



Safety Newsletter

Good Housekeeping –Together We Can!

Good housekeeping is a good indicator of a safe workplace. Clean areas such as work-stations, vehicles, aisles, stair-wells, restrooms, breakrooms, classrooms and, cafeterias,



parking lots, other work areas help eliminate slip/trip/fall and fire hazards. Not only do you promote safety, you also increase productivity and morale. Good housekeeping practices include:

- Keeping aisles and common areas cleared of cords, boxes, and other items.
- Keeping tools and equipment clean and in good working condition; discard them if they are broken
- Floor mats are properly placed and are in good condition
- Keeping computer cables and electrical cords bundled

Health and Safety at work

- Cleaning up water/oil/food spilled on the floor immediately
- Closing open cabinets drawers immediately
- Returning tools & equipment to their proper place
- Properly storing items on shelves or cabinets

Good housekeeping is an on-going process and requires a conscious effort by everybody.

Anxious About Society Re-Opening?



Did you notice rising anxiety at the sight of people standing too close to one another, or touching a door with their bare hand? It is amazing how quickly we became accustomed to life in socially-distant, don't touch anything, lockdown mode. And as most of the country prepares for - or eases into - a lifting of restrictions, those feelings can accompany us out into the world. We cannot just stay home forever. How, then, can we prepare?

A 5-Step Plan to Fight Re-Entry Anxiety:

Clinical psychologist Kevin Chapman, PhD, who specializes in anxiety and related disorders uses an acronym to break down a set of skills using cognitive behavioral therapy to manage strong emotions through the re-entry process: **FIGHT**, as in fight COVID-19 anxiety.

F: Focus on what you can control

While there is a lot of uncertainty associated with COVID-19, and anxiety and uncertainty go hand in hand, he said there are actually a number of elements we can control. Those include how much media coverage we allow ourselves to watch and how much we talk about it. This focus will give us a sense of control and predictability, he said, that will help us manage anxiety much more effectively.

I: Identify negative thoughts

While negative thoughts are inevitable right now, those that are catastrophic in nature, or that are predictive - as in 'this is going to happen to me' or 'I know that this won't end anytime soon' create intense emotions, Chapman said. An important skill is to identify those negative thoughts and recognize that they contribute to maintaining strong emotions.

Ergonomics for your eyes: blink, rest, adjust

Spending long hours on the computer can contribute to eye strain, fatigue and headaches. Computer users may also experience dry eye from blinking less. To help reduce dry and eye strain, consider these eye ergonomic tips:

- **Stay at arm's length.** The eyes work harder to see close up than far away. If you have a desktop computer, try placing the monitor at arm's length. You may need to adjust the font to appear larger at a distance.
- **Give your eyes a break.** Follow the 20-20-20 rule. Take a break every 20 minutes by looking at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- **Lighten up.** When your screen is much brighter than your surroundings, your eyes have to work harder to see. Adjusting your environmental lighting can reduce eyestrain. Also try increasing the contrast on your monitor.



G: Generate alternative thoughts

This is not about positive thoughts, necessarily. Chapman explained, but coming up with more flexible thoughts. "It's not a 'you got this, attaboy' sort of thing. What if you feel like you don't got this?" He recommends coming up with what he calls a retrieval cue, something that reminds you to remain in calm in uncomfortable situations.

H: Highlight adaptive behaviors

Chapman recommends finding behaviors you can engage in to help navigate strong emotions. That could be exercise, mindfulness, and meditation, or connecting with family and friends even if it is via technology.

T: Teach

Arguably the most important element is to teach someone else to do the same thing. Chapman said, "We're all in this fight together. If we band together and use the same skills and strategies. I think that we will make it through together."

AVOIDING OVEREXERTION



Often employees experience workplace injuries from overexertion, which is when you strain yourself from pushing your body too hard. This can happen by lifting, pushing, or pulling something too heavy for you.

Overexertion can lead to long-term consequences for health, so preventing overexertion is important and can be accomplished by simple practices.

- Use correct lifting techniques when lifting a heavy object. For example, when you lift, face the load with your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight, squat by bending at the hips and knees, and then use your leg and stomach muscles to power the lift.
- Use material-handling aides, like a cart or hand truck to lift and carry heavy or awkward objects.
- Ask for help instead of trying to "muscle" your way through a job alone.
- Do not add an extra package or box to an already full load; instead, make an extra trip or ask someone to help.
- Do not overextend or reach to grab that item on a shelf; climb down the ladder, reposition it, and climb again.
- Arrange your work and your work station to minimize reaching, bending, twisting, and awkward postures.

Take short breaks when doing strenuous tasks so that you can stretch and relax tense muscles, giving them a chance to recover.

** The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.*