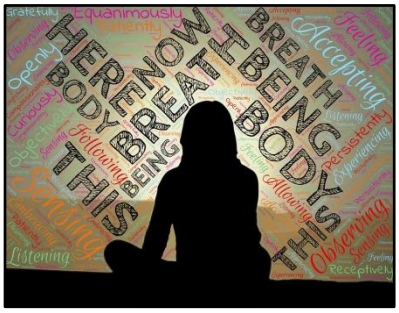
Wellness at Home – Mindfulness



Working from home presents new challenges as compared to working in the office. Add to that the stress of using new technologies, the distractions of other household members who are also working from home and now having to home-school your kids. Sound familiar?

This week's "Wellness at Home" tip is all about clearing your mind and regaining focus.

According to the Mayo Clinic, spending so much time working, thinking, planning, and problem-solving can be draining. Mindfulness exercises can help you experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance. Some benefits of this are improved attention, decreased job burnout and improved sleep.

Simple mindfulness exercises

The Mayo Clinic offers these suggestions:

- **Focus on breathing.** When you feel stressed, take a few seconds to refocus. Take a deep breath and close your eyes. Feel each breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help.
- **Pay attention.** Now that you have more downtime, take the time to experience your environment with all of your senses — touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.
- **Accept yourself.** Don't be so hard on yourself when you make a mistake or if things don't go as expected. Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend—with kindness.

Structured meditation exercises

Meditation is a great mindfulness exercise. It can help reduce stress and lessen the severity of various conditions including anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia and even hypertension. The Mayo Clinic offers these basic meditation practices:

- **Body scan meditation.** Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Slowly and deliberately focus on each part of your body, in order, from toe to head or head to toe. Breathe. Be aware of any sensations associated with each part of your body.
- **Seated meditation.** Sit comfortably with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your breath moving in and out of your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note the experience and then return your focus to your breath.

Smartphone Apps

You can also download mindfulness and meditation apps to a smartphone—many for free! Apps such as Calm and Headspace provide guided meditation at your fingertips.

Many who meditate like to do so right before bed. But these exercises can be practiced anytime, like in the morning before you log on for your shift, or even on your lunch break. Whenever you choose to practice, Headspace says mindfulness exercises offer a pocket of stillness amid the chaos. They provide a sense of awareness and understanding that can ultimately change how you choose to relate to, react to, and view the circumstances happening around you.