Managing your time involves being able to handle two very distinct elements of your work day: the long-term work goals and the daily responsibilities that lead to the success of the big-picture projects.

Big-Picture Management

- Evaluate your goals
- Develop long-term and short-term goals that will help you reach those goals
- List your objectives by yearly, monthly, and weekly needs
- Delegate responsibilities whenever possible
- Develop and maintain a support network

Make a list of daily priorities that you plan to accomplish:

- Don’t include tasks that aren’t necessary to the success of your goals
- Do your most difficult tasks when your energy levels are at their peak
- Tackle big jobs by dividing them up into smaller parts
- Only take on one job at a time
- Handle each piece of paper only once
- Look for ways to improve the efficiency of your daily role
- Set aside time every day to answer your communications
- Learn to say “no” when you can
- Reduce clutter around your workspace
- Use calendars to track your success
- Recognize the difference between doing the job right and perfection

Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©2011

Keep Your Noggin Fit With Brain Exercise

The dog ran. The dog barked. The dog raced. What else did the dog do?

That may seem like a silly question. But the act of thinking up verbs to go with nouns pumps extra blood into your brain, according to brain scans.

Getting more blood to the brain is an important way to counteract the effects of aging, says Thomas Budzynski, Ph.D., an affiliate professor of psychosocial and community health at the University of Washington.

FEATURED ARTICLES

- Keep Your Noggin Fit With Brain Exercise
- How to Be Thankful This Thanksgiving
"If there’s one general thing that happens as people age, it’s that they show decreased cerebral blood flow in certain areas. If you can increase the blood flow, then the neurons will be better nourished," Dr. Budzynski explains.

Dr. Budzynski has developed brain exercises designed to increase cerebral blood flow. There are many such exercises, such as the process of adding verbs to several nouns. There’s also serial subtracting. That involves beginning with a number such as 900, and then subtracting any number from it — say seven. So you get 893, and then you subtract seven from that to get 886…and so forth.

"It’s like lifting weights in the gym: it doesn’t always feel good, but it’s awfully good for your brain," Dr. Budzynski says.

The exercises include visualizing, which stimulates a different part of the brain. For example, Dr. Budzynski asks listeners to visualize a schoolroom from childhood.

Doing the exercises is great, but just doing something novel is good for your brain, too. That’s because as you age, a percentage of your brain’s neurons die. You can still create new dendrites, however. They are the connections between the neurons. They grow from neurons, like branches grow from a tree, when you do brain exercises or just think or see new things. The dendritic networks make a model to comprehend those things.

So your goal is to make more dendrites. They are as vital to mental dexterity as phone lines are to phone networks.

"If you keep changing the input, the brain keeps adding more networks," Dr. Budzynski says. "The stranger, the better. The more novel, the better."

Getting physical exercise and eating a low-fat diet are important, too, for their benefits to the rest of the body certainly apply to the brain.

The chemistry of the brain is complex, and does not necessarily improve with age. For example, over the years, stress produces cortisol, which damages the glial cells that provide nutrients to the neurons in your hippocampus, a part of the brain. Your hippocampus helps handle, among other things, short-term memory.

But it’s wrong to assume that older people can’t compensate for those physical changes. There is evidence from studies in other countries that some memory deficits in older Americans may be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Our culture expects older people to have short-term memory loss, and so they do. In China, older individuals are respected, and do not show the same memory problems, Dr. Budzynski says.

Research by a Harvard scientist showed that presenting older people with subliminal positive words and phrases regarding effective memory actually increased their scores on memory tests, he says. So older folks can keep their minds sharp, even if they can’t do everything they could when they were 17.

It’s also important for older people to have lots of activities, including frequent socializing with others, Dr. Budzynski says. Consider taking up hobbies like chess, crossword puzzles, playing a musical instrument or a challenging volunteer position. Interact with others on the Internet, but get out with real people, too.

Krames Staywell

Continued on next page.
How to Be Thankful This Thanksgiving

It's 11 a.m., the turkey is still frozen, the in-laws are pulling into the driveway and you still haven't set the table. Is this what Thanksgiving is all about? If you're feeling the pressure to have everything just right, take a few minutes to read over the following tips that will (we hope) help put the “happy” back into the holidays.

Plan — but not too much

“I think part of the problem with holiday stress is when the holidays are really blown out of proportion and people start preparing for them so far in advance,” says Carol Goldberg, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and president of Getting Ahead Programs, a New York-based corporation that conducts workshops on wellness and stress management. “Advance preparation is nice, but it shouldn’t take over your whole life. You shouldn’t be so focused that afterward you’re going to feel somewhat let down because the celebration didn’t match your expectations.”

Put it in perspective

“I think it’s important to put the holidays into perspective,” says Dr. Goldberg. “Be realistic. I mentioned that preparation shouldn’t be such that it takes over everything, but you should be prepared.”

She suggests making lists — a different one for each event, celebrations and gifts. “That’s another thing you can do so you won’t feel overwhelmed, and that will reduce your level of stress,” she says.

Share the work

If you have people coming over for dinner or a celebration and they offer to bring something, let them, recommends Dr. Goldberg. “You’ll have less stress and people will feel that they’re doing something worthwhile and useful,” she says.

She adds that there’s nothing wrong with buying some of the food, if you can afford it, or considering a caterer. “Today, lifestyles are much more pressured than they were years ago. We shouldn’t try to replicate the kind of celebration we grew up with,” says Dr. Goldberg.

Being the host or hostess during the holidays can be a stressful role. Dr. Goldberg suggests sharing preparation and cleanup with others. “Hiring help if you can afford it can make celebrations less stressful. Otherwise, if guests ask how they can help, see if a few could arrive earlier to help set the table or stay afterwards to help with the cleanup,” she says. “It’s very hard to get up the next day to a dirty kitchen with all kinds of food already caked on. Let them know in advance so they can set their schedule accordingly.”

Start new traditions

“Ask the people coming to your celebration what they really want to do,” says Dr. Goldberg. “It’s very possible they don’t want to come and get stuffed with lots of calories. They might not even want to have turkey — they may want to have some ethnic food, like Chinese. There’s nothing that says it has to be turkey.”

Although Dr. Goldberg says there is something to be said for tradition, not everyone wants the same kind of celebration. “Some people might not want to stay home, they might want to go to a restaurant, and there’s nothing wrong with that,” she says. “They may not want to sit at home and watch football games, they may want to watch something else or do something else.”

Continued on next page.
Travel wisely

Most everyone wants to go home for Thanksgiving, and most everyone chooses the same day to do it — the day before the holiday. Dr. Goldberg suggests leaving on Tuesday and returning on Saturday to avoid the Wednesday through Sunday crowds. "You may even be able to save some money," she says.

All in the family

"Another thing which people today find very stressful, because there are so many divorces, is the reconstituted family structure," says Dr. Goldberg. "Holiday time tends to be family time, so people who are divorced have to face ex-in-laws and ex-spouses, and that can be very difficult." If you're divorced or separated, and your children are splitting the holiday between both parents' homes, make arrangements to pick up or drop them off at a neutral location, says Dr. Goldberg.

When it comes to conflicts with parents or siblings, Dr. Goldberg says to keep in mind it's only for a few days. "It'll be over soon," she says. "If you see the time as limited, it's easier to take."

Holidays can be difficult times when a close friend or family member has passed away. Setting aside some time to talk about the deceased person and share memories of them is one way of coping. "But move on," says Dr. Goldberg. "Spend maybe a half-hour discussing this person and then stop that conversation and go on to the rest of the celebration."

If you're alone

Holidays are also difficult for people who are alone. "If people are single or far from their families, they could celebrate with friends. Friends are often a substitute for family," says Dr. Goldberg. If you know several other people who are also alone, put together a group and share the holiday together.

"Another thing I think is nice is to volunteer for part of the day in a hospital or soup kitchen, because you're doing something worthwhile, and you're probably not going to feel as sorry for yourself when you see people who are worse off than you," she says.

Exercise away your stress

"Exercise is a physical outlet for emotional stress," says Richard Cotton, an exercise physiologist and former spokesman for the American Council on Exercise. "It's a form of release."

Although there isn't one type of exercise that's right for everyone, Mr. Cotton says that keeping your body in shape or keeping some level of conditioning can be beneficial when it comes to managing stress. "It's physical movement to help resolve the distresses that are building within," he says. "When we keep ourselves in shape, we're more tuned up and we feel better, and when we feel better, we're more able to cope with the stresses of the holidays."

As with other aspects of the holidays, planning is important with exercise, too. "Preparing the mind can help enormously," says Mr. Cotton. He warns, however, against making stress-relieving exercises a stress in themselves. "Figure out what's realistic, when you can and can't exercise, and do your best to stick with that," he says. "Avoid making the guilt of not exercising an additional stress. Plan and make realistic expectations of yourself. It can certainly make a huge difference."

Krames Staywell
Social Media: Recognizing and Responding to the Uses and Abuses

What do you think of when you hear the words Social Media? Most of us think of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but many do not think of all of the other types of social media we use on a regular basis, including: Email, Blogs, Instant Messaging, YouTube, and online forums. By definition, social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. In recent history, social media has substantially changed the methods of communication between organizations, communities, as well as among individuals.

Use of social media is the #1 activity on the web. Today, social networking accounts for 22% of all time spent online. The majority of businesses use social media for marketing. As of June 2011, Facebook had 750 million users and approximately 100 million of those users access Facebook through their mobile phone!

People have multiple uses for social media both in business and in personal realms. Social media is used to obtain information, education, news, and other data. It is also a relatively inexpensive avenue for anyone to publish or access information. It is widely used for social networking and provides a great resource for posting information and organizing events. Employers can also utilize social networking sites as a method of assessing the true character of aspiring employees.

However, where there are great uses for social media – often times it is abused and poses great risks. Some risks include: violations of individual’s rights to privacy, bullying or stalking, providing false information, ruining reputations, as well as setting grounds for possible legal trouble and employment termination. The misuse of social media can also lead to exposure to internet viruses which wreak havoc on your computer’s internal components and can spread like wildfire to other users.

It is important to take technological precautions and frequently update antivirus protection, implement mandatory password changes in the workplace, and to ensure that strong firewalls are in place. Web-filtering systems can also be put in place if necessary. Web-filtering systems can limit access based on many options.

How to Monitor Usage in the Workplace

You can make important decisions about social media in the workplace and set your company in a position to capitalize on the advantages offered by social media while avoiding the pitfalls. Monitoring employee internet usage may save a company from having to bear civil or criminal responsibility for some of its staff member’s actions. Some tips are:

- Connect networked computers to the system administrator’s computer
- Purchase software to monitor internet use
- Check employee computer history and cookies to confirm suspected abuse
- Install a firewall to block certain ports and websites
- Place password protection in areas that the employer doesn’t want its employees to access
- Create a Social Media Policy

You can develop your social media policy as a subset of your employee handbook. Have a master policy document with short chapters dealing with specific types of sites. This will make managing the policy easier as your business and social media changes over time. Having a social media policy will help protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of your company and its current and potential products, employees, partners, customers, and competitors.

Make sure the workforce understands what is expected of them in regards to social networking and use of other social media outlets. This is also a great opportunity to address harassment-related issues and policies. It is important to address criminal activity – what types of things can result in legal disciplinary action and/or termination to ensure a clear understanding of the importance of the workplace policies.

*Amanda G. Traynham*