

CONNECTIONS

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Happy New Year City Employees!

For our January newsletter, we wanted to start by providing you with information on a topic that is very important to our own personal and professional lives, and that is resiliency. Whether you create a New Year's resolution or not, January is a time that many people begin to think about things in their life they may want to change, habits they may want to break or pick up, or goals they want to achieve. Understanding, identifying, and strengthening your resilience can be very helpful as you start off this new year and will better prepare you for bumps in the road that interfere with the changes you want to make.

There is a lot of information out there that says it takes about 21 days to build or break a habit. It can be easier to make changes when we have time frames and end dates in mind, it can help us stay motivated. In 2017, I challenge you to keep your habit changes, goals, and resolutions in perspective, celebrate and reward even small accomplishments, and be kind and patient with yourself. For example, picking up daily flossing and quitting smoking may not both fall under the 21-day time frame.

Consider using the 21 days as a benchmark, and a reminder that it takes time for some consistent changes to take place. One idea is to schedule reminders in your phone for every month or so to evaluate your progress and identify specific steps for moving forward. If you've tried to break a habit several times before and feel stuck, consider some of the following points as you go in to your habit change this time:

- Am I working with an appropriate and realistic time frame for me to change this habit?
- What historically gets in my way? How can I prepare for that this time?
- Why do I want to make this change? Who or what are my motivators?
- Do I feel ready and mentally prepared for change to take place?
- Am I committing myself to more than I can handle? Should I consider breaking my ultimate goal down into smaller monthly goals?
- How far have I come since first deciding I wanted to make this change?
- Is this something I can do alone, or do I need assistance or support as I go along?
- Is there something more going on that I should consider?
 - » Could this habit be out of my control?
- Is it the correct habit to break or build? Are there important steps along the way?
 - » Is nail biting something I need to quit, or are stress management techniques something I need to pick up?
 - » Are the arguments with (Name) something I need to stop, or are communication skills something I need to build, or family counseling something we should sign up for?
- Could I use help?



We encourage you to actually write down your resolution(s) by using the **Change-Plan Worksheet**. If you are comfortable sharing it with someone else, find a partner who knows you and your routine well and swap ideas and offer each other perspectives on barriers to change that you may not have thought of. Of course, always know that you can call your internal or external EAP providers to assist and support you with any New Year's resolutions that would ultimately better your work and personal life.



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What is Resilience?

Resilience refers to the ability to successfully adapt to stressors, maintaining psychological well-being in the face of adversity. It's the ability to "bounce back" from difficult experiences. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or don't have. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in everyone.



Resilience is about being adaptable. It's about being flexible. It's about recognizing that we've got strengths that perhaps we never knew we had until we have to use them. And like many things in life - the more we practice, the more we learn. The more we find out about resilience and certainly the more we do of it, then the more resilient we become.

Resilient people are able to adapt to stress, crises, and trauma. They find ways to bounce back from the ups and downs of life and move forward. Some people are born with a strong sense of resilience. Others may need to learn skills and develop resilience. If you would like to become more resilient, these tips and information can help. Remember that resilience is a skill, like riding a bike. The more you practice, the better you'll be.

Ways to Become More Resilient

Resilience isn't about "toughing it out" or reacting to every setback with a smile. Resilient people still feel sad, angry, or frustrated when faced with a setback. But they find ways to move forward, to tackle challenges with creativity, hope, and a positive attitude.

Here are some ways to increase your resilience:

- **Maintain a sense of perspective.** Ask yourself, "How big is this problem really?" and "What do I need to do?" Remember not to blow things out of proportion or catastrophize, remind yourself of the good in your life and that things really will change.
- **Recognize that you have a choice in how you handle challenges.** You can't control what happens to you, but you can choose how you respond. You can choose to react to changes and problems with hope and a positive attitude.
- **Accept change.** Change and uncertainty are part of life. When you accept this, you'll be better able to react to change with flexibility.
- **Anticipate challenges** by focusing on the positive ways in which you can meet them rather than possible negative outcomes. This will help you feel more in control and less overwhelmed.
- **Learn how to calm yourself.** When you feel yourself reacting to a challenge with escalating stress and anxiety, take steps to calm yourself (deep breathing, replacing negative thoughts).
- **Overcome your fear.** All of us feel fear, especially when we're faced with a change. But fear can hold us back from new experiences and opportunities for growth. If you are faced with a challenge that feels scary or overwhelming, start with the simplest thing you can do that takes you in the direction you want to go. Ask yourself, "What's the smallest thing I can do to get started?" Once you've thought about it, do it.
- **Let go of your anger.** A difficult challenge can cause us to feel angry and upset. These feelings are normal, but they won't help us move forward. Work through your anger and try to let go of negative feelings by writing about them or talking with a trusted friend.
- **Take action.** Avoid dwelling on problems. Focus on solutions instead. Figure out what you can do and then do it, one step at a time.
- **Laugh.** Even when things seem to be falling apart around you, try to find time to smile and laugh. It's very healing and it will help you forget your worries for a few moments. Rent a movie that makes you laugh or spend time with a friend who has a good sense of humor.

Source: www.state.gov/m/med/dsmp/c44950.htm

How to Make Winter Exercise Easier

It can be tough to stick with your exercise program when winter hits. The shortage of daylight, the cold weather and strong urge to stay in your nice warm bed can all work against you as you try to stay focused on your workouts.

While winter does offer a variety of outdoor activities like skiing, snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing, not all of us have access or enjoy those types of activities. That means being stuck indoors (or shivering outdoors) and, often, doing the same old workouts.

The key to staying motivated during the winter is, first, to make it as easy as possible to do your workouts and, second, to recognize when you're starting to get bored with your workouts and make a change before you really lose interest. Check out the following steps to make winter exercise more comfortable.

Step 1: Put Your Clothes in the Dryer

If you're exercising in the morning and find it hard to force yourself out of that nice, warm bed, put your workout clothes in the dryer the night before. When you get out of bed, turn on the dryer for a few minutes. It's much easier to start exercising when you're already warm and putting on clothes fresh from the dryer gives you a leg up on your warm up.

Step 2: Do an Extra Long Warm Up

When it's cold, your muscles can get extra tight which makes exercise uncomfortable and leaves you more susceptible to injuries. In the warmer months, you may be able to get away with shorter warm ups but, when it's cold, you may find you need a little extra time to get the blood flowing.

- **Try dynamic warm ups.** Don't waste time with static stretches but, instead, focus on doing activities to get your body ready for the coming workout. If you're walking or running, start with a brisk walk and stay at that pace until you start to feel warmer. Gradually increase your pace and give your body extra time to get the blood flowing.
- **Get warm before you head out.** If you're exercising outside, try warming up inside before heading out the door. It's much easier to face cold temps when your body is already warm. Try walking or jogging around the house, going up and down the stairs or use a cardio machine if you have one. Just don't get too sweaty before you go or you'll get cold.
- **Take a hot shower.** If it's really cold outside or you just need something more to wake up, take a quick, hot shower to get warm before your workout.
- **Start easy.** If you're really reluctant to get moving, start your workout with something easy like a morning yoga routine. Giving yourself a transition from bed to workout can make exercise much more appealing.

Step 3: Exercise Outside

If you're utterly against exercise in cold temperatures, you can still get outside occasionally for quick workouts without being too miserable. If you stay inside all winter, you'll eventually get bored and forget that there really is a world out there, even if it's cold. Getting out, even if it's just for a few minutes, can be rejuvenating and refreshing—just what you need to keep going until spring.

Here are some tricks to get out a little more:

- **Alternate going in and out.** Start your workout inside with a nice long warm up, then head out for a 3-5 minute walk or run. Come back for another 5-10 minutes until you're warm again and then continue alternating for a dynamic workout.
- **Go half and half.** Another option is to do half your workout outside and then finish up inside. The great thing about this is that you get inside before you really start sweating—sweating when it's cold is not only uncomfortable, it could lead to hypothermia if you're out for long periods of time.
- **End your workout outside.** A great way to burn extra calories and add something new to your winter workouts is to save 5 minutes at the end of your workout for an outdoor sprint. Head out and walk or run as fast as you can for 5 minutes.



Step 4: Layer Up

If you exercise outside, you hopefully know the proper way to dress to stay warm. But, if you're still experimenting with just how much to wear, you may need some ideas for where to start. How you dress can make the difference between misery and just generally being uncomfortable.

- **Base Layer:** Start with a base layer with thin, breathable fabrics, like silk or wool that keep you warm but allow sweat to evaporate.
- **Mid-Layer:** Your next layer should be a little thicker than the first and made of sweat-wicking fabrics like fleece or Coolmax to keep you warm and dry. A mid-weight half-zip top works well here and running tights or pants.
- **Top Layer:** For your top layer, you'll want a jacket that's both wind and water resistant while still breathable. This will protect you from the elements while keeping you from sweltering.

Layering works well with cold temps because it helps you stay warm and provides an easy way to regulate your temperature—if you get too hot, just unzip or remove a layer. And don't forget the hat and gloves.

Step 5: Mix Things Up

If indoor workouts are your thing during the winter, you may get bored with the same old workouts. Even the variety of machines and activities at the gym can get old when you do them over and over. To keep yourself interested, try mixing up your workouts and trying some new ideas:

- **Mix and Match your Cardio.** If you tend to do the same machines all the time, try a cardio medley. Choose 5 different machines and spend 5 or more minutes on each. Or choose 3 machines and hit each for 15 minutes. Mixing things up can make your workouts seem shorter and more interesting.
- **Mix and Match your Strength Training.** If you've been doing the same old routine for awhile, try mixing things up by using different types of resistance. Try doing one exercise on a machine (e.g., a chest press) and then an exercise for the same muscle group with the cables or a resistance band (e.g., crossover chest flies). Or, start at the end of your workout and work your way backwards. Just changing the order of the exercise can keep things interesting.
- **Mix and Match Cardio and Strength.** Another way to perk up is to combine cardio and strength in a circuit. Try 5 minutes on the treadmill and then do a minute of squats before a few minutes on the elliptical, etc.

Step 6: Try New Exercises

If you find yourself staring at the treadmill with something close to dread, that's a good sign you need to try something different. Now is a great time to try a new group fitness class like spinning, yoga or kickboxing. If you usually do group fitness, try heading out to the floor and try different machines. If you're a home exerciser, try different workout videos, an exergame, or turn on the radio and make up your own workout—jumping jacks, squats, lunges, pushups, etc.

Don't be afraid to break out of the old routine and try something different, even if it's not the same intensity as your usual workouts. Doing something new can keep you motivated and on track.

Step 7: Reward Yourself

If you're finding it particularly difficult to get up and do your workout, having something to look forward to may just get you moving. It's tough to look forward to a workout when it's cold and dark, but having something nice waiting at the end of your workout can make it all better:

- **Give yourself an extra ten minutes.** At the end of your workout, use that extra time to sit in the hot tub, take an extra long shower, pick up some coffee from your favorite establishment, stretch, nap or whatever makes you feel good.
- **Reward yourself every week.** At the end of each week, plan something fun you'll do if you've completed all your workouts. A movie, a massage, a shopping trip, an afternoon in front of the fire, etc.
- **Reward yourself every month.** Plan bigger rewards for completing all your workouts in one month. A weekend trip, a new pair of running shoes, a day at the spa . . . choose something that makes you smile when you think about it and get moving.
- **Reward yourself at the end of winter.** Another way to stay motivated is to plan something for the end of winter, like a vacation. Knowing you have a vacation to look forward to will motivate you to stay in shape so you're strong and ready for your trip.

Source: www.verywell.com



Strategic Budgeting: The All-Cash Diet

At the start of every new year, we hear about friends and colleagues who've decided to go on one diet or another in an attempt to atone for too much indulging during the holidays. While most of them are eliminating carbs or swapping juicing recipes, others may be trying out a regimen designed to give their bank accounts a boost: the all-cash diet.



Instead of counting calories, this diet requires setting aside your credit cards and only relying on old-fashioned cash to cover day-to-day expenses. By limiting your spending to what's in your wallet, you'll be more likely to stick to a budget—and less likely to make impulse purchases with plastic. In other words, you'll buy only what you need and less of what you simply want.

According to the Federal Reserve, the average American household owes more than \$15,000 in credit card debt. People who have switched to all-cash lifestyles for a time say that forcing themselves to live only on what's in their wallets increases their ability to pay down debt and live within their means.

In the end, a budget is merely a tool to help you to reach a point where you can easily spend less than you earn, start paying off your debts and start saving. You just need to find the system that works best for you.

Source: feieap.com

LOCAL FINANCIAL BUDGETING & DEBT MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

- ✦ GreenPath Financial Wellness
- ✦ UW-Extension Financial Education Center

January Webinar

Paying with Cash: A Budget Strategy

We invite you to participate in this month's webinar, presented by Mike DiMio, Budget Coach, New Focus, New Jersey on **Wednesday, January 18, 2017 (12:00 pm EST)**.

To register for this webinar now, please [click here](#). For a complete listing of this year's webinars, visit your EAP website and click on "2017 Webinars and Registration" which is found under the **Webinars/Training** tab at the top of the page.

Don't forget to click on "Listen to a Replay" to view past webinars covering a variety of subjects.

For more information about this and other webinars provided by the City's external EAP provider, FEI Workforce Resilience, please visit the [FEI website](#).

REMINDER



We also want to take a moment to remind City staff that the services in EAP are free, voluntary and confidential for you and your immediate family members. If you have any questions about what this means, please visit our [website](#) or call our office.

*Thanks for reading,
we hope you found the information useful!*

**You can reach any of us by calling the
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