

January – March 2005

Did you know?

- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care
- Free “Simple Will” Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- Financial referrals are available for managing your money and planning for retirement

Claremont EAP
800.834.3773

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Recognizing Relapse – When Best Intentions Fail

Most of us who try to change a behavioral habit get discouraged when a “slip” or relapse occurs. We tend to say to ourselves “I just can’t do it” or “I’m too old to change” or “I’m just no good.” You feel guilt and anger at yourself, despite your best efforts to alter a bad habit. Whether it’s an eating disorder, smoking, drinking, abusing behavior or some other disorder, addictive behaviors are difficult to change.

Confronting Bad Habits

In confronting a bad habit, you must recognize that a “slip” (a single episode of returning to an old habit) doesn’t have to equal a relapse (the complete return to an old habit). Breaking an addictive habit means more than stopping a particular behavior. It means stopping relapse. Only 20 percent of the people who seriously try to change an addictive behavior “kick it” on their first try. Most people need to try several times. If you’re not successful at first, blaming yourself only reinforces the bad habit. Don’t scold yourself.

Tactics: Slip vs. Relapse

Recognize that “slips” are normal. Each is also an opportunity to learn. Make a



note of when a slip occurs. Treat it as an emergency in which immediate corrective action is needed. Renew your commitment and review the actions which led to the slip. This will uncover patterns that you need to avoid. Make plans to move beyond the slip, and reward yourself for positive actions. Also, ask others for assistance in returning to full recovery. A key tactic for stopping addictive behaviors is to handle slips positively and to prevent them from developing into a full-blown relapse. A slip is only a human misstep, not a failure in your overall willpower or your entire character.

Be on Guard

Rehearse exactly how to handle situations which may cause you to slip and which place you in danger of a relapse. Try to interrupt the sequence of events and your

response that lead up to the slip. The ability to handle such situations and the temptations they produce is your golden key toward habit control. Don’t give up.

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We’re on the web
www.ClaremontEAP.com

Balancing Work, Family and Personal Needs

Use this exercise to measure the degree of balance you have between the demands of work, family responsibilities and personal time.

Answer each question with a number from this scale:

ALWAYS					NEVER
5	4	3	2	1	

AT HOME

- Does your family complain that you don't spend enough time with them?
- Do you often feel anxious about the demands of your family?
- Do responsibilities at home make you resentful?
- Do you expect your family to adapt to your career needs?

SUBTOTAL

AT WORK

- Do you feel frustrated because your income is not enough?
- Do you feel guilty about the time you spend on your career?
- Do you resent having to bring work home?
- Do you worry that your work interferes with family needs?

SUBTOTAL

PERSONAL

- Do you feel there's never enough time for yourself?
- Do you feel guilty about taking a vacation?
- Do you wish you got more exercise?
- Do you feel you never get to do what you like to do?

SUBTOTAL

TOTAL



A total score of less than 20 indicates you've learned to balance family, career and personal needs successfully.

21-30 indicates a good balance with some need for improvement.

31-40 indicates a fair balance.

41-50 shows that you're barely managing the juggling act of home, career and personal needs.

A high score in only one area indicates a need to organize your life so that area takes less of your time and energy.

Reducing Time on Household Tasks

Preserving Your Days Off

“Days off” are supposed to be just that. Why use those hours up doing chores if you don’t have to? Be preserving some of your time you will not only have more to give to yourself, but you will also have more to give to your family and friends. Here are some tips to help shorted household tasks, leaving you more time for the things you really want to do.

- Delegate some of your work. If your kids are too young, see if some neighborhood children can help out. Just be clear on what’s expected so you don’t have to spend time explaining it several times. Also don’t over-supervise or be critical if their method of doing something is different from yours.
- Make a list for the week and spread out the tasks. This way you can “plug up” little holes in your day, combine tasks if possible, and be more efficient without feeling so overwhelmed.
- Set your priorities; for example, don’t clean something unless it really needs it.
- Procrastinating may mean the job’s unnecessary. If so, drop it; if not, just get it over with. You’ll spend more time thinking about it than it may take to complete it.
- Rethink your appliances. Use a microwave, cordless phone, answering machine, frost-free refrigerator/freezer, self-cleaning

oven or food processor to help you save time.

- Make and freeze a week’s worth of lunches to quickly pop into lunch bags in the morning.
- Do your grocery shopping once a week. Shop at one supermarket to eliminate multiple time-consuming stops.
- Buy nonperishable items in large quantities.
- Make a grocery list of standard items (leaving room for special write-in requests), make several photocopies, and post one on the refrigerator once a week. Your family can then take some responsibility for completing the list.
- Take turns shopping.



- Let each family member share in the cooking duties. Rotate the schedules to provide for a cook’s day off when everyone fend for themselves.
- Eat out once a week, and be spontaneous. If you don’t feel like cooking, don’t. Forcing yourself drains valuable energy. Order a take-out dinner or have it delivered occasionally.
- Prepare dinners with leftover lunch in mind. Even things like pasta and soup can be safely carried

to work or school in airtight containers.

- When you clean house, have your cleansers and other tools organized and readily accessible so you don’t have to hunt for them.
- Have your younger kids help separate and fold the laundry. Teach older children to do all of the laundry when they are able.
- Organize your errands so you can combine them instead of making unnecessary small trips.
- Keep a supply of birthday and other greeting cards on hand so you don’t always run out.
- Create a neighborhood carpool for carting kids to games, school events, and

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Taking Advantage of Ergonomic Furniture and Equipment

Some older types of furniture and equipment may have contributed to physical stress, trauma and injuries in the past. So engineers have designed ergonomic furniture and accessories that are safe, functions, attractive and comfortable. The trick is using this furniture to its best advantage.

Your Chair

In an ergonomically designed chair, sit in a neutral, relaxed position so you're not straining any part of your body. Your hips will be slightly higher than your knees. Most modern office chairs allow you to adjust the seat height and the position of the backrest. Some also come with a firmness adjuster in the back.

To reduce excessive pressure on your lower back and under your thighs, rest your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. Keep the small of your back supported by the chair back. If the chair is too deep to achieve this, use a smaller chair. One size may not fit all.

Your chair is at a proper height when your hands are at your keyboard and your elbows are at a right angle, with your forearms parallel to the floor. Your hands should be in a reasonably straight line with your forearms.

If you opt for one of the kneeling chairs with no back support, raise your work surface to relieve back strain. These chairs are ideal for frequent alternating between sitting and standing.

Your Computer Monitor

Keep your monitor close enough so that you won't crane your head and neck forward to peer at it. Adjust the height of your screen so that your eyes look slightly downward to view it.

Turn your monitor at a right angle to windows and other

remains a problem, consider getting an *anti-glare filter* that covers your screen.

Placing a *keyboard platform* under your keyboard allows you to adjust its height to whatever position is most comfortable for your hands.

Wrist pads can support tired or overstretched wrists and help



direct light sources. Facing a window while working or working with your back to a strong light source can cause too much glare. If, on the other hand, your office lighting is too dark for your taste, ask if you could bring a small adjustable lamp to work.

If your coworkers agree, adjust window blinds or curtains to reduce outside glare. If your screen swivels or tilts, adjust it periodically to avoid glare. Also, keep books and files away from the sides of your monitor so you can adjust it and keep it from overheating.

Accessories

If glare on your monitor

keep your hands straight while typing. Some models are attached to a platform that slips under the keyboard to keep the pads stable.

If you need to type or read from files or books, keep them the same distance and height as your screen. Prop them up in a *document holder* or a *bookstand*.

With the proper use of ergonomically designed furniture and equipment, you can pleasantly avoid most of the physical strains and pitfalls of modern office work – and get a lot more done in the process.

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Claremont's Enhanced Dependent Care Services

Child Care

- Personalized searches of in-home agencies, family daycare homes, and centers that match the parent's needs
- Customized profiles with availability checks
- Sick childcare referrals
- 24 hour/swing shift referrals
- Emergency/drop-in referrals
- Before/after school programs
- Weekend childcare resources
- Summer camp resources
- Transportation options for school age children
- Summer and school vacation program referrals
- Extracurricular activities resources
- Relocation assistance resources
- Referrals for special needs children



Adult Care

- Skilled nursing facilities/day care center referrals
- Respite/hospice care referrals
- Home health services referrals
- Legal services
- Financial counseling
- Mental health services referrals
- Drug and alcohol services
- Rehabilitation services
- Care management resources
- Medicare/Medicaid and other insurance issues
- Homemaker services
- Nutrition services/meal programs
- Nursing care
- Transportation services
- Emergency response programs
- Companionship programs
- Caregiver support
- Housing options
- Relocation assistance

Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.

For more information or for confidential help call
Claremont EAP 800.834.3773

CLAREMONT EAP

Responding to the Human Factor in the World of Work