

WORK • LIFE • EXCEL

Work • Life Tips

▶ **Presenteeism** (in the dictionary since 2007) is the practice of coming to work despite illness, injury, anxiety, or other physical or mental health condition. The result is usually reduced productivity because you lack the capacity to be fully focused. Being at work because you are too worried or concerned about your job to stay away, even though you are too ill or troubled to be effective, is a serious problem. It can lead to burnout or a health crisis. Talk to the EAP if you are struggling with presenteeism.

▶ **More about opioids in the workplace:** Most opioid prescriptions in workers' compensation injuries are not clinically appropriate. Opioid prescriptions increase both medical and disability day-related costs. Most doctors prescribing opioids are NOT following treatment guidelines, and most patients who wind up on long-term opioids were not educated about choices, risks, or benefits. Two-thirds of those on opioids for 90 days will still be on them five years later. Source: Johns Hopkins University Research at www.jhsph.edu [search: "impact of opioids on workers"]

▶ **Emotional intelligence (EI)** applies very well to customer service, where it has big payoffs. To use EI in customer service, focus on your customers' emotions and not your own. You will appear more empathic, identify customer needs more quickly, and calm an angry customer faster. You will experience less stress on the job by being proactive rather than reactive to a customer's emotionality. Try it. See if you aren't less worn out at day's end.

How to Build Your Talents



Outstanding employees (star performers) exhibit certain traits. One of them is "talent." Talent in the workplace does not mean a person is gifted, like a violin prodigy. It means performing certain job functions crucial to the organization's mission in a predictably superior manner. Talent is so crucial that organizations aggressively strategize to find and recruit it. Managers are often frustrated with their inability to develop talent from the ranks because of resource limitations, but don't let that hold you back. Believe that you can be talented like star employees you know. Pay attention to what others point to as your "knack" for doing something well. Consider what you love doing and what seems to come easy to you. Challenge yourself to acquire added skills that grow your talent niche, and stay on the edge of your comfort zone, looking for ways to apply them. Soon you may be seen as a prized part of your organization's talent pool.

Is There a Book in You?

Writing a book may sound like a daunting task, but "systems" now exist to put your passion in print. Search online for all the resources available. Topics that still draw the book-buying crowds include personal experiences on overcoming adversity, inspirational stories of recovery and triumph over illness and grief, raising children, positive psychology, and more. Even a short book with a powerful message can become popular with a New York Times best-selling author endorsing it. A quick glance at Amazon.com's recent offerings from May 2016 finds a 66-page book on grief by Marine Lt. Pete Masalin, titled "The Sorrow of Loss, The Wisdom of Recovery." The book chronicles the author's life during the period of his late wife's death due to cancer, the depths of his grief, and his ultimate recovery.



Lightning Safety Tips for Employees

Lightning strikes the ground in North America over 30 million times a year, with over 300 people being struck and 40 killed. High-risk occupations include logging, heavy equipment operation, roofing, construction (especially scaffolding), power utility field repair, steel erection/telecommunications, farming, field labor, plumbing, landscaping, pipe fitting, airport ground personnel operations, and beach lifeguarding. Failure to promptly get to a safe place contributes to most incidents, but so does going outside too soon at storm's end. Print and distribute to peers the OSHA safety sheet at <https://www.osha.gov> [search "3863"].

Avoid Academic Summer Slump

“Summer slump” describes loss of interest by children in academics during summer vacation. Laura May, associate professor in Georgia State University’s College of Education, offers these tips for parents: 1) Plug into the library, and let children pick their own books. A weekly short trip can accelerate lifelong learning and help children retain reading skills. 2) Incorporate reading by following recipes to make cookies, keeping a journal, writing a shopping list, and reading to younger siblings. 3) Have a child calculate miles per gallon of gas on trips. Any practical use of academics and attempts to make connections to real life will reinforce lessons learned and ward off summer slump. Learn more: [Newswise.com](http://www.newswise.com) Search: “summer slide” (with quotes marks)



See Early Signs of Alcoholism



If you drink, know the early signs of alcoholism. You may spot symptoms that allow you to be better prepared to self-diagnose the illness if it becomes necessary. Once social drinking begins, neurological and behavioral signs and symptoms begin to emerge in susceptible persons. These may include tolerance, often misperceived as a positive ability to drink more “efficiently” or in greater amounts than peers without feeling alcohol’s effects. You may notice fewer adverse consequences the next morning after heavy drinking and increasingly look forward to the next opportunity to drink. You may seek out peers who drink with the same capacity as yourself. Memory loss while drinking (blackouts) may occur. You may see alcohol as a positive way to feel stimulated, and may experience boredom if unable to drink in the evening. Alcoholism is not an equal-opportunity illness. Research shows that a family history of addictive disease places one at higher risk for it. There is a myth that self-referral never happens, and that some horrible incident must force an alcoholic into treatment. Not true. A screening with a professional counselor takes only minutes, and your score and concern over the above symptoms may lead you to accept help early to avoid such an incident.

Soft Skills to Know: Crisis Management

Crisis management skills demonstrate your ability to lead others and remain cool under stress. A crisis includes three parts, the last of which is the target of change: 1) the acute level of threat generated by the crisis; 2) the suddenness of its occurrence; and 3) a brief window of opportunity to intervene. The key to crisis management is not succumbing to the shock and suddenness of the event. Doing so will impede your problem-solving abilities. If you accept that a crisis could someday happen, you will likely act more decisively. When a crisis happens, gather enough information to intervene. Don’t gather so much information and analyze issues and options so deeply that you cannot act decisively—avoid “paralysis by analysis.” Teach this process to others when a crisis looms, and help coworkers understand the value of calm and deliberate problem solving. In a crisis, be proactive and collaborate, but don’t wait for others to make the first move. Instead, step in to intervene.



Science of Taking a Nap



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that naps do increase your ability to be alert and that they are useful. Instructions for taking a nap: Take into account that sleep becomes deeper the longer you sleep, reaching the deepest level in about one hour. If you wake up from a nap after 20 minutes (before going into deep sleep) or at 90 minutes (after the deep cycle has passed), grogginess from “sleep inertia” may be less, thereby making your nap more effective. Nap for no more than about 20 minutes on a busy schedule, or if you have the time, no less than 90 minutes. Source: <http://www.cdc.gov> [search bar: “nap duration”]

