

April 2016 Newsletter Articles

The Zen of Mobile Phones: How to Tame your Stress with Tools and Apps

There is a powerful stress-fighting weapon in your pocket.

An Insider's Guide to Recognizing Abuse and Addiction

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

How to Keep Your Brain Young

Youth is a wonderful thing. -George Bernard Shaw

The Zen of Mobile Phones:

How to Tame your Stress with Tools and Apps

There is a powerful stress-fighting weapon in your pocket.

By Gale Lyman, RN, BSN, HNB-BC

More commonly seen as a source of stress rather than a solution, smart phone tools and apps can indeed help you to take a break and relax. Choose two or three of the following ideas, and see for yourself!

Smart phone features for stress management

Many features have the benefit of working on airplane mode, helpful when you are flying or otherwise disconnected.

Alarms

Set your alarm feature to ring hourly during waking hours, using a sweet alarm sound or song set to low volume. Use the alarm as a reminder to take a deep breath, stretch a bit, and take a break from stress.

Ring tones

Does your phone cause a startle response each time it rings? Even if your work or life responsibilities require you to quickly answer every call you can sooth the process with a gentle ring tone.

Music

Need to let off steam? Wake up? Get moving? Pick a fast paced tune. Need to slow yourself and your thoughts down? Choose a tune with a slow, steady beat. Experts recommend music with a rhythm of 60 beats a minute for relaxation.

Gallery

Create a file of special photos that make you smile. Pets, landscapes, and people who are easy to love are good choices.

Text/email

There are three common responses to stress: fight, flight, or friends. Using messaging or email, reach out to a friend. Swapping even a quick message reminds you of your support system.

Relaxation Apps

Find your favorites with search terms including relaxation, stress management, and meditation, or look for some of the following apps.

Trip planning: Take a break to scroll through one of the many travel apps, imagining you are booking a fantasy vacation.

YouTube: The search terms ‘relaxation’ or ‘meditation’ will find you a soothing video experience.

TED talks: Raise your spirits with inspirational or motivational talks.

Sound generators: These apps offer you a choice of nature and city noise with the opportunity for add-ins like thunder, chimes, and crickets. The ambient music can be relaxing, and can prevail over annoying noises in your environment.

Humor: Get your endorphins flowing with funny videos and jokes.

Puzzles and games: Activities like jigsaw puzzles and adult coloring are often relaxing.

More: Search for other integrative relaxing practices, including qi gong, guided imagery, meditation, and breathing for relaxation.

Electromagnetic Field Safety

Although their findings are not universally accepted, and the agency itself classifies the possible relationship as credible but not conclusive, the electromagnetic fields produced by mobile phones are classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as possibly carcinogenic to humans. More research is now in progress to learn about potential long-term effects of mobile phone use. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been conducting a formal risk assessment of all studied health outcomes from radiofrequency field exposure and plans to release that information in 2016. We’ll be watching for that report, and will update you when it becomes available.

What is clear is that your phone only emits radiofrequency when it is turned on and the exposure decreases significantly the further your phone is from your body. “A person using a mobile phone 30–40 cm away from their body – for example when text messaging, accessing the

Internet, or using a “hands free” device – will therefore have a much lower exposure to radiofrequency fields than someone holding the handset against their head.” (WHO, 2014.) Until the World Health Organization issues their long awaited report later this year, you might play it safe by keeping your mobile phone away from your body as much as possible, and definitely while you sleep. Next to your head on the nightstand might be too close.

Be well, be safe, and be wise.

The information provided in this newsletter is for educational and entertainment purposes only, and is not to be interpreted as a recommendation for a specific treatment plan, product, or course of action. In the right hands, a smart phone can be a powerful tool for well-being. Use it well.

An Insider’s Guide to Recognizing Abuse and Addiction

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

From the US Department of Health and Human Services
Ed: Gale Lyman, RN, BSN, HNB-BC

Drinking too much alcohol increases people’s risk of injuries, violence, drowning, liver disease, and some types of cancer. This April during Alcohol Awareness Month, try to educate yourself and your loved ones about the dangers of drinking too much.

To spread the word and prevent alcohol abuse, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. is joining other organizations across the country to honor Alcohol Awareness Month.

If you are concerned about someone else’s drinking, offer to help. If you are drinking too much, you can improve your health by cutting back or quitting. Here are some strategies to help you cut back or stop drinking:

- Limit your drinking to no more than 1 drink a day for women or 2 drinks a day for men.
- Keep track of how much you drink.
- Choose a day each week when you will not drink.
- Don’t drink when you are upset.
- Avoid places where people drink a lot.
- Make a list of reasons not to drink.

For more information, visit the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. There you will find

- Frequently asked questions about alcohol and drugs
<https://www.ncadd.org/about-addiction/faq/frequently-asked-questions-and-facts-about-alcohol-and-drugs>

- Information about the signs and symptoms of abuse and addiction
<https://www.ncadd.org/about-addiction/signs-and-symptoms/signs-and-symptoms>
 - Warning signs parents can look for
<https://www.ncadd.org/about-addiction/signs-and-symptoms/what-to-look-for-signs-and-symptoms>
 - Treatment for alcohol and drug abuse
<https://www.ncadd.org/about-addiction/support/what-is-treatment>
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How to Keep Your Brain Young

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By Gale Lyman, RN, BSN, HNB-BC

Help your aging brain with a simple strategy that's free and might be right in front of your feet. Researchers from Concordia University, Montreal, Québec, Canada and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York recently found a positive association between physical activity and larger and physiologically younger brains.

The good news is that it doesn't take much physical activity to make a significant difference. The researchers studied stair climbing. They found that spending a year climbing as little as one flight of stairs daily decreases the anticipated physiological aging of your brain by ½ year. In other words, if you take the stairs and your same-age friend doesn't, research indicated their brain could be ½ year older than yours at the end of a year. For those of us expecting to live longer and wanting to live happier, this is an important finding. You can find the full article in the April 2016 issue of *Neurobiology of Aging*.

So, consider taking the stairs instead of the elevator. But to reduce the risk of injury, before beginning this or any exercise program, please consult a healthcare provider for appropriate exercise prescription and safety precautions.

You might start by walking one flight up. Consider taking the elevator to the floor before your stop, then walk the remaining flight. Your peers will think you walked all the way!