

Learning Corner - Check it Out!

How to Avoid the Procrastination Trap

Procrastination can trip up the best-intentioned of us. Here's some advice **from Becky Vaughn-Furlow of the Clarion Ledger** for conquering procrastination:

- **Start the task.** Dedicate the first few minutes after arriving at work to tackling the tough obligations rather than doing minor tasks.
- **Establish the timing.** Schedule important tasks in non-negotiable time segments. Set realistic deadlines for projects.
- **Become more self-aware.** Recognize your procrastination process and lack of focus. Acknowledging the problem is the first step to overcoming most bad habits.
- **Eliminate temptations and distractions.** Eliminate problematic distractions that sap your attention, energy, and time, deterring you from the work to be done.
- **Give up on perfectionism.** Don't let any perfectionistic tendencies make you believe the task at hand is harder than it actually is.
- **Organize your tasks.** Organization is the mortal enemy of procrastination. Learn to prioritize.



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Communication Tips for Extroverts and Introverts

Workplaces are populated with a wide variety of people and personalities. One way people often classify each other is as extroverts and introverts—but it turns out there's some confusion about just what those terms mean.

Katie Loehrke, a certified Professional in Human Resources and an editor with J. J. Keller & Associates, a Wisconsin-based employer compliance resource firm, explains that whether individuals are introverted or extroverted depends most on how they gain and lose energy: **“People who tend toward extroversion typically gain energy by interacting with others and lose it in solitude.”**

Introverts, on the other hand, gain energy from solo thought and lose it through social interaction.

When it comes to workplace communication, Loehrke says, introverted employees may prefer to think through concepts on their own before joining a larger group, while extroverts might like nothing more than brainstorming with peers right from a concept's very start.

Neither can have their preference all of the time, though. That's why members of both camps can afford to step up their communication games. Loehrke provides the following tips for doing just that:

If you lean toward extroversion:

Pay attention to conversational lulls. Your natural instinct may be to fill these silences—but that instinct could be off. Assess the lull before you speak up. Sometimes thinking out loud will be appropriate; sometimes it won't.

Avoid dominating conversations. It's not truly a conversation if you're the only one talking—conversations are a two-way street.

Don't assume that people who aren't contributing don't have valuable input. Invite quieter employees to share their perspectives and give them the space to do so uninterrupted.

If you lean toward introversion:

Prepare for conversations. Thinking through a concept ahead of time can make you more comfortable sharing your thoughts with a group.

Reserve the right to think about it. If you can't prepare for a conversation ahead of time, consider indicating that you'll think through the concepts and return to the conversation later.

Choose your business interactions wisely. If you have only limited energy for interaction, make those interactions count. Opt for the ones that will make a difference in your success.

Tips for Employees

7 Signs You're A Great Employee

Liz Ryan, CEO/founder of Human Workplace and contributor to Forbes.com, recently listed several signs that you're maximizing your value as an employee:

- You ask questions until you understand your job. If you run into a new hurdle, you try to work through it on your own or ask for help.
- You know how your job connects to other jobs in the company. You understand how the organization makes money and serves its customers.
- You know your role and its mission. You understand your internal and external customers and your commitments to them.
- You are a supportive teammate to your coworkers. You know their roles and priorities.
- You have creative ideas. And you share them.
- You keep your commitments. You don't let things fall between the cracks at work or at home.
- You follow your trusty instinct when appropriate. You know when to override your brain.



WELLNESS UPDATE: Sleep Well: You Can Improve Your Nightly Rest

Are you getting enough sleep? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say 33 percent of Americans aren't.

According to the CDC, sleeping fewer than 7 hours per night is linked to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and poor mental health, as well as early death. Insufficient sleep also can affect your ability to make good decisions and increases the chances of motor vehicle crashes.

See tips below:

- Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning,
 - Go to bed early enough to log at least 7 hours of sleep.
 - Limit your exposure to bright light in the evenings.
 - Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
 - Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, at a comfortable temperature.
 - Remove electronic devices from the bedroom.
 - Avoid large meals, caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol before bedtime.
 - Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
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Sneak in Some Cardio While You Work

Can you really get in a worthwhile workout while you work? Kelli Calabrese, MS, an exercise physiologist and spokesman for the American Council on Exercise, tells WebMD yes.

Calabrese believes in 60-second or 10-minute bursts of aerobic exertion. She says that improving your heart rate variability—your heart's ability to jump from resting to "pumped"—has been shown to increase longevity and reduce heart disease risk.

Here are a few aerobic tricks Calabrese suggests you try between tasks:

- Rip off a minute's worth of jumping jacks.
- Do a football-style drill of running in place for 60 seconds, getting those knees up.
- Simulate jumping rope for a minute: Hop on alternate feet or on both feet at once. An easier version is to simulate the arm motion of turning a rope, while alternately tapping the toes of each leg in front.
- While seated, pump both arms over your head for 30 seconds, then rapidly tap your feet on the floor, football-drill style, for 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.
- Do walk-lunges in the vacant office or room.
- No empty room available? Take to the stairs—two at a time if you need a harder workout.

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