Personal Management

**Being a Healthy Worker**

Everyone wishes to be healthy. The reality is we do not have total control of our health. What we can do to influence our health is eat properly, exercise our bodies and also rest ourselves to restore energy. Good health is essential to living a happy life as well as building a solid foundation for career success.

Diet

The food you eat affects your health, your looks, and your mood. Why do these things affect you at work?

* If you are healthy, you will take fewer sick days.
* If you are healthy, you have more energy.
* If you are healthy, you will feel better about yourself.

Eating wisely does not actually mean eating less. It means eating foods that nourish your body. It also means eating the right foods to help reduce your risk of disease.

Exercise

“*Those who think they have no time for exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness.”*  ~Edward Stanley

Exercise requires energy, but it also provides you with energy. Exercise helps to build strength, endurance, alertness. It also reduces tension and anxiety. Exercise is also important if you have a sedentary type of job – one in which you sit for considerable periods of time. Health professionals recommend 20 minutes three times a week to feel the benefits.

So what do you like? Soccer? Hockey? Basketball? Cycling? Jogging? The secret of a successful exercise program is doing something you enjoy.

Rest

*“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise*” ~Benjamin Franklin

Experts say the amount of sleep varies from person to person. In general, most adults need about seven hours of sleep per night. Children and adolescents need even more — around nine or 10 hours each night. Too little sleep can cause problems focusing at work and makes a person more prone to accidents. Sleep restores your body and recharges the brain.

**Dealing with Stress**

Managing stress is another factor required in staying healthy. Stress is your physical and emotional reaction to change or conflict. According to the Canada Safety Council,

*“Mental health claims are the fastest growing category of disability costs in Canada. They account for an estimated 30 to 40 percent of the disability claims recorded by Canada’s major insurers and employers. Three-quarters of employers say mental health issues are the leading cause of short and long-term disability claims in their organization”.*

There are two kinds of stress:

a) Good Stress: -helps you focus more clearly and act more decisively.

-contributes to overall wellness

-energizes and motivates employees

 -when the challenge is over, your body returns to normal.

b) Bad Stress: -when your body does not return to normal but remains in an unnecessary state of alertness.

 -will wear you out and result in effects such as headaches, chest pain, digestive problems, heart disease, high blood pressure back pain, irritability and depression.

How do you deal with stress related issues? Whether at your coop placement or a part time job, the techniques are the same. Health experts agree that the most effective way of dealing with stress is to identify the cause of the stress and address the problem directly. This can sometimes be difficult for a student to address on their own. Your coop teacher is there to advocate for you so do not hesitate to seek advice if necessary.

Preventing Stress

Consider these three basic strategies to prevent or avoid stress in your daily lives. They sound simple but can be difficult to implement.

1. Just say no.

Don’t get overwhelmed trying to please everyone all of the time. Set yourself personal goals with a realistic amount of time to achieve them.

1. Stop procrastinating –take action.

If you believe you perform better under pressure. You may be trying to convince yourself you do. You may be really making an excuse to procrastinate. Putting things off can be stressful, so take action. Make decisions and be prepared to live with the consequences.

1. Get help when you need it.

There is no shame in asking for help when you need it, no matter how strong or proud you are. You may be needlessly stressed by not asking for help. You may need to delegate, asking others to lighten your load by doing tasks that they can handle.

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| Coping with Stress |
| Recognizing the Problem | Finding Solutions |
| Major changes such as marriage, a new job or a death of a family member | Try to limit other changes in your life. If you started a new job, try to delay other changes such as moving to a new apartment. |
| Conflict or uncertainty caused by disagreement with co-workers or unclear instructions about what is expected of you | Talk about the problem with a trusted co-worker or someone who will listen to what both parties have to say. |
| Prolong overwork or pressure when you have to pick up the work of employees who have been laid off or working overtime during seasonal deadlines | Review your responsibilities with a co-worker or mentor. If the workload is too great, discuss getting help from your supervisor. Until you get help, set priorities and take one step at a time. |
| Environmental stresses, such as noise, unpleasant temperatures, or crowding | Generate ideas from co-workers. Bring comforts from home, such as headphones, small fan or heater or a desk lamp |

The Health Canada website link <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/stress-eng.php> has considerable information regarding symptoms of stress, health effects and minimizing your risks.

**Personal Grooming**

Good grooming isn’t just for dogs. Don’t forget about those day to day essentials like showering, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, and using deodorant. Also do not wear too much perfume or cologne as some people are allergic. You want to be known because of your skills and not your smell.

Dress appropriately for your working environment. You should confirm acceptable dress with your teacher if you are not sure. Remember, first impressions are made within the first 5 minutes of meeting someone.