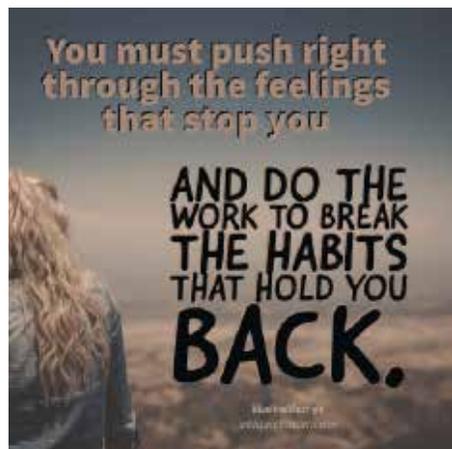


Stop hitting the snooze button and keep procrastination in check

By Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

It's as simple as pushing the snooze button, putting off studying or a work project, delaying bad news, or starting an exercise program: It's called procrastination and we've all experienced it in some form. Procrastination reportedly affects one in five people on any given day, and more than 25 percent of people admit to falling prey to chronic procrastination. It's a dreadful habit that can interfere with work, home life and social life. Procrastination can produce negative emotions such as anxiety, boredom, frustration and guilt.



Experts define procrastination as the voluntary act of delaying or putting off tasks until the last minute, or past their deadline. It's choosing to do more pleasurable things in place of less pleasurable ones. At its core, procrastination is the inability to take action and perform a task, despite the negative feelings associated with it.

Our natural reaction when confronted with negative emotions is avoidance. We may feel anxious, frustrated or bored when faced with a task and our response is to run away. By learning to recognize these emotions, urges and thoughts, we begin to realize that they're just feelings. They come and go. We've learned that how we react is far more important to the outcome than if we react. We can feel angry but act calmly. We can feel afraid but act courageously. We can feel discouraged but keep going. Taking action despite having feelings of failure, being uncomfortable or experiencing guilt is key to beating procrastination.

When we procrastinate, we allow our thoughts and emotions to control our behavior. If we want to beat procrastination, we need to find a better way of handling these feelings right when they're happening. We need to take action and loosen the grip our emotions and thoughts have on us. But how? One theory is through the practice of mindfulness.

According to a study in the International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology, mindfulness exercises can reduce the intention to procrastinate on a task one normally would avoid. As defined in the dictionary, mindfulness is "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations." Mindfulness is paying attention to our thoughts and feelings in the present moment. It creates an awareness of what's going on right now and allows us to make choices on how to proceed. Are we going to allow the negative feelings associated with a particular task to

(continued on page 2)



The SIA Staff wishes you and your family health, joy and peace this holiday season.



- Parenting and COVID-19
- SIA videos are available

Beat procrastination

(continued from page 1)

overwhelm us and therefore choose to procrastinate, or are we going to acknowledge the negative feelings and take action? Only when we create this feeling of awareness can we change something. With awareness comes choice. Once we see our thoughts, feelings and urges from a different perspective, we can choose a different response.

Mindfulness helps us take action despite negative emotions, first by raising our awareness to what is currently happening; second by giving us the choice to react to those negative emotions; and third by just letting them be. All in all, mindfulness as an antidote to procrastination can offer a number of benefits, including:

- Raising our awareness of being in the moment, allowing us to take action;
- Allowing us to act regardless of whatever emotions or thoughts we're experiencing, giving us the power of choice;
- Improving self-control and emotion regulation;
- Making us more self-compassionate, which reduces the fear of failure, guilt and perfectionism;
- Helping us tune out distractions, which provides focus and an increase in productivity.

Free EAP webinar for parents

Parenting through the trying times of COVID-19

During this unprecedented time of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many parents are struggling to navigate daily life. Health concerns, economic hardship, childcare/educational challenges, parenting while working, and uncertainty about the future are some of the crucial issues that have arisen. Many parents feel understandably overwhelmed. This program provides parents with practical tips and strategies for managing daily life in the face of the pandemic, and offers support to enhance the emotional well-being of participants and their families.



Let's face it, we sincerely want to complete projects on time, take better care of ourselves and study harder, but because these tasks elicit negative emotions or make us feel uncomfortable, we continue to hit the snooze button. The key to beating procrastination is not to get rid of negative thoughts and emotions, but to act in spite of them. We need to learn to do the task whether we feel like it or not. By cultivating our "mindfulness muscle," we can become aware of when we're about to procrastinate, accept our negative thoughts and emotions, and then act on them.

Resources:

Procrastination Facts (2018) <https://flowpsychology.com/procrastination-facts/>

Ho, L. (2020) What is Procrastination and How to Stop It. (The Complete Guide) <https://www.lifehack.org/669901/how-to-stop-procrastinating>

Schutte, N.S., del Pozo de Bolger, A. Greater Mindfulness is Linked to Less Procrastination. Int J Appl Posit Psychol 5, 1-12 (2020)

DEFEATING PROCRASTINATION

Mindfulness and meditation can be important skills in the procrastination toolbox. Stop hitting the snooze button and take action today by checking out SIA's own process for defeating procrastination on the SIA YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SIA4Kids/videos?>

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss current challenges and concerns faced by many parents
- Emphasize the value of having "reasonable" expectations
- Review ways to help your child if they're anxious about COVID-19
- Review safety precautions for kids when parents work outside the home
- Consider ways to see the upside during this time
- Offer self-care reminders



You can access this pre-recorded webinar from MHN here:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8748452692296061704>

SIA's 'Create Your Ideal Workstation' video is now available

SIA has created a short video to help you design a workstation that meets your needs. It includes tips on how to best set up your desk, make your seat comfortable and take best advantage of your break times. You can view the newest video on the SIA YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SIA4Kids>.



Exercise can aid your immune system in this COVID, flu and cold season

By Eric Thygesen, SIA Prevention Services

The immune system plays a large part in our ability to fight off viruses and bacteria. There are specific cells in our blood, like little soldiers, that fight off those foreign invaders. The immune system's response can be different depending on our current health at the time of an infection. For example, a person who's going through cancer treatments will have a weakened immune system and may be unable to fight off a virus. A person who has good health and no chronic illnesses will be much better equipped to fight off a virus. With the current times we live in, it's so important to keep our immune systems strong and ready to fight.



Social distancing is currently the best way to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Exercise also can be very beneficial in helping our immune system fight and protect us from viruses and

infection. We know that exercise protects us from developing chronic heart disease and other metabolic diseases, but there's been some research that specifically shows the benefits to our immune system response.

The immune system is a system of cells that work together to keep us free from infection and disease. Most of these cells travel through our bloodstream, scanning our body for infections, viruses or other foreign bodies. Exercise increases blood flow, which allows our immune cells to travel through the bloodstream where they're able to spread out and scan the body better and more efficiently.

"Each bout of exercise, particularly whole-body dynamic cardio-respiratory exercise, instantaneously mobilizes literally billions of immune cells, especially those cell types that are capable of carrying out effector functions such as the recognition and killing of virus-infected cells.... Particularly to the lungs and the gut where increased immune defense may be required."* The cells are circulating more frequently, meaning they're able to scan a larger area more quickly, making us more resistant to viruses and infection. Exercise also releases cytokines (messenger proteins) into the body. There are many different types of these proteins. Some direct the immune cells to where the infection is while others signal the body to produce more troops for the fight.

Currently we're in a pandemic and a flu season, so it's even more important to take time in our lives for exercise. This can be a challenge for some because of a lack of access to gyms and parks, or just because of a fear of being around other people. Studies have shown that exercise not only boosts the immune system, it also helps counter the negative effects of isolation and confinement, such as quarantine.

"Not only can exercise have a positive direct effect on the cells and molecules of the immune system, it's also known to counter the negative effects of isolation and confinement stress on various aspects of immunity. Although no scientific data currently exists regarding the effects of exercise on coronaviruses, there is evidence that exercise can protect the host from many other viral infections, including influenza and rhinovirus (another cause of the common cold)."*

Some research involving astronauts has shown the benefits of exercise in isolation and confinement. The studies showed that the astronauts who had better cardio fitness and muscular endurance before a six-month mission to the International Space Station were less likely to reactivate the herpes virus during the mission. They also were less likely to infect others while on the mission. The astronauts who had lower cardio and muscular fitness were more likely to reactivate the virus during the mission. "Viral reactivation is a global indicator that our immune system has been weakened, which, in this context,



we believe to be largely due to the stressors associated with isolation and confinement. This research indicates that exercise, in addition to the aforementioned direct effects it can have on cells and molecules of the immune system, may be an effective stress-induced countermeasure to help maintain immune function and lower infection risk."*

COVID-19 spreads through human contact, so stay safe and healthy out there by wearing your masks. Hopefully what comes from this current health challenge is an awareness that we all need to focus more on health and not take it for granted. Exercise, good nutrition and sleep can help keep illness at bay.

(continued on page 4)



- Free webinars and trainings
- WeTip works

Free webinars and online trainings

SIA's Leadership Academy:

SIA's Leadership Academy is a collection of courses offered through the year, each designed to help managers become more competent and confident leaders.

For more information about the Leadership Academy, or to be added to the contact list, email Michele Mariscal at mmariscal@sia-jpa.org or Lisa Konarski at lkonarski@sia-jpa.org.

Upcoming Sessions:

November 20 - Managing People with Diverse Styles and Temperaments

December 4 - Creating a Psychologically Safe Workplace

January 21 - Dare to Lead

EAP Trainings:

Through our EAP provider MHN, SIA is offering a variety of free webinars that are open to all SIA member district staff. Each session will be offered twice on the day indicated, first at 9 a.m. and then at 2 p.m.



The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.

Upcoming Trainings:

11/4: Workplace Communication in the Digital Age

11/18: Enhancing Wellness through Resilience and Work-Life Balance

Financial Education Webinars:

To assist with personal financial education, SAFE Credit Union is offering free webinars for SIA school district member employees. All sessions will be from noon to 1 p.m. The next session will be:

November 4 - Smart Holiday Shopping

To register for an MHN or SAFE Credit Union session, visit the SIA website at www.sia-jpa.org or contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org.

Boost your immunity

(continued from page 3)

These things may not totally protect us from COVID-19, the flu or other viruses, but combined they can provide an important extra line of defense. I personally hope that this crazy time creates more research and innovation into exercise and immunity, with the result that ultimately we'll all be healthier.

*Reference:

Simpson, R. J. (2020, March 30). Exercise, Immunity and the COVID-19 Pandemic. American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). <https://www.acsm.org/home/featured-blogs---home-page/acsm-blog/2020/03/30/exercise-immunity-covid-19-pandemic>

Use WeTip

For more information

contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or 916-364-1281, ext. 1256.



WWW.WETIP.COM

1-800-78-CRIME

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 37 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Kings Canyon, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, Visions in Education Charter, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Martin Brady; President — Keyshun Marshall, Sacramento City USD; Vice President — Robert Whittenberg, El Dorado Union HSD; Secretary — Michael Bogaard, Elverta Joint SD; Prevention Services Director/ Communications — Lisa Tremewan-Konarski; Newsletter: CG Communications

www.sia-jpa.org ©2020