Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Getting the Most from Your Leisure Time

Between family, job and household responsibilities, leisure time can often feel like a rare luxury. Learn to enjoy leisure time to its fullest by organizing, learning to say no, deciding what you like to do and making specific plans for enjoyment. With so much going on in life, leisure time is often the first thing to get dropped. Scheduling time for it each week can ensure it plays the important part in your life that it warrants.

Tips and Tools You Can Use

Don't feel guilty about making leisure time a priority. Leisure time provides a chance to unwind, revitalize and maintain social and family connections. It's important for health and for maintaining loving family relationships. Here are some great tips to help you enjoy it:

Organize your time. There is generally limited time for leisure, so it makes sense to organize it. Instead of letting household chores spread out over the weekend, try taking care of them right away. Do the things you like the least, first. It's easier to enjoy your leisure time when you can devote yourself to it.

Learn to say "no." If you find it hard to make time for yourself, learn to say "no" to others who make demands of your time. Decide what's important to you and let other things go.

You don't have to feel guilty about not doing everything. This way, when you do say "yes," others will know that you really mean it.

Make a list. Reflect on some of the things you would like to do if you had the time. Would you like to read a good book, learn a new skill or take up a new hobby? Listing things you want to do will give you more incentive to make time for them.

Think about what you need to do in order to enable you to participate in the things you want to do.

Make specific plans. The amount of time eaten up by just answering the phone or sitting idly in front of TV can be shocking. There is a place in your leisure time for these things—but not for just "killing time." Make a date with your partner to walk in the park. Schedule time to learn a new skill or hobby. If necessary, dedicate time to read a book or relax in the garden. This is your time—make it a priority!

Leisure time is precious. It should also be enriching and rejuvenating. By starting with the advice above, you can begin to make the most of much-needed time for yourself.
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