

August is American Adventures Month - Travel Opportunities Abound

The
EAP is a free
service for you and
your eligible family
members.

All EAP services are
completely
confidential.

It's time to discover new places, and new kinds of vacations. Decide what you want, then calculate how to get the most for your money. If you've been watching the economy for months on end, you deserve a break.

The seven seas are calling

With lower fuel prices, cruise lines can make attractive offers. They are coming up with all kinds of deals. Cruises are convenient. You only have to unpack once, and if you really want to rest up, dine formally, or play for pennies, you never have to leave the ship.

Three Web sites can help you decide what you want in a cruise.

- CruiseCritic.com offers reviews boat-by-boat and port-by-port, evaluating cruise lines and itineraries and providing recommendations.
- ShoreTrips.com offers links and reviews of shore excursions offered by local firms, which may be cheaper or better than those offered by the cruise line.
- To check the sanitary record of a ship you are considering, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site at www.cdc.gov.

Other Travel Tips:

- For the lowest possible seat price, consider buying from a consolidator like AirlineConsolidator.com. They take seats airlines don't think they can sell and offer them at big discounts.
- Search for the best airline ticket prices. Check Kayak.com, a fare-search site that checks lots of different vendors from airlines themselves to online travel agencies like Orbitz.com and Travelocity.com.
- Check the weather. Always check the weather before your flight takes off. Fly.faa.gov offers a map with current information about the status of major airports and what other problems they could be encountering.
- To avoid a long delay at an airport, sign up for flight alerts from your airline or at FlightStats.com. See if your airline can re-route you away from the trouble spot. ⚙



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How Well Are You Balancing Work and Family?

Some people compare their busy lives to a giant jigsaw puzzle. The whole picture is complete when all the parts fit smoothly together. How well do the pieces of your life fit together? This quiz will help you assess whether you need to fine-tune your work-family balancing skills.

At Home

Is your family satisfied with the amount of time you spend with them each week?

Yes No

Does your family have regular meetings to discuss chores, errands and other family topics?

Yes No

Do you communicate your expectations about household responsibilities in a positive way?

Yes No

Do you plan and prepare meals in advance?

Yes No

At Work

Do you have long-term career goals?

Yes No

Do you understand and agree with your employer's expectations of you?

Yes No

Is the number of hours you spend at work sufficient to complete your job?

Yes No

Is your income sufficient to support you and your family?

Yes No

Leisure Time

Do you follow a regular exercise program?

Yes No

Have you taken a vacation in the last year?

Yes No

Do you take time to develop your personal interests, such as gardening, crafts and education?

Yes No

Do you feel comfortable taking time for yourself, without your spouse or children?

Yes No

If you answered "no" to more than three of these questions, you may need to fine-tune your balancing act. Take some time to organize your home life and set long-term goals at work. ⚙️

Beat the Heat When Exercising Outdoors

Maintaining a regular exercise routine is important, even when those lazy days of summer make you want to drop everything and head for a hammock in the shade.

You can find the right summer exercise option for you, regardless of your fitness level or heat tolerance, but you should also take precautions to prevent potential problems such as sunburn, dehydration and sports-related injuries.

Don't overdo the sun

Most people believe it's safe to spend hours in the sun as long as they avoid getting sunburned. The truth is prolonged sun exposure can cause skin cancer and accelerate dehydration and fatigue, fitness experts say. To protect yourself, wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Drink lots of water to stay hydrated, wear loose clothing and pace yourself.

The skin is the largest organ in the body, and sunburn elevates skin temperature. This temperature elevation, combined with the body heat you generate while working out, can lead to discomfort and even illness.



The biggest mistake people make when exercising in hot weather is to do too much too soon. If you're not physically prepared for an activity and push yourself too hard, you can end up with pulled muscles or heat-related illness.

Pay attention

The key to avoiding heat-related illnesses is to be aware of how your body feels and to drink fluids frequently. Don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink fluids. Don't ignore the warning signals of dehydration: feeling lightheaded, tingly, dizzy, short of breath or nauseous or having cramped muscles. Replacing water lost through sweating keeps your body temperature down and hydrates the skin and muscles, allowing you to work out longer and stronger, experts say.

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water before exercise and two afterward. Take sips throughout your workout, even if you don't feel thirsty. And though you don't dehydrate as quickly in water, you still need to drink fluids after swimming or participating in other water-based sports or activities.

One of the best ways to prevent heat-related illnesses is to exercise in the early morning or the early evening. Avoid working out between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest.

Have fun

Physical activity can improve your mood, so it's essential to choose an activity you enjoy rather than trying to force yourself to do something that makes you uncomfortable. If you just can't stand the heat, you can still swim in a lap pool or take a water aerobics class.

And if you're getting bored with your usual exercise routine, look for a new activity. In order to improve, you need to challenge your mind and your muscles by changing how you use them.

Set realistic goals

One of the great things about a sunny summer day or a week at the beach is the sense of freedom it can give you – as though you're capable of anything.

Even though the weather has changed, your overall conditioning hasn't. The biggest mistake people make when exercising in hot weather is to do too much too soon. If you're not physically prepared for an activity and push yourself too hard, you can end up with pulled muscles or heat-related illness. ⚙

Location, Location, Location

When purchasing a home, there are several factors that will guide you to the perfect home. Together with your Real Estate Agent, set out a list of priorities for your new home. How many bedrooms you will need, how much square footage you will need and how much property you would like your home on are examples of things you will need to prioritize before you begin your house hunt.

When reviewing your list of priorities, don't underestimate the importance of your new home's location. Take things into account such as your daily commute to work. Adding time and distance to your commute can cost you. Whereas shortening your commute will not only save you time, but will also save you gas and wear and tear on your vehicle. Also take

into account your friends and family. How important is it to you to stay close to them?

Look in a good school district. Surprisingly, this also applies even if you don't have children in school. When it comes time to sell your home, a strong school district is a top priority for many home buyers, thus helping to boost your property value.

Working with your agent on setting your priorities will go a long way in finding you the perfect home. To be connected with an agent in your community for a no cost, no obligation consultation, utilize the Home Ownership Benefit provided to you by your employer. Simply call Enhanced Benefits Group directly at 866-505-3244 or visit www.ebgi.org.
☼

Tips for Better Mental Health

For better mental health: try housework, gardening or play a sport.

Digging in the dirt has long been known as a way to relax and "let the world go away". The great thing about fooling around with plants: If it's your yard or garden, you can do whatever you want whenever you want and as fast or as slow as you want.

Now, researchers at the University College in London say organizing your space (not dishwashing or other routines) for about 20 minutes can have the same stress-busting effect. They found that engaging in a domestic project for just 20 minutes at a time on one to three days a week reduced the odds of psychological distress by 24 percent.

Sports activities showed the greatest psychological benefits and the clearest relationship between increased activity time and greater mental well-being.

Whether a physical activity is on the tennis court, in the garden, or in the house, it reduces mental distress. ☼

How to Use Your EAP

When help is needed call 1-800-433-2320. The office coordinator will ask for your name, employer and a brief description of your presenting concern. If an emergency exists you will be given immediate assistance. If your situation is not an emergency, you will be offered telephone assistance and/or in-person sessions to complete an assessment and make a referral for treatment if needed.

Meetings with your counselor are completely confidential. Your employer will not know you have used the EAP. No one will be provided any information about you without your written consent. Exceptions would occur only in the event of you being considered dangerous to yourself or someone else.

At the first appointment you should be prepared to give the counselor some background information to assist in formulating an action plan. Many people find it helpful to prepare a list of things they wish to discuss at each session.

PORTLAND:
503-639-3009

SALEM:
503-588-0777

If you live outside the Portland/Willamette Valley areas, call the toll free number listed below. You will be referred to a mental health provider in your area.

1-800-433-2320
www.cascadecenters.com



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direct your questions
or comments
regarding this newsletter
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