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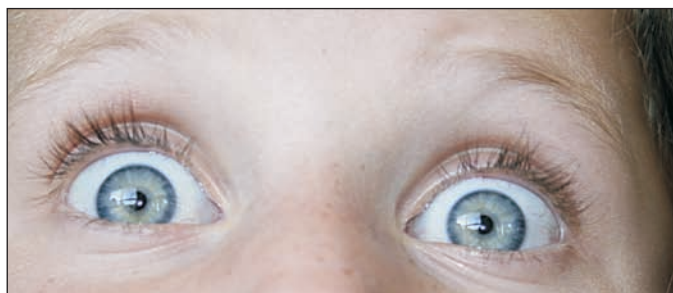
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Are you drinking enough WATER?

by Dr Neetash Patel

Water, one of our most abundant and abused resources, is one of the most essential nutrients for daily health. I often call it the elixir of life, as every cell craves, utilizes, deserves and requires it for existence. Lack of it is a primary cause of daytime fatigue. Why? Our body stores energy in a molecule called ATP (adenosine triphosphate). To release energy we must break down the ATP, which requires water. Not enough water, no breakdown, no energy.

Mild dehydration can slow the metabolism by up to 3%. Not such a huge number, but consider what a mere 2% drop in body water content does to our body—fuzziness in short term memory, trouble with basic math and difficulty focusing on computer screens and printed pages. A little water goes a LONG way. Not to mention, joints (and the fluids within the joints) move better without pain, muscles stretch further without injury, skin remains soft, full and clean, digestion and elimination is so much easier (things don't get clogged up and toxins don't build up) and a host of other maladies caused by depriving your body of this essential ingredient are readily avoidable. By drinking water regularly, did you know you can drastically slash the incidence and risk of colon, breast, bladder and prostate cancer?

A word about regular or common headaches...in simplest terms, your pain fibres wrap around your blood vessels. When we are dehydrated our brain lacks vital oxygen (remember way back to elementary science class where we learned water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen?) Our blood vessels expand to try and get more blood flow to the area; expansion means the pain fibres get stretched and our head 'aches'. Now, considering common OTC headache medications are mainly painkillers...how do you take them? With water. Ever stop to think that once we restore the hydration (and oxygen) balance, the blood vessels stop expanding, the pain fibres lose their stimulation and your headache goes away? Was it the water or the med?

An easy guideline to follow is to drink at least half your body weight in ounces (for example, a 150 pound person, should be drinking 75 ounces of water per day or divided by an 8 ounce glass...9½ glasses of straight, pure, unadulterated water!) Are you drinking enough water? 

Top Five Tips to Keeping a Healthy Existence

by Dr Neetash Patel

1. Creating the Habit

It is often said that doing something 20 times in a row will create a habit. I see in my practice, year after year, people making commitments particularly around New Year's that they can't keep or lose interest in very quickly. The secret to success is small, REALISTIC steps towards a healthy, attainable, sustainable existence. Instead of promising yourself to get to the gym five times a week, start with 10 pushups every day for a month, no matter what (no make-ups the next day, no excuses, just simply DO IT!) The habit of doing something will create itself and then you can push yourself a bit further next month.

2. Perseverance

Don't ever give up on yourself. Believe that you can reach your goal and live your life accordingly. Life happens, we all know that. Life moves forward and so should you. Perseverance is not easy; it takes work, discipline and patience. What is the alternative if we don't continue to try?

3. Variation


Boredom is a key component to throwing in the towel. Don't let this impede your ambition. Develop a new interest, try something different,

change but DO NOT stop. Try doing 10 pushups daily for February, in March do 40 crunches daily, in April walk around the block every night before bed. Not only is this vital to keeping you in the game, but it also forces the body to utilize different muscles for different activities. We begin to develop a more well-rounded body, have more activities to choose from and less chance of giving up.

4. Forgiveness

Wow, this is a big one and one that takes some work. Often we berate ourselves for missing our day at the gym, or eating that piece of cheesecake, or we have been up all night with sick kids and don't even have the strength to blink...it's okay. Everything in moderation, right? Missing one day doesn't break the habit. Every day is another new chance to be healthy. Take stock of what is important, prioritize and act accordingly. Some days, we just can't get it all done, so forgive yourself, don't give up, get some rest and do better tomorrow.

5. PMA (Positive Mental Attitude)

This, by far, is the most important to me. The sheer power of the mind is astounding. We can go from sadness to laughter with a mere thought. My dad used to preach about keeping a positive mental attitude to no end during high school and university days. I feel that every moment in our life is a choice; we can choose to think about all the transgressions against us, or focus on what we have to be grateful for. Keeping our spirits up, trying daily to put 'all of our worries into a box', and believing that sometimes good enough really is good enough is a tough but rewarding challenge. Life is much more fun and way easier when we are positive and happy. Think about it. 



Building an **Unshakable** **FOUNDATION**

The New Era of Core Training

by Mike Howard

Imagine learning a concept that can help prevent and alleviate lower back pain, allow for fluid and safe movement, improve posture, improve athletic ability, increase overall strength and make your waist appear a couple of inches smaller.

The concept in question is a phenomenon known as Core Training—an ubiquitous and yet enigmatic catchphrase that has been flying off the lips of fitness professionals for the better part of this past decade. It is a concept that when thoroughly understood and strategically applied can be beneficial to anybody. So let's explore what the core is, how to engage these muscles and how to integrate it into an exercise routine. It is important to remember that you are learning a model, not just a set of exercises. Learning how to properly use and develop these muscles takes patience, focus and practice.

The Core—a Workable Definition

There is no universally accepted definition of 'the core' and, as such, it has become a blurry area with many different interpretations. Think of the core as a centre point—the transitional centre of the body that acts to stabilize while allowing for optimal movement and function. It consists of the deep muscles of the abdominals, pelvis, lower back and diaphragm. I would also argue that the bigger more superficial muscles of the abdominals, lower back and the gluteals are also part of this symphony that helps provide a

stable base of support. In fact, it would be fair to say that every exercise you perform will, from here on, be a core exercise.

The Prerequisites

Before entering the core training program, it is important to first grasp a couple of key concepts. Properly engaging and stabilizing these muscles is dependant on the following principles:

Neutral Spine

This is the position of the spine where it is at its most efficient and best able to bear weight. In the lower back, it is a gentle inward curve. Take a look at your underwear band (preferably in the privacy of your own home). The label should be pointing straight ahead rather than on a downward angle. Recognize and adopt this position daily—especially while doing exercise.

Bracing

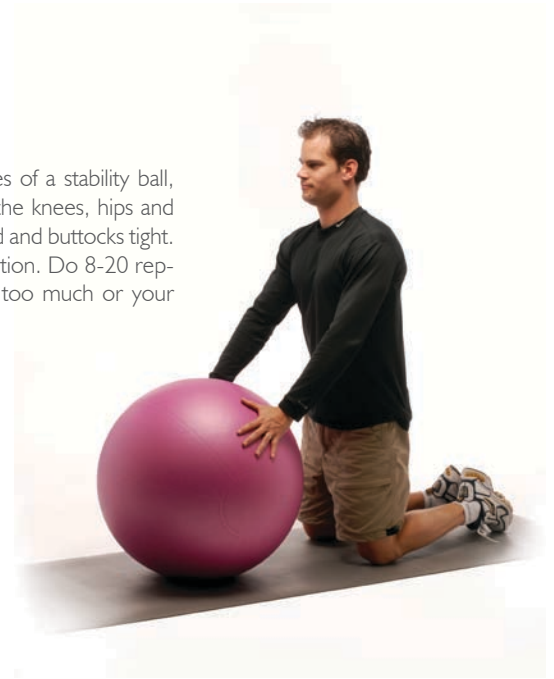
Bracing entails contracting all layers of the abdominal and lower back muscles to provide stiffness. Think about tightening the trunk without pulling the belly button inward—pretend you are about to get a punch to the stomach. Do this with a forced exhalation. You want to feel the lower back muscles contract as well. Practice this while standing (in a neutral spine).

The Program

Now that we have the basics covered, it's time to delve into the program. The first two exercises key in on the core area, while the other exercises promote core stability integrated into key movements. The idea is to get a well-rounded stimulation of the core.

1. The Prayer

Kneeling on a mat, hands placed firmly on the sides of a stability ball, spine neutral, bend forward at the knees, keeping the knees, hips and shoulders in a straight line. Keep core muscles braced and buttocks tight. Hold for a count of two, then return to starting position. Do 8-20 repetitions, or until you feel your lower back arching too much or your buttocks jackknifing (sticking up).



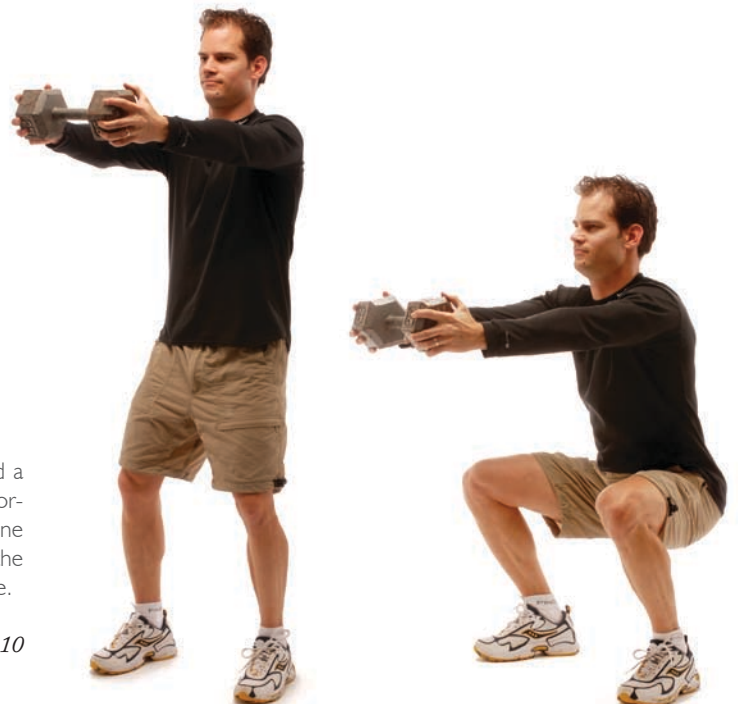
2. Side Plank

Balance on your forearm and the sides of your feet and raise your body up until there is a straight line from your ankle to your shoulder. Keep your neck aligned and your chin tucked in. Breathe continuously and hold for 15-45 seconds each side.



3. Front-Loaded Squat

Stand with feet at or slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Hold a dumbbell, plate or medicine ball at shoulder height, arms extended forward. Drop buttocks down to at least 90 degrees while keeping spine neutral and knees in line (not coming in or out and not moving past the toe of your shoe). Squeeze buttocks on the way up while you exhale.



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4. Single-Arm Dumbbell Presses

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, holding one dumbbell, palm forward at earlobe level. Keeping the hips even and the torso stable, push dumbbell up towards the ceiling until elbow is only slightly bent. Return slowly to starting position.



Program Parameters

Perform exercises # 1, 2 and 3 every day or every other day. Perform exercise #4 every second day at the most. Increase reps/time or weight as the exercise becomes easier.

Reminders, for all of the last sections

- The concept of core training may take time to learn—be patient and seek help if needed. Try a session or two with a Pilates instructor, knowledgeable personal trainer or physiotherapist for re-enforcement of the principles
- Be in a neutral spine position for all exercises
- Don't just 'do' the exercises—think about engaging (bracing) throughout each rep or second
- Focus on proper engagement rather than 'feeling the burn'
- Integrate core stability principles into other exercises and daily life (think about firing up the core while standing at the check-out line)
- If you are currently experiencing back pain, see a physiotherapist who can (amongst other things) teach more remedial core stabilization exercises ✓

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Bored Stiff

How to Fight Boredom

by Neil Parmar

Millions of men suffer from it every year: Boredom. And while it's not a diagnosable affliction—not yet, anyway—there are some easy ways to make life a little more interesting when times get dull. But there's more to it than merely finding something to do; you've got to first determine your personality type...

Although you wouldn't necessarily think it were true, bored men have some pretty fascinating stories to share—about what they've done when they're bored, that is. Take Patchen Barrs. When he was a reporter for the National Post, Barrs wrote in the newspaper that because he was bored he decided to get his hair professionally dyed—blue. Barrs wrote that nearly four hours after he walked into a salon (and \$160 later) his new hairdo “made me feel like a superhero, even if I was fighting boredom rather than crime.” In February, blogs were abuzz with news that a teenage boy in a small German town had tied himself to a foldaway bed—because he was bored, or so he later told the police when they had to help get him out.

Sure, these examples may seem extreme. But since the dawn of civilization men of all ages have experienced occasional bouts of boredom. And some have found, well, interesting strategies for coping with the feeling. Yet, depending on the personality type of the guy you speak with, you'll likely find a stark difference in the kinds of activities men would choose to participate in when they're suffering from boredom. An extrovert—someone who is generally sociable and interested in being involved in group activities—might try to stir some excitement in his life by taking a weekend trip with some buddies, or by doing something a little more low-key like enrolling in a non-credit course that focuses more on group work and discussions rather than a sit-and-listen lecture. In comparison, an introvert—someone who tends to be somewhat withdrawn and enjoys more solitary activities—may prefer to take a guided walk through a forest or a historic part of a city, or perhaps get involved in more rigorous exercise by taking a run or a swim.

Of course, the activity you would choose would depend mostly on your personality type and whether your mood beckons for something relaxing or a little more strenuous.

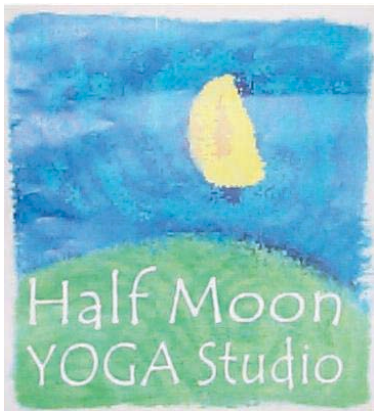
So the next time you're ever bored out of your mind or merely stymied about what it is that you could do with yourself, match yourself up to the appropriate personality type from the below categories (an extrovert or an introvert) and let your mood and budget help determine what you'd like to do during that particular moment in time.

The Extrovert Who...

Returns to School

A number of Canadian universities, understanding that there's a strange nostalgia for college days gone by, have created 'personal enrichment' classes for adults who want to continue their education beyond convocation. For only \$55, any adult can head to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and spend two hours a week for four weeks studying with other adult students...about beer. Colin Jack, one of the three classroom instructors who have been teaching this beer-tasting course for the past four years, says he uses PowerPoint presentations to delve into the various aspects of beer, ranging from marketing to economics to sociology and even the history of beer. And yes, he notes, there are taste tests provided in class.

Before you shrug off this academic offering as another excuse for guys to get together and down a few beers, consider the fact that you might walk away from class actually having improved both your mind and body. According to a 2004 study from the University of Western Ontario, researchers discovered that beer possesses the same health benefits commonly found in red wine. In fact, one drink of beer a day was, much like red wine, found to increase the antioxidant activity in the blood, which aids in preventing triggers of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and cataracts. Apparently, the body absorbs nearly the same amounts of special molecules known as polyphenols from both beer and wine, even though wine contains 20 times the amount of these ▶



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molecules than beer. Separately, a study published in *The Lancet* found that beer could help the heart because it contained vitamin B6, which prevents the build up of a chemical that is known to increase the risk of heart disease.

But before you crack open a can of Molson, it's important to note that while studies have demonstrated that one daily drink of nearly any alcoholic beverage can reduce risks of many aging diseases, consuming three drinks per day can actually have the reverse effect, thereby increasing the risk of getting the same diseases. So drink wisely, especially if you plan on doing so while cracking the books with your buddies at school.

Takes A 'Mancation'

If you're looking for group fun but aren't interested in socializing at school, you could always round up your buddies and take a so-called 'mancation' (think: man + vacation). Ladies, look out. Hotels and resorts, having taken a break from marketing those famous 'getaways for girls,' have recently begun creating men-friendly vacation packages, and ushering in the now popular mancation. Sure, it may sound like the latest marketing spin on an age-old social tradition courtesy of the tourism industry, but the word mancation actually first cropped up in the summer comedy *The Break-Up* starring Vince Vaughn. And it isn't the first time Hollywood has hinted at the growing popularity of men-only trips. A few years ago, the film *Sideways* received a lot of attention when two middle-aged buddies took to California's wine country, sipping on pinot noir.

Fast forward to today. If you and your buddy visit California's wine valleys and check into the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, you can both indulge in the 'Speed Meets Spa Package,' which pairs three days of racecar driving instruction with guy-friendly spa treatments—in a 40,000 square foot spa—to keep you relaxed. If you're looking for something within Canada, resorts like the Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello in Quebec offer off-road Land Rover adventures. Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, the Fairmont Chateau Whistler offers a three night special with a pair of two-day lift passes and buffet breakfasts each morning. The packages might sound a little gimmicky but there's nothing like taking a weekend of 'me' time when work gets stressful or you're feeling bored.

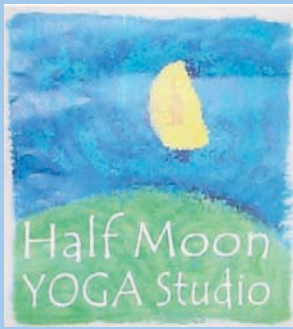
The Introvert Who...

Walks the line

Of course, not everyone wants an intense social outing even when they're fighting the most extreme bouts of boredom. Some merely want to get outside for some fresh air but want more of an individualistic experience, albeit with the adventures that come with travelling to a far away region. Guided hiking, backpacking and walking tours may be the solution here. They have proven to be popular, especially among middle-aged and elder men who have come to appreciate the quieter, quainter side of life.

The Great Canadian Adventure Company, an Edmonton-based outfit, customizes itineraries by providing experienced guides and finding comfortable accommodations without you having to do any of the legwork. There are leisurely walking tours in Canada's Atlantic region targeted at those who might want a relaxing cultural experience where they'd wander inn-to-inn. The Rocky Mountains, jutting between British Columbia and Alberta, is another hotspot, and many local guides can offer their insight of native fauna and flora. Then there's the Niagara walking tour along Bruce Trail which begins with a boat ride across Lake Ontario then later takes you around some of the vineyards in Ontario's wine country.

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by Samantha Lopeter-Lloyd
Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher/Owner Half Moon Yoga

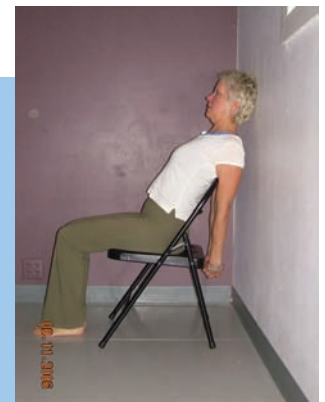
Experience Yoga in a Studio dedicated to the Discipline with a Teacher dedicated to the Art

Yoga can be a great way to relieve stress. Most of us are busy though, and sometimes the last thing we need to do is add something else to our schedule. We all tend to over-complicate our lives – making things harder than they need to be. The catch is to keep things simple, so that we're more willing to take the time to start making a difference. The problem is; 'simple' doesn't always mean 'easy'. And if the truth be known, most of us will take 'easy' – no matter where it may lead - any day. Taking some time to do a little yoga at home or work will go a long way to relieving stress and making life easier. Here's three poses that are simple and easy. They balance your energy, helping you to focus and relax:

Most of us spend most of our day with our arms in front of us; driving, typing, cleaning, pulling wrenches. If we don't reverse this habitual posture we can weaken the back, compress the chest and tighten the shoulders. Reverse the effects of your daily tasks by doing the following for 2-3minutes twice a day.

Chest Opener:

1. Sit in a chair with your back to the wall. Leave about a 12" gap.
2. Rest the back (not the top!) of your head on the wall (move closer to the wall if necessary). Drape your arms over the back of the chair and interlace your fingers. If your hands don't meet – use a belt or tie. Move your hips towards the front of the chair if your lower back feels tight.
3. Pull the hands down toward the floor, straightening the arms. Look into the centre of the room and breathe easily. As the shoulders loosen, the straight arms will be able to move towards the wall as well, increasing the stretch across the chest and mobility in the shoulder.



In addition to stretching tight muscles, this pose enhances your posture and allows you to breathe more deeply. After coming out of the pose, you can stay in the chair and do a simple twist. Twists also enhance the breath, clearing sinuses and stretching the intercostal muscles between the ribs. Take it easy in both of these postures if you have heart disease or injured shoulders.



Twist:

1. Sit with the right side of your body to the back of the chair, feet on the floor, knees together.
2. Wrap the heel of the left hand around the back of the chair to pull your left side towards the chair, open your right palm onto the back of the chair to push your right side away from the chair. Wait!
3. On an inhalation lift the chest, keeping the spine verticle. On the exhalation, rotate the belly from the left to the right. Move gently up the spine with each exhalation from the abdomen up to the shoulders using the push/pull of the hands on the back of the chair
4. At the top of the twist gently gaze over the right shoulder. Come back to neutral on an exhalation.
5. Repeat the same number of breaths on the left side.

The last pose can be done immediately following the above poses, or on it's own. This pose balances your energy, relaxing and restoring you.

Chair Savasana:

1. Lay on your back on the floor with your knees bent – calves resting on the seat of the chair
2. Have a pillow or folded blanket under your head so that the face is gently tilted towards the chest.
3. With each exhalation relax. Gently move your awareness through the body relaxing in each area as you go. Use this pattern: Head, throat, arms, hands, chest, belly, hips, legs, feet. Then just focus on your breath or perhaps some music. If your mind gets caught up in thoughts, focus on your body pattern again until the mind is calm. Return to the breath.
4. Stay 5-10 minutes



THE BEACON IN THE STORM

A Real Solution For Struggling Readers

Michelle Everett Faut
and Cheralyn Doell

Parents around the world celebrate their children's first attempts at speaking. As the sweet sounds of their baby's cooing and babbling graduate into meaningful words, parents are excited and amazed at the natural evolution and development of speech. The human brain is, in fact, hard wired to make sense out of sound. Our anatomy is such that speech sounds can be easily produced, unlike other species.

When children reach school age, most parents assume that reading and writing will develop as naturally as speaking. They believe that with some direct instruction from the teacher, their child will easily learn to read. What most of us do not realize is that reading is a learned process that does not develop as naturally as speaking. Reading is a code that must be explicitly taught. For a variety of reasons, many children have great difficulty cracking this code. When a child begins to struggle with literacy skills and traditional teaching approaches do not seem to work, parents are shocked, worried and at a loss as to how to help their frustrated child.

Thankfully, the emergence of Beacon Literacy, Canada's #1 reading specialists, is truly the safe haven for which parents and children have been searching. The Beacon Literacy Program is a new and innovative

**Reading is a code
that must be
explicitly taught**

way to overcome reading difficulties. The company is made up of a dedicated and empathetic group of specially trained instructors and leaders that strive for the highest quality in their programs, services and client relationships.

Beacon Literacy is now the most efficient and effective remedial reading program in Canada and the United States. Tens of thousands of children and adults have been taught to read effectively, through the Beacon Literacy Program. Lanni Donaldson, CEO and President of Beacon Literacy Canada explains, "We see an average improvement in reading rates equivalent to 2.6

grades in only 20 hours of instruction." The program offers hope for the future to children and adults, who have been frustrated by a lack of real solutions to their reading difficulties. "We take what we do very seriously," says Donaldson. "This is more than just a job for us." The Beacon Literacy staff is very passionate about helping both children and adults regain their self-esteem and conquer the reading difficulties that have interfered with their successes in life.

Lanni's enthusiasm for the program grew out of her own desire to help her dyslexic daughter to read. After years of trying different strategies and unsuccessful modifications to her daughter's school program, Lanni persevered in her search for more answers. She found them in a reading program developed by Canadian Chartered Psychologist, Philip MacMillan. Scientific research has shown that people learn and

**"We see an average
improvement in reading rates
equivalent to 2.6 grades in
only 20 hours of instruction."**

retain information quickly and more effectively when learning is undertaken in their own voice. This is called the "self-voice" learning approach. This learning approach helped Lanni's daughter to vastly improve her ability to make more efficient connections between sound and text. Philip and Lanni felt compelled to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of struggling readers. As a result, they founded Beacon Literacy in 2001. Philip MacMillan is now the Program Director for Beacon Literacy, and Lanni Donaldson heads up the Canadian headquarters out of Calgary, Alberta.

Yvonne Basten is the Vice President of Operations for Beacon Literacy Canada. Her vast international experience and multilingual capacity is

an incredible asset to the company. Basten says, "The Beacon Literacy Program can be used to teach reading skills in any phonetic language." In fact, the program can be used in conjunction with reading materials from any culture or subject. Yvonne Basten is an instrumental part of the team that is endeavoring to bring the Beacon Literacy Program to all struggling readers and ESL students in Canada. Their plans also include taking the program worldwide.

The empowerment and success that the Beacon Literacy Program has brought to so many people, is truly life changing. As one parent expressed, "...the rough seas are behind us now that we have found our beacon in the storm." The compassionate team of specialists at Beacon Literacy believes that literacy is a fundamental right to which all people are entitled and they are determined to bring literacy to the nation, one student at a time.

Beacon Literacy offers free, no obligation assessments. For more information, please call 403-283-3278 in Calgary, or toll free outside of Calgary at 1-866-270-4111.



Lanni Donaldson President and CEO
Yvonne Basten VP of Operations

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City lovers can learn to appreciate walking tours as well. Instead of merely wandering around downtown Toronto the next time you decide to waste some time in the provincial capital, connect with Muddy York Walking Tours to see how Canadian history, which is oftentimes “presented as being a dry and boring subject,” can actually be “a fun and exciting way to spend a few hours, whether you are a visitor to [Toronto] or a life long resident,” reads the company’s official website. Richard Fiennes-Clinton, the company’s founder, says he leads about half a dozen different tours around the city at any given time, which cost between \$7 and \$10 for adults.

Works—and tunes—out

As interesting as taking a guided walking tour might be, it may be too low-impact for some. Instead, certain men might prefer to be total soloists while taking part in more rigorous exercises. So why not tackle a spell of boredom by working out and going for either a run or a swim, while taking advantage of the latest in portable music players to tune out the world? It’s the next step up from mixed tapes and burned CDs, making it easier than ever to find modern-day technology to match the workout of the modern-day man.

Look no further than a recent venture between the companies Nike and Apple, which teamed up to create the Nike + iPod. This device pairs a sensor in your running shoe with a receiver on your iPod nano so that you can see the minutes and miles wind down and hear both real-time feedback and your favourite tunes while you improve your cardiovascular fitness. When you’re finished your workout you can transfer all of the data to the Internet so that you can analyze your performance and assess your goals by checking your speed, distance and how many calories you’ve burned. While the tunes no doubt stimulate your mind and at the very least help distract you from the rigors of running, the Center for Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery

in California contends the act of running itself will assist in reducing stress, controlling your weight and may actually decrease the risk of degenerative joint disease.

And if running isn’t of interest, you could always pocket a portable MP3 player and either go cycling or hit the gym. Or try the latest thing that’s taking some pools by storm: performing laps while listening to songs underwater. The company FINIS, founded by an Olympic gold medalist, sells (for around \$200) its waterproof SwiMP3, an underwater MP3 player that the company claims transfers sound vibrations from the cheekbone to the inner ear “with exceptional sound clarity.” Now if that alone doesn’t entertain you for at least a little while, you might want to try dyeing your hair...the colour blue. 

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10 Things Every Man Should Know About His Health



(but doesn't really want to think about)

by Dr Kimberley Foster

So you accidentally cut your hand with a bread knife. It seems to be bleeding quite a lot, actually...and, well, now your fingers are feeling a bit numb...trouble is, you're watching the Super Bowl on TV and, unlike most years, it's a great game. What do you do?

If you're like many men, you ignore that pesky laceration and go to the hospital only after they've handed out the Vince Lombardi Trophy. Think I'm joking? Sadly, I'm not. A recent study in Baltimore found a significant increase in the number of men admitted to emergency after major televised sporting events, and a drop in normal numbers during game time.

Men are notorious for avoiding the doctor, and not just because of sports. Well, it's time to re-think that because we're going to plunge right into the truly nasty stuff. Like erectile dysfunction. And colon cancer. So get ready—it's not going to be pretty.

1. Prostate Disease

The prostate gland is, in many ways, a man's Achilles heel. It seems like any number of things can go wrong with this wretched organ. It becomes enlarged in Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). It becomes inflamed or infected in prostatitis.

But the biggie that everyone worries about, of course, is cancer. We usually begin screening at age 50. Commonly used screening methods are the digital rectal exam (that's digital as in finger, not as in watches and clocks), and the PSA.

PSA stands for prostate-specific antigen, and it's a blood test. Unfortunately, it's not a perfect test, and many men will receive false positive results. That's a positive result—which means you'll likely go on to further investigation, including biopsies—despite the fact that you don't actually have cancer. Clearly, more research is needed on prostate cancer screening. In the meantime, what's a man to do?

For starters, sit down and chat with your doctor to discuss the pros and cons of screening. Know your family history and be on the lookout for unusual symptoms such as blood in the urine, a weak flow, difficult or frequent urination, especially at night.

2. Heart Disease

Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of men which definitely qualifies as something you shouldn't ignore.

Take stock of your risk factors. The major ones are: high blood pressure, older age, diabetes, smoking, family history, elevated cholesterol, obesity, and a sedentary lifestyle. You'll notice

that some of these risk factors are under your control. Some aren't. Work on those that are fixable.

You should also know the symptoms of heart disease, chest pain being the most common. And when we say pain, this can be a pressure, a tightening, a heavy feeling...not what you might describe as pain at all. Heart-related discomfort can also radiate to the jaw, arms or back. Other associated symptoms may be: shortness of breath, sweating, nausea, palpitations, and lightheadedness. Anything along these lines warrants an immediate trip to the doctor.

If you develop heart disease, there's a lot to be done these days. From simple interventions like an aspirin a day, to full-blown bypass surgery. Bottom line? You'll be in good hands, so long as you get checked out.

3. Colorectal Cancer

Nobody likes to think about this one but it's a reality of life; it ranks as the third most common form of cancer in Canada. Risk factors include: age, smoking, drinking, and a poor diet. A family history of polyps or cancers of the colon, breast, ovary, or endometrium will also raise your risk. Watch for signs. Don't ignore blood in the stool, a persistent change in bowel habits, a feeling of incomplete emptying, or chronic fatigue. See your doctor with any of these concerns.

Early detection is important. Caught early enough, colorectal cancer can be cured entirely. Screening usually starts at age 50. A hemoccult test, checking for hidden blood in the stool, is the simplest screening method.

Sigmoidoscopy is another screening method. Yes, this is a lighted tube inserted up your, ahem, rear-end. It looks at the lower colon for cancer or polyps. If there's anything suspicious, a colonoscopy is then done.

Say the word 'colonoscopy' and most people break out in a sweat but it's probably not as bad as you're imagining. Dying from cancer, likely, is worse. Besides, they offer you sedation for the procedure.

4. Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease. It's important to know what your levels are, including a breakdown of HDL (the protective stuff) and LDL (the harmful stuff). Get a baseline blood test when you're young, then get rechecked every five years—more often if you have other heart disease risk factors.

To prevent cholesterol problems, care for your body. Exercise regularly and aim for a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fat. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats—found in olive oil, nuts, and fish—are a good thing.

Sometimes a crummy cholesterol profile just won't budge, despite your best efforts. That's because cholesterol metabolism is partly controlled by hereditary factors. This is where medication comes in; it can make an enormous difference.

5. Erectile Dysfunction

Hey—at least we don't call it impotence anymore. And, just so you know, it's quite common. The Viagra people are definitely not going hungry.

Occasional difficulty with erection is practically ubiquitous, but if you're having trouble more than 50% of the time, you need to be assessed for ED. This feared condition can affect men of any age, but it's more common in older age groups. A variety of causes can underlie the problem: hypertension, diabetes, smoking, neurological disease, and psychological issues like performance anxiety, stress, fatigue and depression. Erectile dysfunction is not, by the way, the same thing as low sex drive or problems with ejaculation.

Treatment is tailored to your particular issues and may include medication, sex therapy, penile injections, surgery, or lifestyle changes like quitting smoking. See your doctor for an assessment and to discuss options. And don't be shy. An awkward visit with your doctor is far preferable to...well, you know.

6. High Blood Pressure

Pay attention here: you do not feel high blood pressure. So no more staying away from the doctor because you feel 'just fine, thank you very much'.

We call blood pressure the silent killer which should give you an idea how serious it is. Uncontrolled hypertension leads to heart disease, strokes and kidney failure.

Basically, you need to get screened. Get assessed early and regularly. A healthy diet and regular exercise helps keep blood pressure in a safe range. So does reducing your salt and alcohol intake. Dropping a little weight—even 10 pounds—will lower blood pressure. Then, if all that's not enough, medication can work wonders on stubborn blood pressure.

We like to see blood pressure below 140/90. If you have diabetes or kidney disease, it should be even lower: 130/80 or less.

7. STDs

If it's burning when you pee, you're probably thinking: this just can't be a good thing. And you're right. Although other possible explanations exist, there's a good chance you've got a sexually transmitted disease. So you need to zip over to your doctor and get tested.

The nasty truth? STDs abound in our society. There's a spectrum of delightful infections to choose from: chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital warts, genital herpes, syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. Some of them are easily cured; others have no cure. It's not uncommon for a person with an STD to experience few or no symptoms, which means they can unknowingly pass it on.

So, some important points. Use a condom—every time. And, get screened regularly if you have multiple partners. Speaking of those partners...untreated chlamydia or gonorrhea can lead to major complications in women, like pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. If you discover you have an STD, do the decent thing and let your partner know, so she (or he) can be treated too.

8. Diabetes

Diabetes afflicts over two million Canadians. The vast majority of these have Type II diabetes, commonly thought of as adult-onset. Symptoms may include excessive thirst, frequent urination, weight changes, fatigue, or vision changes. In the long-term, diabetes leads to major complications: blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, nerve damage. Things you can do without, I'm sure.

Continued on page 19

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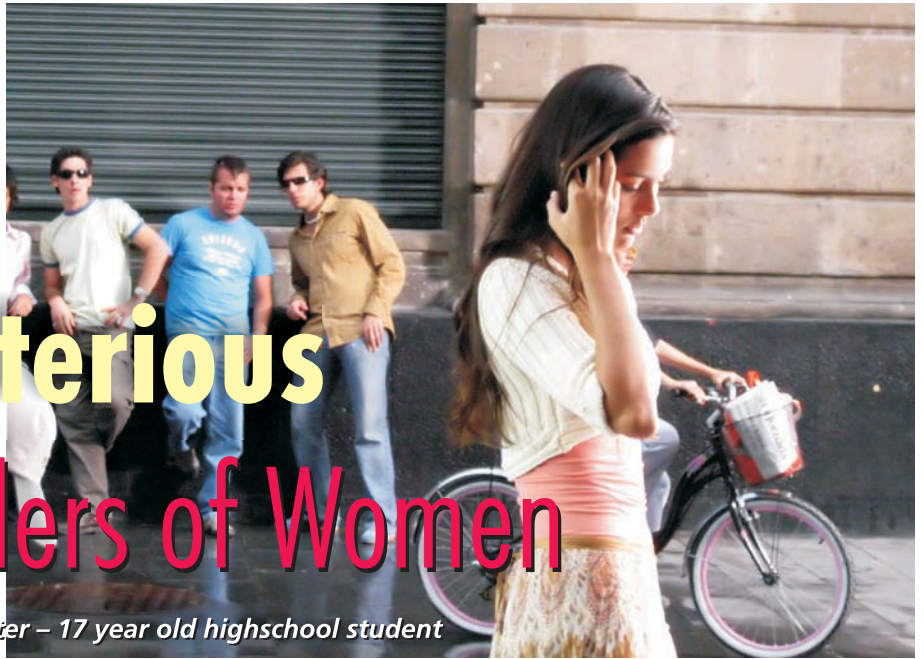
To a Best Bud

by Leeanne Haines
- 17 year old highschool student

To me you are everything
To me you are amazing
To me you are incredible
I only wish you could know
Just how much you mean
To Me
You are my world
Sometimes foggy
But always strong
And full of life
My words can not even begin
To describe how I feel about you
You're always there, no matter what
And I know you'll be there till the end
So to you my friend
I write this just to say
my quick thank you...
Thank you for just being there
My friend you are the best
And this I will remember
Until I am laid to rest
Friends forever and for Always.

The Mysterious Wonders of Women

by Cora McCalister - 17 year old highschool student



The mystery of a woman... still a mystery. Sorry fellas, but even though you may think you know a woman, we will keep you wondering, or a little confused for that matter, until death. But this wouldn't be an article if I didn't try to ease your hunger for a better grasp of the female psyche.

Question 1: *Why do woman always think they can change a man?*

If we're trying to change you, we obviously like you, but selfishly we want you to be perfect, so that our friends and parents can say "Wow". But, we also try to scavenge hope from every guy or "project" we fall for, to maintain motivation that you could really be the man of our dreams.

Question 2: *What's up with carrying a purse 24/7?*

Hell with it, I'm just going to be blunt. We're girls! That purse contains a small fraction of our lives... but most importantly, what girl wants to carry a tampon, noticeably, in her hand or pocket all the way to the bathroom?

Question 3: *Why do women have to go to the bathroom in pairs? What do we talk about in the bathroom anyways?*

Many reasons! One: We had to take a pee break, but didn't want to stop the conversation for half a minute. Two: We need a second opinion on how we look, make up and hair approval and if our shirt looks weird... seriously. Women usually talk about the guys or vent about other girls. We talk about new hairstyles and the latest gossip about the girl due in February. Anything can be brought up in the bathroom.

Question 4: *Why do women constantly have their cell phones flipped open?*

We are obsessed with texts and missed phone calls. We always check to make sure we aren't missing out on certain conversations, or maybe it's the fact we always have something to tell someone every minute of the day, and the cell phone just helps us along.

Question 5: *Why are girls so emotional? Why can't we just bottle it and bury it forever?*

If we buried it you might as well let us be *one of the guys* who has weird growths on our chests. Tears can happen either because of physical pain, or we put everything we had into something and it failed us. But really, if you think about it, most emotions that burst from a girl are because she put everything she had into something or someone, and they either failed her or exceeded her expectations. You can't be mad that we like to cry over silly things, but imagine if we did bottle up our emotions... that bottle, guaranteed, is going to explode, and I feel very, very sorry for the man who's in her path.

Well, your five top questions answered... I hope! But please, without hesitation, e-mail any questions or article ideas you would like to read about in our next article to: checkup@shockware.com. ✓

The fact is, many people show no obvious symptoms. Fortunately, a simple blood test is a good screening method. Testing usually starts at age 40 and is repeated every three years but you should start earlier and be tested more often if you're at high risk—if you're overweight, for example, or have diabetes in your family.

Diabetes, once diagnosed, is managed with a combination approach—lifestyle modification, weight control, medication, exercise and education.

9. Testicular Cancer

Think cancer is something only older men need to worry about? Think again. Although rare, testicular cancer is a young man's disease—it's the most common form of cancer in men ages 15 to 34. A history of undescended testes raises your risk. If caught early, there's a high potential for cure.

What you should do is check yourself regularly. How? Gently, but firmly, roll each testicle between your thumb and fingers, feeling for abnormal masses or lumps. If you're not sure what you're checking for, ask your doctor to show you how to do a self-exam. Yes, even if (horror of horrors) your doctor is female.

10. Infertility


Although infertility is often lumped in with women's health issues, it's a man's concern as well. In

a third of infertility cases, male factors alone are responsible.

So what provokes male infertility to strike? The long list of potential causes includes insufficient testosterone and childhood infections, especially mumps. The most common culprit, perhaps, is a varicocele. Like varicose veins around your testicles, a varicocele seems to raise testicular temperature, which hinders sperm production.

If you and your partner have been trying to conceive for one year without success, see your doctor for a complete assessment. In the meantime, are there simple things you can do to raise your chances? You bet.

Avoid things that elevate scrotal temperature. Hot tubs, for example. Tight jockey shorts or perching a laptop computer on your lap may also heat things up. Quit smoking. This nasty habit appears to lower sperm count. Trim down. Research has recently demonstrated a link between male infertility and obesity. So get in shape. Besides, you're going to need all the energy you can get, when it comes time to chase after that toddler.

You're now armed with a little more knowledge. You've got some stuff to get tested and a list of symptoms you shouldn't ignore. So...next time you're sick, developing a peculiar rash, or bleeding half to death, do yourself a favour and get checked out. Now. Not at half-time. 

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joint pain or inflammation
constipation or diarrhea
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hormonal imbalances
digestive difficulties
anxiety and stress
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GREG GARVAN

Got a Life

by Sharon Crawford

Last year Greg Garvan went from hero to zero.

"I thought I was invincible," says the 51-year old former Polo Canada Field Director. "I played polo, basketball and rode horses." The latter was a habit since he was two years old and growing up on a sheep and cattle farm in New Zealand. He also ran a horseshoe business from the four-acre Okotoks, Alberta property he shares with his wife, Lynne Steele. Life as he knew it bit the dust last year when Greg couldn't move. Eventually doctors would diagnose him with POEMS syndrome, but not before several misadventures in medical land.

POEMS, a very rare multi-system disease, is an acronym for Polyneuropathy (peripheral nerve damage), Organomegaly (unusual organ enlargement), Endocrinopathy (diseased hormone-producing glands), Monoclonal gammopathy or M proteins (produces edema), and Skin abnormalities (hyper pigmentation, thickening). It is also called Crow-Fukase syndrome, Takatsuki syndrome or PEP syndrome and hits more men than women (both in their 50s or 60s). There are only about a dozen people diagnosed with this disease in the whole of Canada. POEMS isn't fatal, but healing depends on early detection and lifelong follow-up treatment.

Greg's shebang of symptoms began four years ago with pain in his left hip and lower back. He thought it was arthritis. Then, "In the summer of 2003, I couldn't stand even to walk on grass." He managed to drive across Canada for Polo Canada. He also had edema (swelling of an organ or tissue due to accumulation of excess lymph fluid) in his feet, and then his hands swelled and became gnarled.

In Greg's case, the ultimate diagnosis was slow. The first x-ray showed a shadow in his right femur (thighbone). In April 2004 he had an Elec-

tromyography (EMG) test to determine the physiologic properties of his muscles during movement and at rest. His neurologist stuck a needle into his muscle tissue. The good news was he didn't have Guillain-Barre Syndrome where the limbs become weak, painful and sometimes paralysed. The bad news was they thought it might be the neurological disorder called Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy. With CIDP, the legs and arms become weak and lose their sensory function because the myelin sheath protecting the peripheral nerves is damaged. Greg had to physically look down to *find* his lower limbs.

The neurologist admitted him to the hospital for a week. "He ran a bunch of tests on me and had this blank look on his face," says Greg. CIDP wasn't ruled out and the doctor started him on gamma globulin for his immune system, which required two days a month in hospital. However, he kept working. In May 2004, his doctor put him on Predisone, a steroid, an anathema for a sports coach. "I wasn't very happy about it," says Greg, who took the drug for almost eight months.

Greg's body became stiffer, but he managed to climb on his horse and ride. He also took another cross-country trip for Polo Canada. That fall he spent \$600 for a naturopathic doctor to hook him up to a computer for a diagnosis. Still no answers. By December, "I was walking with a walking stick. I was tripping and falling." He started using a wheelchair. The edema worsened. So did Greg's stress level.

The next year turned into a banner year for bad news. In March 2005, his poor health contributed to the abrupt ending of his employment with Polo Canada.

Greg Garvan's tips to deal with rare diseases

- Be more pro-active with your doctors—tell them what you need; it's a team process so ask your doctor questions
- Educate yourself on your disease—there are answers out there
- Take control of your destiny
- Don't get excited—slow down
- Live one day at a time—there is no quick fix
- Simplify things

The emotional ride continued to bump along when more tests showed the shadow on his femur had increased in size. The doctors also thought he had an enlarged kidney so he was admitted to another hospital. On May 17th, an open biopsy on his femur showed a large lesion.

The doctors ruled out CDIP and then, finally, Greg was diagnosed with POEMS syndrome, with three of the symptoms—the P, M and S of this auto-immune condition. Now Greg had something to work with. But the journey back to health contained land mines. The doctors put him on 25 days of radiation. His weight plummeted from 220 pounds to 150 pounds.

"I went from walking to doing nothing," he says. He had to wear hand braces because he'd lost most of his hand movement. "I could just feed

myself." He was now in a wheelchair. "I didn't have the strength to hold myself up."

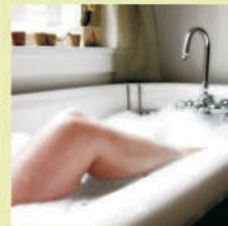
Back home, the disasters kept pouring in. "The house got flooded twice during the June flood and we lost the basement twice," he says. "It was pretty stressful and I felt helpless because I was always a person who did things for everybody else."

Enter the Okotoks community—population 16,500. An auction was held on his behalf at Bar U Ranch. Lynne's 4H Club ran a silent auction and collected donations. That helped both financially and in boosting his spirits.

The long road of rehabilitation began with the support of many fellow patients, family and friends. After four months, he was checked out of the hospital. "Too soon," Greg figured. His care continued at the South Care Clinic where he received intensive physiotherapy to stretch his body—the muscles and his hands—to stimulate them.

Feeling frustrated with the lack of progress with his traditional healthcare, Greg became more pro-active and took healing into his own hands and followed his own belief. "I've got this condition. I've got to get over it and get on with my life."

He tackled the time factor by micro-managing doctors' appointments. He still regularly sees a neurologist, an orthopaedic surgeon, a haematologist and a sports medicine doctor. He's retraining his body to open up and not let the upper body support the lower. He self-medicates with whey protein, which he says helps build up the glutathione in the body. Glutathione is an antioxidant containing three amino acids: cysteine, glutamate and glycine, and is best known for preventing cells from free radical damage. Greg ▶



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takes vitamins and minerals, particularly calcium, and vitamins C, E and D. The latter helps regulate the central nervous system and immune system. His supplements also include lipoic acid, an antioxidant which helps fight free radicals, and co-enzyme 10, a digestive and immune aid. He stopped eating beef and instead eats elk and bison, locally-grown vegetables, and drinks plenty of water and juice.

He also began reading books and watching movies on healing alternatives. He experienced a personal epiphany while watching the 1998 Robin Williams movie *Patch Adams*, based on a true story of a doctor who combined traditional medicine with humour to heal. The movie reaffirmed his belief that health care "is about the patient, not the administration." Greg says all medical professionals should watch the movie every six months.

His body still reacts to temperatures; this is connected to his nerves. "When it's cold my body tightens up; when it's warm my body is much freer." He still tires, but his strength has increased; he now walks without any help, and "I'm riding my horse every now and then."

This year Greg Garvan got on with his life. ✓

Common Symptoms with POEMS

(Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/poems/symptoms.html>)

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Swelling of the ankles and legs (edema)
- Enlarged breast tissue (both men and women)
- Generalized aches and pains
- Fluid collecting in abdomen and lungs
- Increased blood cell counts
- Vision changes

Treatment for POEMS

(source: Mayo Clinic <http://www.mayoclinic.org/poems/treatment.html>)

- Radiation
- Physical therapy
- Corticosteroids
- Bone marrow transplant
- Hormone replacement
- Chemotherapy
- Nerve damage treatment

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Swim or Sink

Surviving office politics

by Richard Hart

Say the words ‘office politics’ and watch grown men wince. Why is that?

“Office politics is everything that’s bad about working in a group,” says Ben, an associate in a mid-sized professional firm. “You know, all the rules that you’re supposed to pick up on without anyone telling you straight out, like who it’s okay to hang around with, when you’re supposed to stay late in order to ‘be seen’, who to suck up to...it drives me crazy. All I want to do is come to work, do my job, and go home.”

“I agree,” says Wu, a computer developer who has recently started with a new employer. “I hated every day of working at my last job. My manager was a real stickler. She’d act all nice when things were going her way, but you couldn’t disagree with her. It was, ‘my way or the highway’; if she thought you were challenging her, she’d talk right over you, or go all frosty, or ridicule you and your ideas in front of everyone. Everyone played along. Just button it, or your day would be hell, or worse, you might not have a job.”

Antoine, a nurse, has worked with 10 women on a ward for the last three years. “Man, it can make you nuts. I mean, you never know till you walk in who’s in trouble today, who’s getting the silent treatment, who’s ‘out’. I like a lot of my co-workers as individuals, but as a group they’re dangerous. The way they all talk about each other, it makes me really uncomfortable. I try to not get involved, to just keep out of it, but that doesn’t help; then they just think you’re aligned with the ‘other side’ and start in on you.”

Guys often talk as if office politics is some sort of malevolent force, or a dangerous landscape that they are forced to walk through on a daily basis. Is this a healthy way of looking at office politics? Does it have to be this way?

So what is office politics?

Ask a few men, and you’ll get some very different answers. Wikipedia defines office politics as “a term for both the productive and counterproductive human factors present between coworkers, in any office environment. Office politics differs from office gossip in that people participating in office politics do so with the objective of gaining advantage, whereas gossip can be a purely social activity.” Think manipulation, undermining, mobbing—a whole range of behaviours, some of which are simply annoying, others are intentionally hurtful.

Lots of men use the term ‘office politics’ to capture this dark side of working together, and talk negatively about people who they think ‘play the game’. It’s easy for these guys to pretend that there is, or should be, a way of opting out of office politics, a way of not playing the game.

“They’re like kids in the school yard, yapping at each other all the time,” says 34 year old Alex, a production manager. “I keep my head down, my eyes on my work, and just shut everything else out. Let the others do what they want. I don’t want to live like that.”

But sometimes not playing can be dangerous, too. Ahmed’s attempts to stay out of the rumour mill backfired on him. “I didn’t listen to any of the talk about my co-worker’s drinking problems or the disasters in her personal ▶

Critical Strategies for Surviving Office Politics

- Follow regulations and policies that apply to your workplace, even when others don't
- Act professionally, even when others don't
- If it's unimportant, let it go and move on
- Whenever you need to address something, talk directly to the people involved or get help to have that conversation
- Treat others the way they want to be treated, not the way you want to be treated
- Pay attention to the effect of your behaviour on others
- Tell others how you want to be treated OR stop whining when they treat you differently than you want them to
- Provide people with opportunities to participate, join in, be part of the place
- Let people know when you feel let down or disappointed
- Don't tolerate bad behaviour directed at you or anyone else
- If you've done all you can and you're still not happy, think about going somewhere else



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life; I didn't get involved. She suffered a breakdown and left after making some costly mistakes." Ahmed continued, "Later, when I applied to become a manager, I was turned down. Afterwards I heard that people think I keep myself too isolated and too out of the loop to manage others."

Some people think of 'office politics' in more neutral terms, as a phrase describing the very activity of dealing with others in the workplace. Sure, it might include behaviours like gossiping and sucking up, but it can also include celebrating successes, jumping in to help when the workload shifts, and speaking out when the boss is being unfair to someone. Office politics is inevitable, and not necessarily evil. The politics of an office can be good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, depending on the specific behaviours that people engage in. It's just a term that captures the way we get on together in the workplace as a group of very different individuals. From this perspective, it's not a question of whether to play the game or not; it's more a question of *how* you're going to play the game.

Types of Office Politicians

The staff at ProActive ReSolutions, a Vancouver-based company specializing in workplace conflict issues, has worked with hundreds of workgroups around the world on issues around relationship management—issues involving respect, strong emotions, poor behaviour, and even violence. They believe it's helpful to avoid thinking of office politics in negative, narrow terms. If you work with other people then you are automatically involved



in office politics. You cannot avoid being political at the office. Your choice is only about the kind of office politician you want to be, not whether you are one or not.

So what type of office politician do you aspire to be?
Blinders on—Playing the game blindly and selfishly, without regard for your co-workers, focusing only on your work and ignoring the fact that the way you deal with others every day has a very real effect on them and their daily experiences in the workplace.

Gloves off—Playing the game competitively against your peers, working actively to win at all costs even if others have to lose.

Tuned in—Playing the game collaboratively with your peers, with integrity and professionalism, adjusting your behaviour as necessary in order to help make the whole team successful.

People who work with blinders on or gloves off just keep conflict management specialists in business. By tuning in, workgroup members give everyone a chance to thrive.

Tuning In

So what's the secret? Just how can you be a tuned-in office politician? During ProActive ReSolutions' workshops based on creating respectful workplaces, participants are asked to complete two columns on

a flip chart. The left side of the chart is headed 'Best Boss/Co-worker'. The right hand side—the dark side—is headed 'Worst Boss/Co-worker'.

The 'Best Boss/Co-worker' list inevitably includes the following:

- Friendly
- Helpful
- Sense of humour
- Supportive
- Gives credit where it is due
- Lets others know what is going on
- Deals with poor behaviour and performance early ▶

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The 'Worst Boss/Co-worker' list usually includes items such as:

- Doesn't let others know what's going on
- Takes credit for others' work
- Gossips, puts others down
- Says one thing to our face, another behind our backs
- Shouts, yells
- Irrational, unpredictable
- Shames, humiliates people
- Plays favourites
- Ignores others' poor performance or behaviour
- Makes excuses for their own poor performance

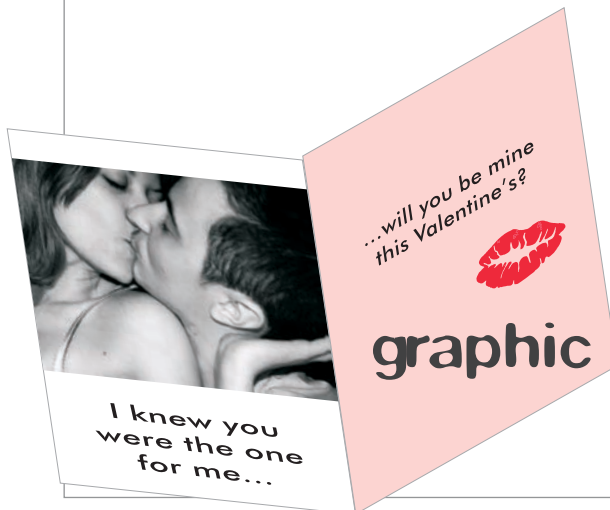
Both lists identify behaviours that are highly political, highly influential. But the first list consists of productive and respectful behaviours, while the second list is a great recipe for a negative, destructive workplace.

Making it Work

Staying tuned in isn't always easy, and no one can do it all the time. But keeping up the effort does have its rewards. In fact, people who are tuned in tend to play politics specifically for the rewards of engaging others, and of achieving superior performance and development in the workgroup.

Of course it's possible to profit from a career of counterproductive behaviours. And some people are tempted to advance their own selfish interests this way. Just read the papers: 'honest politics' can seem like an oxymoron. But we all make choices. As you struggle to navigate the daily challenges of working along side others, ask yourself what sort of person you want to be remembered as when you leave the workplace. Destructive and self-obsessed? Or a leader in making things a little better for everyone? 

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Fallen Chocolate Soufflé

Cooking for Sizzle

The Way to a Woman's Heart is...

by Paul Rogalski

We all know the cliché ‘a way to a man’s heart is through his stomach’. Well, that’s true of women too. We all need to eat, so why not use food to dazzle that special woman? With a sumptuous home-cooked dinner, you can convey a message without saying a word...unless of course you want to. She’ll have the impression that you are generous, thoughtful and concerned about her well being. It’s a formula for success.

I think back to 17 years ago, when the tables were turned, and an insightful woman prepared a fantastic dinner for me, then proposed marriage. Wow. Irresistible...and accepted!

For many people the enjoyment of a good meal is the icebreaker in a relationship. Consumption can be quick and easy or slow and engaging. Familiar fare can comfort us in awkward moments and a new taste experience can increase our pleasure in times of celebration. It nourishes us; it comforts us. Food can remain familiar or be adventurous. It is unrelentingly diverse and ever changing. It has the power to make time stand still or help us ignore things that cause discomfort. Food not only provides us with energy, it enhances our lives.

For those special evenings, here are a couple of recipes that will make you look like a star—the first one is an appetizer and the second one will provide that chocolate fix that so many women adore. One important thing to remember is to ask in advance if your companion has any food allergies or particular dislikes in foods. It can definitely take the shine off an evening if your date is struggling to eat something just to be polite or, even worse, if you have to take her to the hospital after a bad reaction to food.



Escargot and Gnocchi Tossed in Browned Sage Butter (2 servings)

- 12 escargot, rinsed in cold water
- 1 cup potato gnocchi (Emma brand is excellent for this dish)
- 3 tbsp butter
- 3-5 fresh sage leaves, gently chopped
- 1/2 tsp shallots, chopped
- 1/2 tsp garlic, chopped
- 3 tbsp tomato, chopped
- 1/4 cup spinach leaves
- 4 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. In a non-stick pan, melt butter and add the sage leaves. Cook until butter starts to brown
2. Add the gnocchi and sauté until they start to brown. Add shallots and garlic and continue cooking until caramelized
3. Add the escargot and heat through
4. Toss with tomato, spinach and Parmesan cheese. Season to taste
5. Place in a serving dish and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.



Fallen Chocolate Soufflé (Makes 4 Soufflé)

Note: This recipe may be made a day ahead then warmed for a few minutes in the oven before serving

- 4 oven-safe coffee cups
- 1 oz butter (unsalted)
- 2 oz sugar
-
- 1 oz sugar
- 1 oz butter
- 1 oz flour
- 1 cup milk
- 2 oz dark chocolate (highest quality)
- 2 oz Frangelico liqueur
- 4 large eggs (yolks and whites separated)

Method

1. Using a paint brush, evenly spread butter on the inside of the coffee cups. Pour the sugar in the cups and spread until the inside is completely covered. Set aside
2. Combine sugar, butter and flour and mix until smooth
3. Place milk and flour mixture in a small pot and bring to a boil stirring constantly
4. Add the chocolate and Frangelico. Mix until smooth
5. Add egg yolks and again mix until smooth
6. Whisk egg whites until soft peaks form. Add a pinch of sugar and continue whisking until the peaks are a little more defined
7. Fold the egg whites into the milk and chocolate mixture until smooth
8. Pour mixture into the sugar-lined cups up to 1/4 inch from the top
9. Place in a shallow baking pan and add a little water to the bottom of the pan
10. Bake in a 375°F pre-heated oven until the tops have turned dark brown and the soufflé has crowned. Remove and set aside to cool
11. Remove soufflé from the cups by turning them upside down and shaking them on to your hand
12. Place on a plate garnished with your favourite fruits. Serve.



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10 TIPS

for putting
a **BAD**
day
in its
place

by Dr Nathan Cobb



We all have one occasionally. It often starts with small things. Your car doesn't start in the morning or you miss your bus. Your boss scolds you for missing a deadline. You have a fight with your spouse. You feel on edge and cranky. And it isn't even noon yet. You're having a bad day.

So what can you do about it? Here are ten suggestions for putting a bad day in its place.

1. Put it in Perspective

Remember, there are 365 days in a year. This day is only one of them. Tomorrow will bring new opportunities.

2. Count Your Blessings

It sounds simple but it works. Make a list of 20 things you are grateful for in your life. Add to it every day. Review your list when you are feeling down.

3. Use Humour

Laughing is a great way to release emotional energy and rise above your setbacks. Humour is healing. Learn to laugh at yourself. Crack a joke at your own expense. Look for the absurdity in the situation. Find someone to laugh with.

4. Focus on Solutions

Don't dwell on all of the things that went wrong. Train your brain to think about solutions. What can you do about the problems you encountered? What actions can you take starting today?

5. Focus on Positives

What you focus on determines your reality. Try not to let a few bad events determine how you feel about the whole day. Often there are good events that go unnoticed. Focus on those positive things about the day that you may have taken for granted.

6. Take a Mental Vacation

At least once in your day, stop what you are doing and take a few minutes to calm your mind and body. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Loosen your shoulders. Relax your muscles. Visualize yourself in a peaceful setting.

7. Lose Yourself

Instead of focusing on your own problems, volunteer your time to help a friend, family member or neighbour. You'll feel better about making a difference in someone else's life and it will get you out of your self-focused thinking.

8. Avoid Spillover

Unresolved stress from one area of life, such as work, often spills over into other areas, such as your home or friendships. Resolve to put your work problems away when you are home. Try not to take it out on your loved ones.

9. Keep a Journal

Writing can be very helpful in letting go of negative emotions. Writing it down can clear your head, help you better understand yourself, and create perspective. Don't worry about how it sounds. Just put your pen on the paper and start moving your hand.

10. Plan for Tomorrow

Before you go to sleep at night, make a plan for the next day. Decide what you will do differently. Set some short-term goals of things you want to accomplish. **■**

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