

Improvement Initiatives

"Change – for the better"

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FREE NEWSLETTER

June 2010

What's New?

Lean Six Sigma Practitioner, Improve Thyself!



"Never tell your problems to anyone... 20% don't care and the other 80% are glad you have them."

- Lou Holtz

Ed. Note: Continuous Improvement generates results: competitive advantage, business growth, improved quality, profit/shareholder value, business success – But, can we do better personally? Last year our e-news issues covered quality, productivity, safety, and project issues – but, this edition is dedicated to you. How you can save money, lose weight, do better, live longer, and get more done! Enjoy! -JW

Need more energy?

Here are some really surprising, non-caffeinated, ways to rev you up...

1. Change your socks. I know, odd, right? I read about this one over at [Zen Habits](#). The advice is to bring an extra pair of socks to work and sometime around 3 p.m. when you hit your slump, take off your shoes and socks (and

maybe air out your feet for a sec if you have a private office; if you don't, that would be a nada) and then put a fresh pair of socks on. Voila! "You'll be amazed at how much fresher you'll feel," write the [Zen Habits bloggers](#). "This trick is especially handy on days with lots of walking."

2. Rethink your workout time. If you tend to work out at night, it might be messing with your sleep. Here's why: [Experts believe that people who work out too close to their bedtimes](#) may flood their brains with stress hormones that can make it hard to fall asleep. A workout doesn't do a body good when it leaves you sluggish and exhausted the next day because it prevented you from getting enough sleep.

3. Eat chia seeds. Favored by the Aztecs for their energy-boosting qualities, you can add these little seeds

continued on next page

Hey freecreditreport.com (r u doggin me?)

People are also often amazed by the number of mistakes on their credit report. Often creditors will report negative payment history that is incorrect or a result of misunderstandings. These can often be cleared up but only if you take action. Unless you check your score, you may know that these detrimental items are affecting your score.

The easiest and fastest way to check your credit score is online. There are many services that let you check your credit free-of-charge. [GoFreeCredit.com](#) is one the best established and most reputable of these services.

You can try this service free to monitor all activity on your credit report.

You may have heard that the very act of checking a credit score can have a negative impact on your score. It's true - some methods actually reduce your score by 10 points for each check. However, checking your credit score through [GoFreeCredit.com](#) will not have any negative effect on your score.

And with [GoFreeCredit.com](#), you also get credit monitoring; automatic notification of credit activity and a personal analysis.





More Time Mgmt Tips

www.ineedmoretime.com/

Office Time Wasters to Avoid!

You can make more time in your workday. Read up on these time wasters and learn how:

*** Desk Clutter.** Put personal items up on shelves. Leave an item on your desk only if you use it everyday. Use a step file to keep paper sorted and off your desk. Have an in box to contain papers entering your office.

*** Interruptions.** Move your desk so you can't see the door - so people can't catch your eye. Find a vacant conference room or area where you can work uninterrupted for one hour.

*** Overload.** If you feel like you have too much to do and don't know where to start, make a list of top priorities. Ask your supervisor if you aren't sure. What's most important? Do it first. Also, keep a stress ball, calming music and healthy snacks and water nearby.

*** Computer.** Turn off the "You've got mail" alert. Only check email two or three times daily. Avoid games and useless surfing.

*** Lost in Space.** 5S your desk! What a waste of time it is to search for items! Taking the necessary time today to organize your workspace will save hours later.

Need more Energy ... (continued from page 1)

(P.S. we're not talking about the Chia Pet here) to all kinds of snacks and recipes. Here's a [chia seed muffin recipe](#) that looks interesting.

4. Sniff some citrus. Past research indicates that citrus-scented essential oils or lotions can boost alertness. There, you have an excuse to shop for some grapefruit-scented lotion!

5. Get on your toes. If you're feeling sleepy at your desk, take the advice of Connie Tyne, executive director of the Cooper Wellness Program in Dallas, who says the best way to wake up your circulatory system is to roll up and down on your toes. "As the blood starts flowing, more nourishing oxygen and glucose are transported throughout your body -- so you feel more energized," said Tyne, to [Quick&Simple](#).

Need Help with Money??



- [Dave Ramsey](#) offers life-changing financial advice as host of the nationally syndicated radio program, *The Dave Ramsey Show*, heard by nearly 4 million listeners each week on more than 450 radio stations throughout the United States.

- The three-hour live radio talk show focuses on **life, love and relationships**, and how they happen to revolve around money.

www.daveramsey.com

- [Suze Orman](#) has been called "a force in the world of personal finance" and a "one-woman financial advice powerhouse" by *USA Today*.

- A two-time Emmy Award-winning television host, *New York Times* mega bestselling author, magazine and online columnist, writer/producer, and one of the top motivational speakers in the world today, Orman is undeniably America's most recognized expert on personal finance.

www.suzeorman.com

Join the Drive for Better Gas Mileage

Joan Shim via Lifewire



Here's six ways to stretch a tank of gas ...

- 1. Drive smoothly.** Eliminating jackrabbit starts, speeding and hard breaking can increase your fuel economy by 33 percent on the highway and 5 percent in the city, netting you up to 92 cents per gallon, the EPA says. Editors from the automotive Web site Edmunds.com tested some common driving tips for improving gas mileage and found that driving moderately rather than aggressively has the greatest impact per gallon - as much as 37 percent improvement in fuel efficiency.

Take a long view of the road and brake slowly when you need to stop.

- 2. Use cruise control when you can.** It's an easy way to keep erratic driving in check.

Tests find that using cruise control can yield as much as 14 percent better gas mileage.

- 3. Slow down.** Vehicles' optimal cruising speeds vary, so it's worth experimenting with a few tanks of gas to find your car's most efficient speed. That said, higher speeds generally increase aerodynamic drag and decrease gas mileage. The EPA estimates that for every five miles per hour you drive over 60 mph, you pay another 20 cents per gallon of gas.

- 4. Minimize idling.** You'll be surprised at the difference it makes in fuel economy to simply turn off



SMILE, and you'll live healthier!

by 1800dentist.com. Copyright © 2008, ARAnet

Oral health is directly connected to your overall health. Making even the smallest change to your dental health regimen can have a big impact on your smile, as well as the way you look and feel.

1. Brush and floss your teeth every day.

You should brush your teeth at least twice a day; it's one of the easiest and best things you can do for your oral health. Dental plaque starts releasing harmful acids that can erode tooth enamel as soon as you eat and too much plaque can lead to gum disease. Floss at least once every day to get plaque and food out of hard-to-reach places where bacteria can flourish.

2. Use your dental insurance.

Not everyone has dental insurance, but if you're lucky enough to have it, use it! Find out what procedures your insurance covers and check with your dentist to make sure they accept the type of dental insurance you have.

3. Visit your dentist every 6 months.

The American Dental Association recommends you see a dentist for a professional cleaning and exam every 6 months. If you have a dental problem in between regular visits, don't

try to self-diagnose. Your dentist is the only one who can tell you if a toothache is something more serious; and the sooner you see the dentist the better you'll feel. Waiting can mean more extensive, and more expensive, treatment in the future.

4. Eat and drink smart.

What you eat and drink can affect your dental health. Snacks like candy and cookies and beverages like sodas and juices are loaded with sugar that can lead to cavities. Replace at least one sugary snack with a smart snack like carrots, broccoli or nuts and drink more water. Remember that coffee, tea and wine can stain your teeth, so drink them in moderation or your smile could become dull.

5. If you don't have a dentist, find one.

When you have a dentist, you like you're more likely to take care of your teeth with brushing, flossing and regular dental visits. Your dentist is your partner in dental health, so he or she should make it easy and comfortable to get the care you need.

Keep your teeth bright, white, and healthy and visit your dentist regularly.

Live 2 B 100 !!??

-Dr. Mao

- **Healthy habits to live long...** It takes 14 to 21 days of repetitive behavior to form a new pattern in your brain. Once the pattern is formed, it becomes an automatic behavioral response. As you develop new healthy habits, they will begin to replace bad habits. Here are some of the most transformative longevity habits:

1. Drink more water

-8 glasses a day - filtered

2. Eat like a centenarian

-reduce meat and poultry

3. Restore with regular rest

-7 to 8 hours of quality sleep

4. Take the stairs!

-walk, swim or gym

5. Manage your stress.

-relax, meditate every day

6. Detoxify your surroundings.

-undergo periodic detoxification

Buy organic foods and use glass and recycled paper products. Cut out sugar. The very best thing you can do for your health is to eat a wide array of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.

Learn more at:

<http://health.yahoo.com/>

Learn more -



P-M-A! All the way!

If you really want to live longer, then you can start with your attitude. Your way of thinking can not only impact the quality of your life, but also how long you actually live. In 2002, researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., found that optimistic people decreased their risk of early death by 50% compared with those who leaned more towards pessimism.

See, I care

(Si. Eyecare)

Maintaining eye health improves the quality of life for people throughout their lifespan.

Proper eye health care helps slow down the processes associated with aging such as macular degeneration. It also reduces the likelihood of premature vision loss through strain, disease and accidents.

Eye health can be maintained and enhanced through eye exercises and proper nutrition.

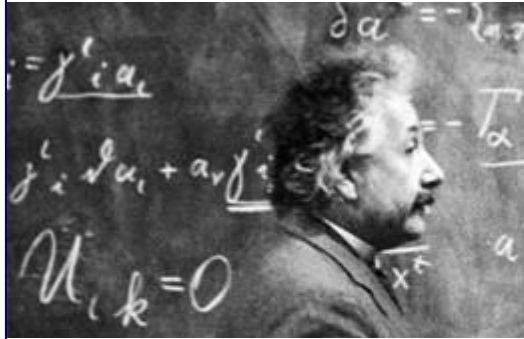
See an eye Doctor every two years.

Learn more at:

www.eyecarebasics.com/



Think and Grow Rich!



5 ways to make your nest egg last

"Making Your Nest Egg Last a Lifetime," which was written by Anthony Webb of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, suggests the following:

- 1) Delay claiming Social Security
- 2) Consider purchasing an annuity
- 3) Pay off your mortgage
- 4) Allocate your assets wisely
- 5) Withdraw funds carefully

Learn more at:

www.MarketWatch.com

Estimate your retirement benefits at:

www.ssa.gov/planners/calculators.htm

Better Gas Milage ... (continued)

the engine when you stop for longer than a minute. Cutting down excessive idling can save 19 percent of fuel, he says. Cars with bigger engines burn more fuel when idling than cars with smaller engines, according to the EPA.

5. **Drop excess weight.** Aerodynamics and weight both greatly affect fuel economy, so reconsider your roof racks, cargo boxes and whatever you keep in the trunk. Every additional 100 pounds of weight reduces fuel efficiency by 2 percent. If that weight is on the roof, it adds aerodynamic drag. When [Consumer Reports](#) tested the effect of adding a car-top carrier to a 2005 Toyota Camry, the Camry's mileage per gallon dropped from 35 to 29.

Did you know?

Keeping tires properly inflated can earn you another 10 cents per gallon.

6. **Maintain your car.** Would you go out of your way to save 55 cents per gallon on gas? The EPA estimates that a well-tuned engine can save its driver 13 cents a gallon. A clean air filter can yield a savings of 32 cents a gallon. And keeping car tires properly inflated can earn you another 10 cents per gallon.

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off the page...



10 Tips for Staying Lean by Bonnie Liebman

What's the best way to stay lean? There are no magic bullets, despite the bold (or merely sneaky) claims on weight-loss supplements. But there are some fascinating possibilities on the horizon.

Researchers at Laval University in Quebec, for example, recently found that when people are fed an appetizer of chausson (a savory pastry) and a red sauce with capsaicin—the stuff that makes red chili peppers hot—they eat about 200 fewer calories over the next three hours than when the sauce has no capsaicin.

“But so far we've only tested it in lean individuals under laboratory conditions,” says Laval's Angelo Tremblay. And, he cautions, if you go to a Mexican restaurant and eat a bowl of chips with salsa, don't assume that its calories don't count.

Until researchers know more, here are some new (and some old) strategies that may give you a fighting chance to win the battle of the bulge.

Curb calorie density

Does fat make you fat? For years, popular diet books assured the chubby masses that a low-fat diet was the key to weight loss. They were right...and wrong.

“Our research shows that it's calorie density—not fat—that determines how many calories people eat,” says Susan Roberts of the Jean Mayer U.S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston.

For 18 days, Roberts offered 14 people meals that were either low-fat (20 percent of calories from fat) or high-fat (40 percent fat). But, unlike other studies comparing high-fat and low-fat diets, these two regimens had the same amount of fiber, palatability, and calorie density (that's a food's calories divided by its weight).¹

“When we kept calorie density constant, people on the high-fat diet ate no more calories than people on the low-fat diet,” says Roberts.

But her research doesn't let fat off the hook, because it's so calorie-dense (see “Counting Calories *and* Density,” p. 5). “Fat is important to watch out for, but low-fat foods that are high in sugar like SnackWell's cookies and Entenmann's cakes are also high in calorie density,” says Roberts's colleague Megan McCrory.

The bottom line is that low-fat diets that are loaded with vegetables and fruits and other high-fiber, low-calorie foods may indeed help keep the pounds off. Diets filled with calorie-dense low-fat cakes, cookies, ice cream—and even bread, pasta, and crackers—may not.

Shrink your servings

“When people were served larger portions of lasagna, they ate more than when they were given smaller portions and allowed to get up for more,” says Tufts's McCrory.

That's what happened in single-meal studies done decades ago.² More recent studies show that when people are given larger amounts of “hedonistic” foods like M&Ms, they eat more than people who are given smaller amounts.³

“When we gave people big buckets of popcorn—the ones you have to hold with two hands—at a movie theater, they ate 40 to 50 percent more popcorn than people who got smaller buckets,” says Brian Wansink, director of the Food and Brand Research Lab at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The only exception: Women on a date ate the same amount of popcorn, regardless of bucket size, he notes. “When they were on their own or with friends, though, watch out.”

The nation is proving those studies right. “Serving sizes in restaurants have gotten bigger,” says Marion Nestle of New York University. “Food is low in cost relative to rent and labor,” she explains. “So it’s just as easy to throw in more food.”

And it’s tough to change. “People become accustomed to large amounts, so if they’re served a normal portion they feel cheated,” says Nestle.

That could explain why people who frequent restaurants are more likely to be overweight. “We asked people how many times they ate at different restaurants, like Chinese, Mexican, or places that serve pizza, hamburgers, fried chicken, or fried fish,” says McCrory.

“The more often they ate out, the fatter they were.” It may be more than huge portions that make restaurant-goers heavier. “Restaurants serve foods that are calorie-dense, palatable, varied, and in large portions,” says McCrory. And that’s a recipe for flab.

The answer, says Nestle, is simple: Eat less.

“Before you put the first fork in, think about how much you’re going to eat and have them wrap up the rest for the next day,” says Nestle, who recently dropped ten pounds to lower her blood cholesterol. (It fell 60 points.) “It really works.”

Limit (some) choices

“Eat a variety of foods,” says the government’s *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, the American Dietetic Association, and others.

But variety may be the dieter’s enemy. “If people are offered three different kinds of sandwiches, they’ll eat more than if they are given three of the same sandwich,” says McCrory.

“People eat more pasta if they have three shapes to choose from, even if all three are the same color and they’re served with plain spaghetti sauce,” she says.⁴

Lack of variety may help some people lose weight on the Atkins diet or other regimens that limit bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, and other carbohydrates. Suddenly, variety plummets to a much narrower—and more manageable—range.

“The instinct to eat a variety of foods is incredibly powerful,” says Tufts’s Susan Roberts. “We probably wouldn’t have survived in Paleolithic times if we weren’t programmed to eat meat, fruit, and vegetables instead of just one food.”

McCrory and Roberts found that people who eat the widest variety of almost any food—including sweets, pizza, sandwiches, salad dressings, pasta, and potatoes—have more body fat. (More variety means typically eating eight rather than three kinds of sandwiches, six rather than two kinds of cookies, etc.)

Exceptions: people who eat a variety of fruits and dairy products have no more (or less) body fat. And people who eat the widest variety of vegetables have *less* body fat than others.⁵

“Vegetables are good news for people who are trying to reduce their weight,” says Roberts. “They’re low in calorie density, so they may displace calorie-dense foods, and their bulk may reduce overeating.”

Yet just five vegetables—fresh potatoes, frozen potatoes, onions, iceberg lettuce, and processed tomatoes—make up half of all the vegetables we eat, says McCrory.

Instead of a variety of vegetables, many of us eat a variety of junk.

“If you want cookies, you’re better off buying three boxes of one kind than one box each of three different kinds,” says McCrory. “With just one kind of cookie in the house, you get sick of it after a while.”





Curb liquid calories

Ate more than you should have? No problem. You'll just eat less later.

That's more likely to happen if the extra calories you ate came from solid rather than from liquid foods, says Richard Mattes of Purdue University.

He gave 15 normal-weight men and women an extra 450 calories a day as either a liquid (three 12-ounce cans of soda) or solid (45 large jelly beans) for four weeks each.⁶

"When they got the solid food, they ate less at other times, so they adjusted for all of the calories," he explains. In contrast, "when they got the liquid food, they just added those calories to their customary diet. They didn't compensate at all."

Other studies also suggest that people compensate best for solid foods, less well for semi-solid foods like (non-clear) soup or milkshakes, and worst for liquids, he adds. "Liquid calories don't trip our satiety mechanisms," says Mattes. "They just don't register."

A recent analysis of a national survey jibes with his findings.⁷ "The more (non-diet) sodas children drink, the more calories they consume," he notes. The solution: "Use beverages that have no calories," Mattes suggests. "Or limit calorie-containing beverages. Don't drink them all day long or in large quantities."



Make movement part of your life

We have more-sedentary jobs, more cars, more computers, more televisions, and more labor-saving conveniences. Is it any wonder that we also have more stores that specialize in big sizes?

"The next step is that we won't even need to expend the energy to push a button," says James Levine of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. "We'll just say 'bring me the food' and computers will operate on voice recognition. We'll become immobile blobs."

The answer: Get moving. And that doesn't necessarily mean tennis or bicycling. Gardening, raking leaves, mowing the lawn, and washing windows also count.

"Overweight people are more amenable to increasing lifestyle activities—like using the stairs or parking farther away from the mall—than going to the gym," says Thomas Wadden, an obesity expert at the University of Pennsylvania. And people who boost their lifestyle activity are just as successful at keeping the weight off as people who participate in formal exercise programs.⁸

In fact, overweight children lose more weight when told to limit sedentary activities than when told to exercise (or to do both).⁹ "Getting kids to turn off the TV or spend less time at the computer works better than urging them to increase their aerobic activity," says Wadden.

Keep moving to keep from gaining

Exercise doesn't make much difference when you're trying to lose weight. "Fairly strenuous exercise—30 to 40 minutes three or four times a week—produces only a two to six pound weight loss over six months," says Wadden.

That's because exercise just doesn't burn that many calories and because some people may compensate by eating more. —Most people who participate in an exercise program think, 'I should look like Cindy Crawford by now,' he says. But that's unrealistic.

It's not weight *loss*, but weight *maintenance*, that gets easier when people exercise. "If you find 100 people who have kept the weight off, 90 of them are likely to be exercising enough to burn more than 1,500 calories a week," says Wadden.

Rena Wing of the University of Pittsburgh has enrolled 2,000 people in her National Weight Control Registry.



These weight-loss champs—who report having lost an average of 66 pounds—expend an average of 2,800 calories a week. That’s the equivalent of walking three or four miles a day.¹⁰

Who has the time? “Most of the people in our registry don’t do only one thing,” says Wing. “On average, they spend about 1,000 calories a week walking. That’s ten miles. But most combine that with other activities.”

That’s the flip-side of limiting your variety of high-calorie foods, she adds. “For physical activity, we encourage variety” so people don’t get bored.

Break it up

Note to busy folks: People who exercise in shorter bouts may be more likely to stick with the program.

“If you tell people they have to exercise for 40 minutes a day and warm up and cool down, some say they don’t have 40 minutes and that’s the end of it,” says Wing.

“But if you say, ‘try to find ten minutes four times a day,’ they say, ‘OK, maybe I can do ten minutes after my lunch break or while I’m waiting for the pasta to cook.’” And even if they don’t squeeze in all four bouts, they may get in two or three.

Find a friend

For many people, eating less and exercising more is easier if they don’t go it alone.

“It’s an old strategy,” says Rena Wing. “In some early weight-loss studies, they put people at a worksite on different teams to compete against one another. It works because the people on the team support each other and the competition is fun.”

In her recent study, people who chose to join a weight-loss program with three friends or family members lost more weight than those who joined alone.¹¹ The “team” members ate a meal and exercised together at least once during the study, called each other to provide support, and got group assignments (like finding good locations for walks). They also competed to see which group could maintain its weight loss most successfully.

“Groups don’t always work,” cautions Wing. “When we treated husbands and wives together, we weren’t very successful. It seemed to help the wife, but the husband did less well.”

One can only speculate as to why. But in general, it makes sense that healthy living loves company. Would you rather be watching your weight in a crowd that’s munching on baby carrots or pigging out on pizza? And even the most airtight excuse for avoiding exercise can evaporate when someone asks you to go for a walk or run.

Set realistic goals

How much weight can you expect to lose? A few years ago, Tom Wadden and colleagues asked 60 obese women—they averaged 218 pounds—their “goal weight,” “dream weight,” “happy weight,” “acceptable weight,” and “disappointed weight.”

After 48 weeks of treatment, the women lost an average of 35 pounds... slightly less than their “disappointed” weight loss (37 pounds). Half never even lost that much. Almost all fell far short of their “acceptable” weight loss (55 pounds).¹²

“Most people have unrealistic expectations,” says Wadden.

“People can typically reduce their weight by 10 to 15 percent with the best behavior-modification programs. If you try to lose 20 or 30 percent, you’re likely to regain the weight.”



The body seems to defend its weight, he adds. “But there’s a certain amount of wiggle room.” Go beyond it and you set yourself up to fail.

“Satisfaction is comparing what you expect and what you get,” says Wadden. “If you keep ratcheting up your expectations, you’ll get dissatisfied and quit.”

Think healthy, not just skinny

Diet sodas, Wow chips, and artificially sweetened candy bars may help you cut calories, but healthy they’re not.

Each time you chew on a high- or low-calorie candy bar you miss a chance to swallow some photochemical neatly packaged in a wedge of watermelon or a handful of berries.

Luckily, the same foods that cut your risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and stroke should help you trim extra padding between your shoulders and knees. Don’t think of them as punishment. Dishes like roasted asparagus, stir-fried broccoli, sautéed mushrooms, or broiled pineapple or bananas can be delicacies.

Skinny isn’t the only point of exercise, either. You can be fit *and* fat... if you move enough. “When we looked at overweight men as a group, they were less physically fit and had the highest death rate,” says Steven Blair of the Cooper Institute of Aerobics Research in Dallas.

“But when we looked separately at the overweight men who were fit, we didn’t see much increase in dying.” The same probably holds for women. To be fit, you have to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity most days.

1 *Amer. J. Clin. Nutr.* 66: 1332, 1997.

2 *Appetite* 7: 71, 1986.

3 *Journal of Marketing* 60: 1, 1996.

4 *Physiol. Behav.* 29: 409, 1982.

5 *Amer. J. Clin. Nutr.* 69: 350, 440, 1999.

6 *FASEB Journal* 13: A870, 1999.

7 *J. Amer. Diet. Assoc.* 99: 436, 1999.

8 *J. Amer. Med. Assoc.* 281: 335, 1999.

9 *Health Psychology* 14: 109, 1995.

10 *Amer. J. Clin. Nutr.* 66: 239, 1997.

11 *J. Consult. Clin. Psych.* 67: 132, 1999.

12 *J. Consult. Clin. Psych.* 65: 79, 1997.

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