

Employee Assistance Program

New Skills, New You

Did you know that learning something new not only helps keep your brain sharp, but can also improve overall wellbeing? Engaging in new activities can slow age-related cognitive decline and can help you feel a sense of competency, increased self-esteem, and a connection with others.

New Skills Improves Brain Functioning. Not everyone is wired to seek out new experiences and trying new things can push you far outside your comfort zone. So why bother? Research has shown that challenging our brains can lead to actual changes in the brain that can help protect the brain and keep it resilient. Set a goal to target a new skill every month to keep your brain learning and engaged.

Learning Something New Helps Combat Stress. Trying new things forces us to be present in the moment and to slow down. Something that is new is going to be more deeply engaging since it requires more focus to accomplish. Concentrating on a new task can also help clear your head of other stressors. The key is to choose something that you want to do and is going to maintain your interest, but is also going to challenge you to stretch yourself to learn a new set of skills.

Feel Confident and Connected. Accomplishing something new is satisfying and increases self-confidence. Setting a goal and working to reach it fuels a sense of purpose. When that goal is reached, it helps reinforce that we are capable of growth and our capabilities are not limited. Staying open and curious to new experiences can also have an added benefit of expanding social connections. As we develop new interests and hobbies, we often interact with others with similar hobbies and broaden our circles. Being socially engaged can help guard against isolation and promotes wellbeing.

Ideas for Activities. Want to give it a shot? How about trying one of these?

- Play a new sport
- Take an art class
- Learn an instrument
- Learn a new language
- Write short stories, poems or start a journal
- Try your hand at calligraphy
- Pick up a practical skill, like plumbing
- Knit or crochet
- Learn how to edit videos or improve your photography
- Play Sudoku, crossword puzzles, or memory games
- Attend a seminar on an area of interest
- Learn a new baking or cooking technique
- Dive into a DIY project
- Learn a new card game

It's never been easier than now to find affordable, often free tutorials or trials online, through libraries or community centers.

Need help finding activities or groups in your area? Contact your Employee Assistance Program at the phone number below to speak to a Work-Life Specialist who can help with research and referrals.

References

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 www.EAPHelplink.com

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