

The Continuum Edge

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

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INDOOR GARDENING: **FOR MANAGING STRESS & NUTRITION**

Tending indoor plants has been shown to lower stress and improve mood because of the hands-on nature of gardening, along with the positive distraction, focus and satisfaction of watching things grow. Other benefits include positive self-talk from success, goal-directed activity with the reward of eating the results of one's efforts. That's a lot of bennies!

Even in the fall and winter, you can easily make gardening part of your stress management strategy. You don't need a garden outside. You only need a jar and water to get started with over a dozen different vegetables and herbs. Ready to create your own indoor garden? YouTube can help you get started.

RECOGNIZE DISTRACTIONS TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS



You've heard it before: It only takes a second of distraction for an accident to happen. So why is it hard to ignore them, even when performing a dangerous task? One reason is the "normalcy bias" — our tendency to assume all will remain well because nothing bad has happened before. Hence, we engage in distracting activities while driving. You might also tolerate distractions because you know your job too well. For example, if more widgets can be produced with the safety catch off, why not work without it, since you still have 10 fingers and nothing bad has happened — yet?

Grasp this idea: Familiarity allows you to operate on autopilot, making distractions harder to notice. And grasp this: Start treating distractions as the key safety hazard. Create a habit of consciously asking yourself, "Where is my attention right now?" Triggers for asking this question include rushing, accepting interruptions, experiencing fatigue, engaging in conversations, using a phone or experiencing emotional preoccupation.

Learn more: [ascelibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1061/\(ASCE\)CO.1943-7862.0001459](https://ascelibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1061/(ASCE)CO.1943-7862.0001459)

BUILDING YOUR WORKPLACE REPUTATION



What price can be put on a highly respected workplace reputation? It's safe to say it's invaluable. A valued reputation is not derived from positive personality traits or being likable. It's done with intentionality. Here are five ways to grow your reputation as a valued worker.

- 1) Do what you say you will do. When people know they can count on you, trust develops naturally. It takes only three or four positive experiences, but one failure to follow through can be a significant setback.
- 2) Acknowledge people when they interact with you. Don't leave them hanging. Respond quickly or let them know when you can respond. The analogy is sitting in a restaurant with a server not acknowledging your presence.
- 3) Don't hold on to information. Stay aware of others' needs, and if you can solve a problem or have information that will make someone's life easier, step in.
- 4) Pause before reacting. It requires practice, self-awareness, and a conscious choice. How you respond under pressure is modeled by others, making it an important reputation builder.
- 5) Practice consistency. One great performance isn't likely to cement your reputation. Rather, it's the small, consistent efforts that do it. Think of your reputation as a tangible asset, and with the tips above, experience the payoffs for your career.

MANAGING YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE FEARS



If you're a new hire, you likely have a few normal fears: making mistakes, appearing unqualified, asking the wrong questions, or not measuring up. Most employers have one overriding goal — your success — so relax. New employee mistakes happen, and you're likely more prepared than you think. Trying too hard to prove what you know can make you come across as overly ambitious, lacking self-awareness, or rushing your integration.

Here's what counts: your ability to communicate, engage with others, take initiative, learn, contribute and demonstrate growth. This mattered when you got hired. Thoughtful questions — ones that show you're listening and engaged — will make a more powerful impact than showing what you know. So during your first few weeks, count on making a few mistakes. Learn quickly from them, and don't let one awkward moment feel like a foreshadowing of your future with your new employer.

MANAGE STRESS TO REDUCE RISK OF COLD AND FLU

Managing stress deserves a place in your strategy for avoiding flu and cold viruses. When stress is chronic, high cortisol suppresses immune cell production, including white blood cells, several types of which are your frontline defenders against viral infections.

Do you associate stress with emotional symptoms like anxiety, irritability and feeling overwhelmed? Many people believe that if they aren't experiencing these states, then stress isn't affecting their immune system. This is a myth. Stress physiology, cortisol elevation and immune suppression happen at the cellular level.

Talk with your doctor or medical advisor to determine which flu vaccine best fits your age, health history and risk factors. Many types are now available.

