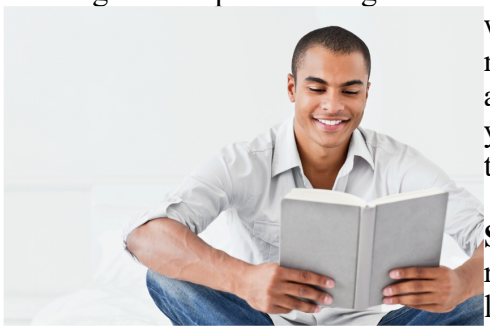
Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

All work and no play?

In today’s fast-paced world, more people are reporting that their personal stress levels have increased. Although it’s impossible to get rid of stress altogether, it is possible to effectively manage stress. One way to help achieve this is by taking on a new interest or finding a new pastime. Often, just an hour of "getting away from it all"—and doing something that you truly enjoy—is enough to refuel yourself and refocus your mind. Here are a few "new interests" that you might consider.



Start your own collection. Things like antiques, coins or stamps represent events, people and places, and can be an exciting way to learn about the world around you. Or, you can collect things that are simply special to you. The benefit of starting your own collection is that you can do it in the privacy of your home, or you can make it a more social activity by joining a club.

Discover your creative side. Whether it’s through painting, drawing or sculpting, taking up an interest in art can be an effective form of stress management. Not only does art provide a way for you to express yourself emotionally and increase your self-awareness, thinking about and creating art can help distract you from the hectic pace of the world around you. Many first-time artists also enjoy the sense of accomplishment that comes from creating something personal for themselves, or for others.

Put your feet in motion to music. Dancing has something for everyone. You can meet new people, get exercise and build self-confidence all at the same time. If you are looking to relieve stress, the physical exertion of dancing, combined with the music that accompanies it, is one of the most effective stress relievers available.

Explore the world through books. Feed your mind with historical events from the past, or immerse yourself with a good fiction novel. Reading transports you into another place or time—where the only boundary is your imagination.

In a time crunched and stress fuelled world, adding in playtime can actually benefit your mental health. Carving out a little time for yourself can help you to renew your energy and reduce stress levels while simultaneously increasing your happiness and boosting production.
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