



EFR EMPLOYEE & FAMILY RESOURCES

UNPLUG TO RECHARGE



WE WORK, PLAY, AND LIVE WITH SCREENS EVERY DAY. HOW CAN UNPLUGGING BOOST YOUR WELL-BEING?

Discover how unplugging from work and the rest of the world for a few hours each day can improve both your physical and mental health.

Many of us use our phones as our alarm clock, making it the first thing we use when we wake up in the morning. That can lead to a scroll through social media and our messages, meaning we tend to see what the world is doing before we even start our day.

While technology has many benefits on both personal and societal levels, such as helping us stay connected to loved ones and the flow of information, that constant connection can actually impact our health and well-being.

There are numerous benefits from

TECH-FREE RELAXATION

Check out these [five screen-free relaxation activities](#) to help you unwind and de-stress!

unplugging from your devices every once in awhile; check out these tips for improving your personal well-being:

Compare yourself less.

With social media at our fingertips, we are constantly updated with what people are doing or accomplishing. Because people often put their best selves forward, even if it doesn't tell the whole story, we can feel envious or left out when most of what we see is vacation photos, happy family get-togethers, job promotions, weddings, and more.

Unplugging allows you to see and be grateful for what you have. It allows you to find satisfaction in your life when you're not comparing yourself to a misrepresentation of someone else's.

Live in the present moment.

Having 24/7 access to everyone's lives, many of us have developed the fear of missing out, otherwise known as FOMO. We see what our friends and loved ones are doing, and we want to be part of the fun.

Our constant connection with others also leaves little time for meditation, self-reflection, and solitude, which are important elements in taking care of our mental health, especially when many of us are becoming increasingly anxious about managing our digital life and keeping up with others' adventures.

Fewer online distractions allow us to better experience the world



around us. Instead of thinking about your social media post announcing your promotion at work, take a moment to absorb your feelings of accomplishment, joy, and excitement. Be present for yourself.

Engage in authentic interactions.

In a world of constant connection, we, as a society, have never felt more lonely. According to a study by Cigna, 46 percent of U.S. adults report sometimes or always feeling lonely, and 47 percent report feeling left out. Moreover, only about half of Americans say they have meaningful in-person social interactions on a daily basis.

Communicating through a screen, rather than face-to-face, is not only isolating, but less effective. In-person interactions provide body language, too -- you get a better interpretation of the

other person's actual feelings and what they're trying to communicate.

If you're struggling with feelings of anxiety, depression, or loneliness, whether or not perpetuated by using screens, your Employee Assistance Program can help. Call **800.327.4692** 24/7 to speak with a masters-level clinician about positive next steps.

Get outside.

Using screens often means sitting for a period of time -- we stop all motion to focus on that email or text, or to scroll through social media. However, that time adds up, sometimes leaving us with vision problems, lower back pain, weight gain, and other issues that affect our physical health.

A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Recognizing these health risks,

turning away from the phone to instead spend time outdoors can boost your mood, give you a breath of fresh air, and get you moving!

Many of us become uncomfortable when our phone is more than a few feet away. We fall into this rhythm of continually checking social media just to see what others are up to, or even just checking to see if we got that text we've been looking forward to all day.

This month, choose a day and time to intentionally unplug from your devices for a few hours. Take time to be in the present moment, have more authentic conversations and experiences, and get outside or get moving to refresh and boost both your physical and mental health!

WELLNESS

Tis the Season to be Walking!



Walking is one of the most beneficial ways to improve physical and emotional health, yet many people underestimate its importance and overlook it as a way to get in shape or stay in shape. According to Robert Sallis, M.D., a family physician and sports medicine doctor with Kaiser Permanente, "Walking is the most studied form of exercise, and multiple studies have proven it's the best thing we can do to improve our overall health and increase longevity and functional years."

With the weather becoming more pleasant and hours of daylight extended, now is the time to get outside, breathe fresh air, and get your body moving. While it might be tempting to walk and text or walk and scroll, staying connected to devices makes it difficult to be aware of your surroundings and enjoy nature.

Consider This:

- Wear comfortable shoes and apply sunscreen
- If walking at dawn or dusk, wear reflective and light clothing.
- Carry a phone for emergencies but do your best to stay off your device
- Let someone know where you're walking if you are going somewhere remote, like a trail or the woods
- Bring a water bottle

Do you live in Iowa? Do you want support to get moving? If so, check out the [Walk With Ease program!](#)



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