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information | for your life

TEEN TIME: Finding a Balance

So, you are a full time high school student. You are in a couple of school sponsored clubs, march with the school band and compete on the swim team. You are always low on cash so you want to get a part-time job. Your social life is okay but you'd really like to be able to hang out more with your friends. Sometimes it seems like it is all top priority, and there is never enough time to do everything that you want to do. If this sounds like you, these tips will help you regain some balance in your life.

ORGANIZE AND PRIORITIZE

Some teenagers find that using a planner is a great way to organize their busy lives. Color coding activities makes it easy to see at a glance how your time is spent. Write down everything that you do during a day, a week, and a month. Once you are sure that you have included all your activities, estimate the amount of time that you spend on each activity. You may find that there are simply not enough hours in a day to do everything you want to do. Now comes the hard part: what can you eliminate or spend less time doing? Keep the following things in mind as you make these decisions.

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TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

SET A SCHEDULE

Go to bed at a set time each night and get up at the same time each morning. Disrupting this schedule may lead to insomnia. "Sleeping in" on weekends also makes it harder to wake up early on Monday morning because it resets your sleep cycles for a later awakening.

EXERCISE

Try to exercise 20-30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep, although a workout soon before bedtime may interfere with sleep. For maximum benefit, try to get your exercise about 5-6 hours before going to bed.

AVOID CAFFEINE, NICOTINE, AND ALCOHOL

Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, which acts as a stimulant and keeps people awake. Sources of caffeine include coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs, and some pain relievers. Smokers tend to sleep very lightly and often wake up in the early morning due to nicotine withdrawal. Alcohol robs people of deep sleep and REM sleep and keeps them in the lighter stages of sleep.

RELAX BEFORE BED

A warm bath, reading, or another relaxing routine can make it easier to fall sleep. You can train yourself to associate certain restful activities with sleep and make them part of your bedtime ritual.

SLEEP UNTIL SUNLIGHT

If possible, wake up with the sun, or use very bright lights in the morning. Sunlight helps the body's internal biological clock reset itself each day. Sleep experts recommend exposure to an hour of morning sunlight for people having problems falling asleep.

DON'T LIE IN BED AWAKE

If you can't get to sleep, don't just lie in bed. Do something else, like reading, watching television, or listening to music, until you feel tired. The anxiety of being unable to fall asleep can actually contribute to insomnia.

CONTROL ROOM TEMPERATURE

Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep or prevent you from falling asleep.

SEE A DOCTOR IF YOUR SLEEPING PROBLEM CONTINUES

If you have trouble falling asleep night after night, or if you always feel tired the next day, then you may have a sleep disorder and should see a physician. Your primary care physician may be able to help you; if not, you can probably find a sleep specialist at a major hospital near you. Most sleep disorders can be treated effectively, so you can finally get that good night's sleep you need.

National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. (Updated 2007, May 21). Brain basics: Understanding sleep. (NIH Publication No.06-3440-c). Retrieved November 9, 2010, from <http://www.ninds.nih.gov>



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Halloween

HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

For many people, autumn events like Halloween and Harvest Day are fun times to dress up in costumes, go trick-or-treating, attend parties, and eat yummy treats. These events are also opportunities to provide nutritious snacks, get physical activity, and focus on safety.

CHECK OUT THESE TIPS TO HELP MAKE THE FESTIVITIES FUN AND SAFE FOR TRICK-OR-TREATERS AND PARTY GUESTS.

Going trick-or-treating?

- S:** Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible.
- A:** Avoid trick-or-treating alone. Walk in groups or with a trusted adult.
- F:** Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you.
- E:** Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering

before eating them. Limit the amount of treats you eat.

- H:** Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you. Always WALK and don't run from house to house.
- A:** Always test make-up in a small area first. Remove it before bedtime to prevent possible skin and eye irritation.
- L:** Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible.
- L:** Lower your risk for serious eye injury by not wearing decorative contact lenses.
- O:** Only walk on sidewalks whenever possible, or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe.
- W:** Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls.
- E:** Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid eating homemade treats made by strangers.
- E:** Enter homes only if you're with a trusted adult. Only visit well-lit houses. Don't stop at dark houses. Never accept rides from strangers.
- N:** Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.

Expecting trick-or-treaters or party guests?

- Provide healthier treats for trick-or-treaters such as low-calorie treats and drinks. For party guests, offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, and cheeses.
- Use party games and trick-or-treat time as an opportunity for kids to get their daily dose of 60 minutes of physical activity.
- Be sure walking areas and stairs are well-lit and free of obstacles that could result in falls.
- Keep candle-lit jack o'lanterns and luminaries away from doorsteps, walkways, landings, and curtains. Place them on sturdy tables, keep them out of the reach of pets and small children, and never leave them unattended.
- Remind drivers to watch out for trick-or-treaters and to drive safely.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC). (Updated October 2012).



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SCHOOL MUST COME FIRST

Doing well in school will lay the groundwork for your success as an adult. Set goals for grades and develop a realistic plan for achieving them. Make schoolwork a priority by setting time aside every afternoon or evening to do homework or study. Start with the most difficult assignments first, breaking them into parts if necessary. Don't procrastinate—you know that those assignments won't go away and may actually be more difficult to do if you wait until the last minute.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE IMPORTANT TOO

Decide what you really love to do and pursue that. Don't try to be involved in everything that is available.

SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE WHO SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

It is a great way to make new friends. Schedule time with your friends—good relationships will develop into great relationships if you nurture them.

WORKING IN TIME FOR A PART-TIME JOB

Restrict your time at work to no more than 15-20 hours a week. Working more than that while you are going to school full time is likely to create undue stress in your life. It also affects your ability to do well in school or to enjoy your free time.

By prioritizing all the things you do and organizing your time, you will use your time most effectively. This is key to keeping the balance in your life now and for many years to come.

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2013). Teen time: Finding a balance. Raleigh, NC.

COPING WITH CHANGE

Change can take many forms and affect every aspect of our lives. It occurs in our family, work, social life, and well-being. Some changes involve additions, such as births, new friends or relationships, and new possessions. Others involve losses, such as death, divorce, or illness. Some changes are sudden, such as losing your job, while others are more gradual, such as entering middle age.

Change can be good or bad, depending on the person and the circumstances. For example, a divorce may be seen as a tragedy or a relief. A promotion is generally viewed as a change for the good, but if you're anxious or unsure of your skills, you may view it as negative or threatening.

Whatever its form, change requires an adjustment of some kind. This takes energy and, when the demands are too great, it can drain you physically and mentally. Change creates stress, so it needs to be managed effectively to prevent the development of stress-related symptoms and illnesses. Unmanaged stress can cause physical and emotional disorders, including headaches and digestive problems to high blood pressure and insomnia.

The key to coping with change is to recognize it, understand its effects, and bring it—or your responses to it—under control as much as possible. When you can't control the change itself, adjusting your attitude toward it can help lessen any stress or tension. You'll stay healthier that way.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT CHANGE

Strive for moderate change

Change is stressful, even when it's positive and welcome. But no change at all can make us feel like we're stagnating. Strive for balance. Too much stress at once, or even a moderate amount of stress over a long period of time, can be unhealthy.

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COPING WITH CHANGE

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Research shows that people who experience a lot of changes in a brief period—within a year, for instance—are more likely to experience an accident or illness within that period than people who face fewer changes.

Try to see the opportunities in change

The Chinese word for crisis is made up of two symbols: the symbol for danger and the symbol for opportunity. Try to think of change as a mixture of crisis (or danger, or uncertainty) and opportunity. Ask yourself what lesson you might learn, what skill you might develop, or what aspect of yourself you might strengthen as a result of coping with this change.

FAQs

Only unwanted changes create problems, right?

No, not really. Any change places demands on you, whether it's one that's wanted, such

as a raise, a birth, or marriage; or one that's not, such as a job loss, a death, or divorce. It's important to be aware of major changes in your life so you can take steps to cope effectively.

Things at work always seem to be changing, especially lately. How can I cope with changes when I have little or no control over them?

First, ask yourself whether it's really true that you don't have control over the changes. Is there a staff meeting, suggestion box, or committee at work that allows you to make suggestions before changes are decided? Even if the changes are ones you don't like, you may feel better knowing you at least had some say about them.

Second, try to view change as a natural and healthy part of life. A company that doesn't change is unlikely to grow and survive. That goes for people, too. Accept change as inevitable and look for ways to make the change work to your advantage when possible. See it as an opportunity, not a crisis. Sometimes, changing your attitude is the best strategy for coping with change.

I just turned 50. My friends and family threw me a big birthday party, yet I'm really feeling down. I'm already getting mail from the AARP—but I'm not ready to be put out to pasture. Everyone assumes I'm happy, but I feel terrible. What's wrong with me?

You may be stressed out about getting older, and turning 50 is a stark reminder of this. You knew it was coming, but you still may not feel prepared. With age come changes in lifestyle and self-image—and a sense of mortality. This can be very stressful, yet others may not realize you're going through this.

As you move from stage to stage in your development, you'll face unique crises and opportunities. Don't be surprised to find yourself confronting stress at most, if not all, of these stages:

1. Moving from adolescence to early adulthood
2. Turning 30 (or 40, 50, etc.)
3. Becoming a parent
4. Reaching midlife
5. Becoming a grandparent
6. Retiring

Being aware that these are normal, predictable phases of life can help you prepare, cope with and minimize stress.

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2013). *Coping with change*. Raleigh, NC.