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# Your EAP news

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** | 1-800-999-7222 | [anthemEAP.com](http://anthemEAP.com)

## Starting – and sticking to – a healthy plan for exercise

Flowers are blooming, the weather is breaking – yes, springtime is the season for fresh starts. It's also a great time to work toward a healthier you, with a new plan to start exercising and keep it going. So how do you start?

### **Step 1: Get rid of your roadblocks**

You know all the reasons why you should start exercising, but it's easy to come up with just as many reasons, if not more, why you can't. Here's how to get past some of the most common reasons that stop people from exercising regularly:

**Roadblock:** I don't have time.

**Solution:** Break your exercise routine down into 10-minute chunks. Take a quick, brisk walk. Spend 10 minutes doing jumping jacks. Or spend 10 minutes standing in front of your desk instead of sitting.

**Roadblock:** I don't belong to a gym.

**Solution:** You don't need one. Do you have stairs in your home or your office? Go up and down them a few times. Is there a public library nearby? Ask if they lend out exercise videos or simply try an online fitness video or download your favorite fitness app. When it comes to getting moving, all you need is motivation.

**Roadblock:** I'm too self-conscious.

**Solution:** Remember, nobody's really watching. People have more to think about than how you look when you're working out. And if they do care, they're not really worth worrying about.

**Roadblock:** I don't think I'm healthy enough to exercise.

**Solution:** Start very small. If you're worried about making it on a long hike, go around the block a few times so if you start to feel winded or get tired, you can stop at home to recharge. Talk to your doctor or a professional trainer, who can give you exercise advice based on any health condition you may have.

### **Step 2: Stick to it!**

Once you're in a routine, it's easy to get a little bored. Here are a few tips to stay motivated:

- **Use online tools.** For example, check out the [NIH Body Weight Planner](#). This planner can guide you through creating personalized calorie and physical activity plans to reach specific goals.
- **Start using a wearable.** Devices you can wear, such as pedometers and fitness trackers, can help you count steps, calories and minutes of physical activity.



## Lecturas recomendadas para esta temporada

Tu programa Employee Assistance Program (EAP) también ofrece información útil en español. Para leer los artículos que enviamos este trimestre, visita [anthemEAP.com](http://anthemEAP.com) y selecciona español. Encontrarás la lista de temas tratados en esta edición en la sección "Noticias para Usted."

*continued>>*

- **Keep an activity journal.** Writing down what you've done can make you feel more accountable.
- **Set goals.** As you track your activity, try to set specific short- and long-term goals. For example, instead of "I will be more active," set a goal such as "I will take a walk after lunch at least two days a week."
- **Get support.** Ask a family member or friend to be active with you. Your workout buddy can help make your activities more fun.
- **Give yourself nonfood rewards.** Did you lose that first five pounds or make it up three flights of steps without getting winded? Treat yourself to a manicure or a movie.
- **Tell yourself that not exercising is a nonoption.** You're the boss of your own health. It's up to you to keep yourself in check.

Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). *Staying Active at Any Size* (July 2016); [niddk.nih.gov](http://niddk.nih.gov).



## Caring for the elderly? Know your resources.

If you're caring for your older parents or other senior loved ones, it can be difficult to support their health and well-being on your own. But there are resources out there to help. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can connect you with resources and referrals to help each of you live life to its fullest, including:

- **In-home services** designed to help older adults stay in their own homes or in the homes of family members. **Meals on Wheels programs**, community transportation services for seniors, visitor programs and access to home adaptive equipment may be available in your community at no or low cost to the family. Do an online search for *aging, elderly or human services* for information on programs and services for your area. You can also contact the Area Agency on Aging office nearest you.
- **Senior communities** that include residential care for independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing care and memory care. Most residential options will require an assessment of the older person before they can be admitted to determine the care they need. Fees and payment sources for residential services vary greatly. Be sure to compare communities – and if you don't want to commit to "buying" permanent placement for your loved one, many communities now offer rental options.
- **Geriatric care managers** to help you determine which resources and services are most appropriate for your loved one and which are local to your area. Geriatric care managers are available in most communities and usually charge for their services.
- **Caregiver support groups**, which can be found at many local hospitals and senior care facilities. Senior centers may also have information on local support groups.
- **The Social Security Administration**, which can answer questions about benefits and can automatically deposit payments into the bank account of your loved one.

Source: Workplace Options. *Providing Care to Older Adults* (reviewed 2017). Raleigh, NC: Author.

## Forgive, forget and feel better

At one point or another, most of us have been hurt by the actions or words of others. These can be painful moments – but they don't have to last a lifetime. By practicing forgiveness, you can move beyond those bad feelings and embrace healthier emotional qualities such as peace, hope and joy.

### What is forgiveness?

It's the process of letting go of hurt, resentment, sadness, anger, hate, a desire for retaliation and other negative feelings that come up when there's hurtful behavior. Forgiveness isn't just something you do for those who have hurt you; it's also something you do for yourself and your own well-being.

### What are the benefits of forgiving someone?

Forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Lower blood pressure

- Fewer symptoms of depression
- A stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Better self-esteem

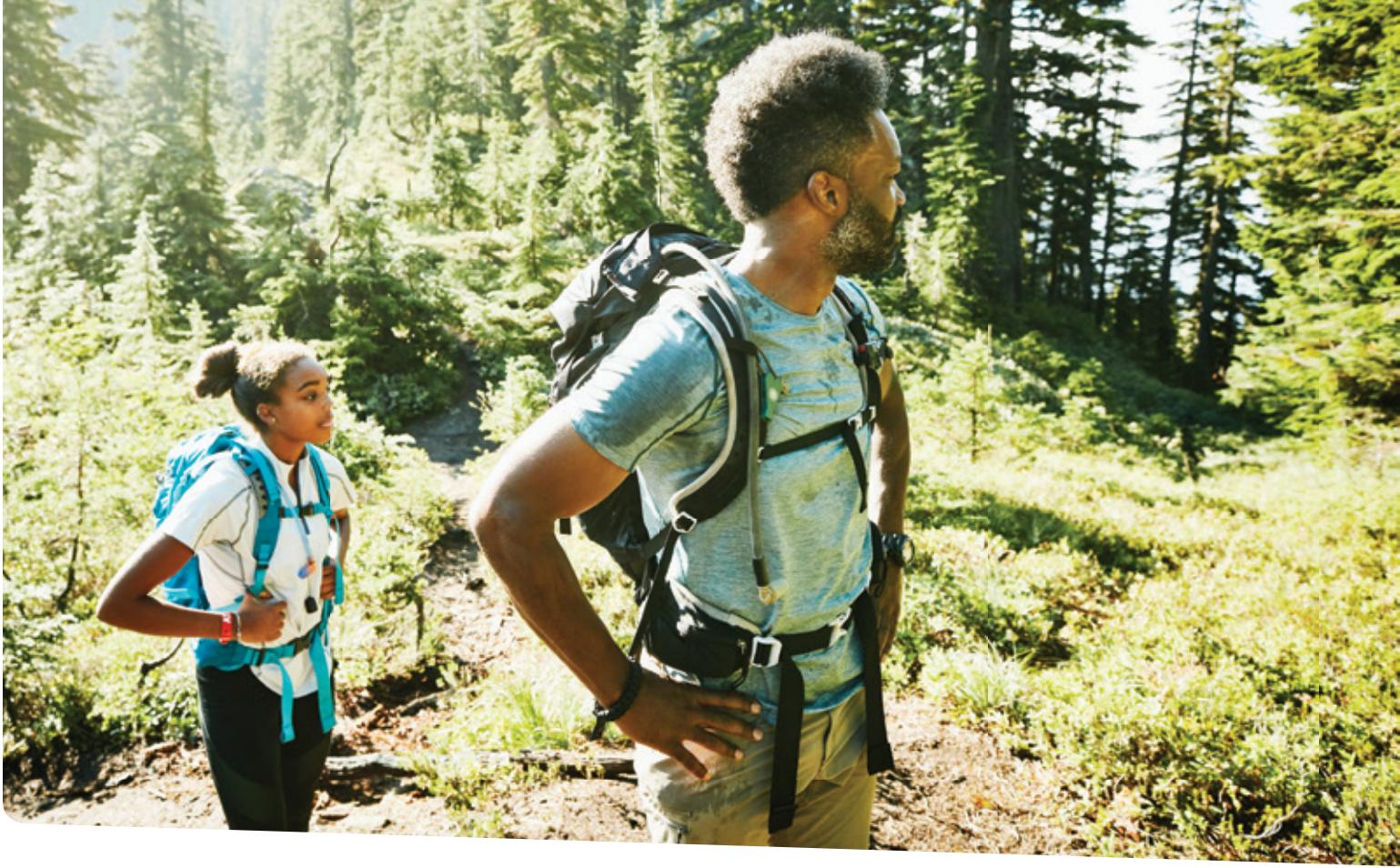
### What if you can't forgive?

There are true effects that come with carrying a grudge. You could become depressed or anxious, feel like your life lacks meaning and become so consumed by your feelings that you can't enjoy the present.

So how do you forgive? To start, identify what needs to be healed and realize how much harm was done to you. Then move away from your role as a victim and release the control the other person has had on you. By taking away the power a person has over you, you can begin to heal.

Source: Mayo Clinic, *Forgiveness: Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness* (November 4, 2017): [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org).





## Parents: tips for raising an active family

In the U.S., the percentage of children and adolescents affected by obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s.\* So how can you, as a parent, make sure your children beat the odds? The key is to be active with your family. Here are some tips to fit physical activity into a busy week — and make it fun:

- **Make activity part of your daily plan.** Find two 30-minute time slots each week when your family could fit in physical activity. Choose times when your family is typically together and make sure it's a time of day when you all usually have a lot of energy.
- **Work exercise into other routines.** Walk to work, school or a friend's house. Take a walk to the store instead of jumping in the car. Rake leaves, play tag or "speed clean" the house together.
- **Start with what you know.** At first, do things everyone knows how to do, such as riding a bike or dancing. Pick activities that don't need any expensive sports gear, like jogging, doing pushups or tossing a ball.
- **Be a good example.** If you come home, plop on the sofa and eat junk food all night, your kids will copy you. By taking care of your body by eating right and staying active, you'll pass on those good habits to your children.

Source: U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, *Parent tips: Be Active and Have Fun* (accessed December 2018): [nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov).

\* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Obesity* (September 18, 2018): [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).



Important: This document is intended for general information only. It does not provide the reader with specific direction, advice, or recommendations. You may wish to contact an appropriate professional for questions concerning your particular situation.

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