

News and Views

Municipal Employees Chapter Lawrenceville, Georgia

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PASSION & PURPOSE
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES CHAPTER

President's Corner

By: Doris Davis, CPS/CAP

CORE TIP: Focus on *Stretching*

How many of you can touch your toes? At this stage in my life (I fall in the 50 and over crowd) I can't. It is a known fact that over time if you don't use your muscles, you will lose flexibility. But don't let this defeat you, there are exercises you can do help regain the loss. One of my 2011 goals is to work on improving my range of motion.

But we should not limit ourselves to thinking of stretching only in the physical sense. There are other areas in our lives we need to stretch also.

Stretch your mind. Alzheimer's research has linked maintaining mentally stimulating pursuits to helping people stay healthy. Doing crossword puzzles or learning new skills are ways to keep active. Go back to school or take a dance class. Anything that challenges your brain to think in a different way counts.

Stretch your service. Getting involved in community service is a good way to get the focus off your problems. I was always told if I looked around, I could always find someone worse off than me. Be thankful for what you have and reach out to those who need a helping hand. It could be as simple as a smile and kind word to a stranger. You never know what people around you are going through and how you could impact their lives.

Stretch your leadership. Are leaders born or are they developed over time? The answer is yes. Most people have the potential to be leaders. Some seemed to be born with more underlying characteristics than others; however, if you do not work toward the goal, leadership skills will not develop. Former U.S. Secretary of the State Colin Powell has stated that effective leadership is through trial and error. A true leader learns from experience and moves on. Being a leader may require you to get out of your comfort zone and do something new. It will be well worth the effort to push yourself a little further than you've gone before.

The good news about stretching is you can do it everyday. With practice you will see results by going to a greater degree than you did the last time. Stretching has multiple benefits and feels good too. So let's get stretching!

2010 - 2011
Strengthening the Core

C - commitment
O - opportunities
R - resources
E - excellence

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The biggest defect we human beings have is our short-sightedness. We don't see what we could be. We should be looking at our potential, stretching ourselves into everything we can become.

~ Mitch Albom Quotes from
Tuesdays with Morrie

The link to this article was in the January 13, 2011 Office Pro Express. In case you didn't see it, I thought it was appropriate for us and snow jam 2011.

How to Feel Better in the Wintertime

[Sarah Nagel](#) 27th December [General](#) [11 Comments](#)

During the winter, it can feel like the forces of nature are conspiring to keep you from going anywhere or doing anything. Just getting to work can feel like an epic battle. With winter upon us, the increasing darkness and freezing temperatures can feel downright oppressive at times, and it can be tough to stay energized and motivated.

Although hibernation may feel like the best solution, there are other effective ways to cope. We turned to [Kathianne Sellers Williams](#), MEd, RD, a registered dietitian and wellness coach, for expert tips on keeping energy levels up during the dark, cold days of winter.

How can people feel their best despite seasonal changes?

I lived in Minneapolis for 4 years and Boston for 10, yet I am not a fan of winter. All those years in the bitter cold and I never got used to it. Each year as the leaves started to fall I would dread the approaching darkness and the long, long cold months ahead. I'm sure I had seasonal affective disorder. Then one year I realized my complaining was only making me and those around me miserable. So I tried something new. I decided to embrace it. I couldn't change that winter was going to happen, but I could change my attitude (and my behaviors.) Here's what my "Operation Embrace Winter" looked like: I didn't let myself say anything negative about winter. I bought a very warm and stylish coat (which was worth every penny) and focused on winter's gifts: drinking tea, sitting by fires, making soups, etc. I kept up with my yoga and exercise routines (which are easy to skip when it's so cold out!) and chose to view winter in a more spiritual way – as a time for reflection and renewal. Deciding to embrace the season is the best advice I can give.

Do you have any dietary suggestions to help people stay energized and alert throughout the workday?

Small frequent meals/ snacks are important to maintain blood sugar, and therefore energy levels. Hydration is also important for staying energized and often people forget about that when it is cold out. The heated air indoors can really dry you out. I recommend sipping tea during the day (preferably without caffeine) and having broth based soups to aid in adequate hydration. Finally, I would encourage people to learn more about Vitamin D, the "sunshine vitamin." Recent research has shown that many people are deficient in this vitamin, which is actually a hormone. Deficiency is especially common in people who live in northern latitudes, where they aren't getting adequate sunlight in winter months.

Are there any snacks you would recommend to give people a solid energy boost?

A combination of a whole grain/unrefined carbohydrate and a protein will do the trick. The size of one's snack depends on their meal sizes and weight goals but, in general, some examples are: apple slices with almond butter, 1/2 peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole grain bread, a cup of veggie/ lentil/ split pea soup, or hummus and veggies.

What kind of exercise routine do you recommend for people to try to maintain during the winter? Should they adjust their routine at all?

It's important for everyone to find what energizes them. Each person is different. I would encourage people to look outside traditional modes of exercise. There are so many options! Zumba, Nia, dance classes, rock climbing and ice climbing, hiking, snow shoeing, and cross country skiing, are just a few. Power walk with a friend and make it a social event as well. Just do something physical that brings you more life force. Choose something that you look forward to, NOT something you dread and do just because you know you "should." If run-

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How to Feel Better in the Wintertime

(Continued from page 2)

ning on the treadmill isn't your thing, no worries. Find what is. And be sure to get outside – even if it is cold out. Getting fresh air is important.

What are some practical ways people can increase their sense of motivation?

I encourage my clients to link their goals with something they wear everyday (i.e. a watch or ring) so they are continually reminded of what they are working towards. Set reminders on your computer. Finding support is also incredibly important. Surround yourself with people who positively reinforce your goals. Ask people for support and tell them specifically how they can help you.

What are some signs people should go visit a doctor or specialist for more help?

Symptoms of winter-onset seasonal affective disorder include: depressed mood, hopelessness, sleep disturbances, changes in weight and/or appetite, difficulty concentrating, and social withdrawal. If you think you might have seasonal affective disorder, talk to your doctor so you can start feeling your best.



Stretching: Focus on flexibility

You can stretch anytime, anywhere. Consider the benefits of stretching, such as increased flexibility and circulation. Then ready, set, stretch!

[By Mayo Clinic staff](#)



You pound out a few miles on the treadmill. You work your way through a series of strength training exercises. You even add some time on the stationary bike for good measure — and you smile with satisfaction that you made it through your workout.

Nothing to do now but hit the shower.

Not so fast. Did you consider stretching those muscles that pulled you through your invigorating workout? Understand why stretching matters — and how to stretch correctly.

Benefits of stretching

Most aerobic and strength training programs inherently cause your muscles to contract and flex. That's why regular stretching is a powerful part of any exercise program. Consider this:

- **Stretching increases flexibility.**

Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance. Tasks such as lifting packages, bending to tie your shoes or hurrying to catch a bus become easier and less tiring.

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Stretching

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- **Stretching improves range of motion of your joints.**

Good range of motion keeps you in better balance, which will help keep you mobile and less prone to falls — and the related injuries — especially as you age.

- **Stretching improves circulation.**

Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. Improved circulation can speed recovery after muscle injuries.

- **Stretching can relieve stress.**

Stretching relaxes the tense muscles that often accompany stress. Some studies indicate that stretching helps prevent athletic injuries as well. However, this finding remains controversial. Other studies don't support stretching as a way to prevent injury.

Stretching essentials

Ready, set, stretch!

- **Target major muscle groups.** When you're stretching, focus on your calves, thighs, hips, lower back, neck and shoulders. Also stretch muscles and joints that you routinely use at work or play.
- **Warm up first.** You may hurt yourself if you stretch cold muscles. Warm up by walking while gently pumping your arms, or do a favorite exercise at low intensity for five to 10 minutes. Better yet, stretch after you exercise — when your muscles are warm and more receptive to stretching.
- **Pace yourself.** It takes time to lengthen tissues safely. Hold each stretch for about 30 seconds, then repeat on the other side. Do each stretch three or four times.

- **Don't bounce.** Bouncing as you stretch can cause small tears in the muscle. These tears leave scar tissue as the muscle heals, which tightens the muscle even further — making you less flexible and more prone to pain.

- **Focus on a pain-free stretch.** Expect to feel tension while you're stretching. If it hurts, you've gone too far. Back off to the point where you don't feel any pain, then hold the stretch.

Relax and breathe freely.

Don't hold your breath while you're stretching. How often to stretch is up to you. As a general rule, stretch whenever you exercise. If you don't exercise regularly, you might want to stretch at least three times a week to maintain flexibility. If you have a problem area, such as tightness in the back of your leg, you might want to stretch more often.

Know when to exercise caution.

You can stretch anytime, anywhere — in your home, at work or when you're traveling. If you have a chronic condition or an injury, however, you may need to alter your approach to stretching. For example, if you have a strained muscle, stretching it like usual may cause further harm. Discuss with your doctor or physical therapist the best way to stretch.



<http://exercise.about.com/cs/exerciseworkouts//blofficeworkout.htm>

Use this link for a complete Office Stretching Workout.



18 Common Work E-mail Mistakes

Andrew G. Rosen, On Tuesday January 18, 2011, 2:10 pm EST

Most of us rely on e-mail as one of our primary communication tools. And given the number of messages we send and receive, we do it with remarkable success.

But as with anything, the more e-mails we send, the more likely we are to screw one up. And simple e-mail mistakes can be disastrous. They can cost us a raise, promotion--even a job.

With a new year upon us, this is the perfect time to go through some of the worst e-mail mistakes employees make and how to avoid them.

1. Sending before you mean to. Enter the recipient's e-mail address only when your e-mail is ready to be sent. This helps reduce the risk of an embarrassing misfire, such as sending an important e-mail to the wrong person or e-mailing a half-written note.

[See [9 Little-Known Ways to Damage Your Reputation at Work.](#)]

2. Forgetting the attachment. If your e-mail includes an attachment, upload the file to the e-mail *before* composing it. This eliminates the embarrassing mistake of forgetting it before hitting "send," and having to send another e-mail saying you forgot to attach the document.

3. Expecting an instant response. Don't send an e-mail and show up at the recipient's desk 30 seconds later asking if they've received it. They did, and they'll answer at their convenience. That's the point of e-mail.

4. Forwarding useless e-mails. I've never seen a single e-mail forward at work that was beneficial. Whether it's a silly joke or a heartwarming charity, there's never a time to share an e-mail forward using your work e-mail.

5. Not reviewing all new messages before replying. When you return to the office after a week or more away, review all new e-mails before firing off responses. It might be hard to accept, but odds are, things did march on without you. Replying to something that was already handled by a co-worker creates [extra communication](#), which can lead to confusion, errors, and at the very least, wasted time for everyone involved.

6. Omitting recipients when you "reply all." Unless there's an important reason to omit someone, don't arbitrarily leave people off the response if they were included on the original message.

7. Including your e-mail signature again and again. Nor do you need to include it at the end of an e-mail you send to your long-time co-worker who sits six feet away. If you have your e-mail program set to automatically generate a signature with each new message, take a second to delete it when communicating with someone who knows who you are. It's always wise to include your phone number, but the entire blurb with your title and mailing address is often nothing but clutter.

8. Composing the note too quickly. Don't be careless; write every e-mail as if it will be read at Saint Peter's Square during the blessing of a new Pope. Be respectful with your words and take pride in every communication.

9. Violating your company's e-mail policy. Many companies have aggressive spam filters in place that monitor "blue" language. From that famous four-letter word to simple terms, such as "job search," don't end up tripping the system by letting your guard down.

10. Failing to include basic greetings. Simple pleasantries do the trick. Say "hi" at the start of the message and "thanks" at the end. Be sure to use the recipient's name. Be polite yet brief with your courtesy.

11. E-mailing when you're angry. Don't do it. Ever. Recall buttons are far from a perfect science, and sending a business e-mail [tainted by emotion](#) is often a catastrophic mistake. It sounds cliché, but sleep on it. Save the message as a draft and see if you still want to send it the next morning.

[See [Don't Make These Interview Mistakes.](#)]

12. Underestimating the importance of the subject line.

The subject line is your headline. Make it interesting, and you'll increase the odds of getting the recipient's attention. Our inboxes are cluttered; you need to be creative and direct to help the recipient cut through the noise. You should consistently use meaningful and descriptive subject lines. This will help your colleagues determine what you're writing about and build your "inbox street cred," which means important messages are more likely to be read.

13. Using incorrect subject lines. Change the subject line if you're changing the topic of conversation. Better yet, start a new e-mail thread.

14. Sending the wrong attachment. If you double-check an attachment immediately before sending and decide that you need to make changes, don't forget to update the source file. Making corrections to the version that's attached to the e-mail does not often work, and it can lead to different versions of the same doc floating around.

15. Not putting an e-mail in context. Even if you were talking to someone an hour ago about something, remind them in the e-mail why you're writing. In this multi-tasking world of ours, it's easy for even the sharpest minds to forget what's going on.

16. Using BCC too often. Use BCC (blind carbon copy) sparingly. Even though it's supposed to be a secret, it rarely is. Burn someone once, and they'll never trust you again. Likewise, forwarding e-mail is a great way to [destroy your credibility](#). When people send you something, they aren't expecting you to pass it on to your co-workers. The e-mail might make its way back to the sender, who will see that their original message was shared. They might not call you out on it, but they'll make a mental note that you can't be trusted. [For more career advice, visit [U.S. News Careers](#), or find us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).]

17. Relying too much on e-mail. News flash! No one is sitting around staring at their inbox waiting for your e-mail. If something is urgent, use another means of communication. A red "rush" exclamation point doesn't compare to getting up from your desk and conducting business in person.

18. Hitting "reply all" unintentionally. This is a biggie. And it's not just embarrassing; depending on what you wrote in that e-mail, it can ruin your relationship with a co-worker or even your boss. Take extra care whenever you respond so you don't hit this fatal button.

COMMITTEE UPDATE – MEMBERSHIP

By Debbie Boyd

On February 5, we officially “oriented” our newest member, Mrs. Susan Chilton, Office Services Coordinator with the Gwinnett County IT Department. Susan was looking for an organization to assist her with career development and provide support as her job responsibilities are growing. Susan has effectively expanded her “contact / support list” to include her 15 IAAP sisters within the Municipal Employees Chapter – which as we all know is a huge benefit that many of us have utilized numerous times!

Career contacts is certainly one benefit of membership, and IAAP provides local networking opportunities via the 28 Chapters throughout the state. Interesting speakers, educational programs and development activities are offered free, or for a nominal charge, via IAAP Chapters located within driving distance of Lawrenceville. Leadership opportunities and venues for professional growth are all a big part of IAAP; however

just as important are the friendships and the camaraderie shared with members of your local chapter.

IAAP is the world’s largest association devoted to administrative professionals. There are currently 28,000 members in over 600 chapters worldwide, who are dedicated to advancing the interests of those in the administrative profession.

If you know someone who is looking to enhance her career through education and professional development activities, or simply looking to join an organization that will provide “on the job support”, invite them to one of our meetings. Allow them to experience what we already know – that Municipal Employees Chapter is the BEST!

HEART FELT FACTS

- ♥ **Since 1963, February has been declared “American Heart Month”.**
- ♥ **Cardiovascular Diseases, including stroke, are our nation’s no. 1 killer.**
- ♥ **In 2006, Heart Disease was the cause of death in nearly 316,000 females.**
- ♥ **Heart Disease is the 2nd leading cause of death in women, 45-64 years.**
- ♥ **2nd hand smoke can trigger a heart attack.**
- ♥ **Proper diet and exercise can help prevent heart disease.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chapter

- February 5, 2011 Mid-year Chapter Leadership Training
- February 17, 2011 Monthly Meeting
- February & March Community Service Food Drive

GA Division 2011

- February 25 & 26 CDW/Student Conference
Host Chapter: DeKalb
- May 2 Golf Tournament
Sponsored by: Georgia Division
- June 3-5 Annual Meeting
Host Chapter: Albany Area

International 2011

- March 6-9 Spring Conference
Tampa, FL
- July 24-27 EFAM
Montreal, Quebec