



Alive & WELL

WPS
HEALTH INSURANCE®

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Organize Your Environment for Positive Living

Some environments can cause stress if they are cluttered or set up inefficiently. Sound familiar? Is your work station or desk set up optimally? How about your kitchen, home office, bathroom, or living room? Here's a tool called "5S" that can help you turn any space into a positive environment that will reduce stress, improve efficiency, and reduce wasted time. It's part of a larger organizational method called Six Sigma, and here's how it works:

Step 1: Sift—Separate the items in the selected environment and eliminate those you don't need. The objective: Eliminate the clutter of unnecessary items.

Step 2: Sort—Group the remaining items in the selected environment by task, frequency of use, etc. The objective: Reduce having to gather items when completing a task.

Step 3: Sanitize—Clean the selected area. The objective: Create an attractive environment in which it is easier to work.

Step 4: Smart Placement—Set up the environment so all tasks completed in that area can be done efficiently. The objective: Reduce time spent searching and gathering items to complete a task.

Step 5: Sustain—Possibly the hardest step is to sustain this new environment. The objective: To maintain the improvements in one of your higher-stress environments so you will feel better about living or working in that area.

Contributed by Emily Moenck

Our Environment Issue

It's the start of a New Year—a fresh chance to achieve your goals, and set productive new ones. In 2012, the theme of each issue of Alive & Well will focus on one of the six dimensions of wellness—environmental, physical, emotional, occupational, mental, and social. The theme for our first issue is "environment." As you read these articles, we hope you discover numerous connections between the health of our planet and your own personal well-being. Enjoy!

Composting: a Win-Win for You and the Environment

Composting is nature's process of recycling decomposed organic materials into a rich soil called—what else?—compost. It occurs naturally when animals, birds, rodents, worms, insects, and microscopic organisms eat plants, leaving a combination of digested and undigested food on the ground that creates a soft, nutrient-rich soil. Backyard composting is a way to manage your organic materials, such as yard trimmings and food scraps, while benefiting the environment and beautifying your yard.

Why compost?

Many people compost to enhance the soil for their garden, making plants healthier and more productive. Composted soil provides all the essential nutrients your yard grass and garden plants need to flourish.

Composting is environmentally friendly because it reduces the amount of solid waste we put in the trash every day. The more we compost, the less we contribute to the cost of trash removal and the volume in our landfills. Using compost on the lawn and garden also reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, saving money and cutting down on chemical pollution.

How do I start composting?

For homeowners, backyard and indoor composting is the easiest way to convert small quantities of organic material into compost. Many people place their compost materials in a small bin near the kitchen and transfer the matter to a larger compost bin in their backyard.

Besides the compost bin, you only need three things:

1. Browns: dead leaves, branches, and twigs
2. Greens: grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps and coffee grounds
3. Water

For step-by-step instructions on how to compost, visit www.recyclenow.com/home_composting.

What should I compost?

Animal (cow or horse) manure	Grass clippings
Cardboard rolls	Hair and fur
Clean paper	Hay and straw
Coffee grounds	Houseplants
Coffee filters	Leaves
Cotton rags	Nutshells
Dryer lint	Sawdust
Vacuum cleaner lint	Shredded newspaper
Eggshells	Tea bags
Fireplace ashes	Wood chips
Fruits and vegetables	Wool rags
	Yard trimmings

Where can I find more information on composting?

Visit the EPA website <http://www.epa.gov> and search composting.

Contributed by Sarah Both

Sources: www.howtocompost.org, www.recycleworks.org

http://www.epa.gov/osw/conservation/rrr/composting/by_compost.htm#todo

Keep Fit in the Great Outdoors

They were big in the 70s—outdoor exercise stations made of wood and metal that dotted woodland trails and municipal parks across the country. But then came the health-club craze of the 80s and fitness trails fell out of vogue. Today, they’re making a comeback, and these free public resources are just as useful in helping people reach their fitness goals now as ever.

Outdoor exercise systems consist of basic, stationary fitness equipment installed along walking and jogging trails. The built-in beams and platforms encourage stretching, strength training, and balance exercises to complement your walk or jog. An instruction sign at each station explains the exercise, which can be adapted to each user’s age, goals, and fitness level.

Outdoor exercise stations can be found at woodland trails, municipal parks, and other outdoor settings. Check out this great activity to do with your friends and family!

Contributed by Erin Gavinski
Source: www.fittrail.com



Think Before You Throw It!

Where to Donate Your Unused Items

Did you know that more than 4 million pairs of eyeglasses are thrown away each year? And 64 million gallons of paint? That’s enough to fill 128 Olympic-sized swimming pools! Thankfully, valuable resources are available to help all of us in the never-ending, sometimes quite confusing process of donating or recycling items we no longer need.

Item	Where	For more information, visit:	Notes	What happens next?
Electronics	Best Buy	bestbuy.com/recycle	Accepts electronics regardless of brand, where they were purchased, or age.	Best Buy makes sure the item is responsibly recycled, and that hazardous materials are disposed of properly.
Tennis Shoes	Nike Stores	nikereuseashoe.com	Will take any brand but will not accept cleats or wet/damp shoes.	Shoes are shredded and made into “Nike Grind,” used for sport surfaces like tracks and new Nike products.
Eyeglasses	Lenscrafters, Sears, Sunglass Hut, Lions Clubs	volunteerguide.org	Will take prescription eyeglasses and sunglasses.	Helps people with eyesight difficulty worldwide. Sunglasses are needed in countries close to the equator to help protect eyes from sun damage.
Paint	Neighbors, charities, church groups, community organizations	planetgreen.discovery.com	As a last resort, call 1-800-CLEAN-UP to learn about paint-collection programs in your community.	Extra paint can be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch-ups • Lighter colors brought back for darker tinting • Community groups use for graffiti cover-up and other projects
Vehicles	They pick it up!	donateforcharity.com	You choose a charity from the website. Have the title and vehicle ready, does not need to be in working order. Tax deduction available.	Donate For Charity only sells the donated cars through a national network of auction and salvage houses that optimizes revenues for your charity of choice.
Plastic Bags	WalMart, Target, most grocery chains	plasticbagrecycling.org	Accepts grocery bags, retail bags with no strings, paper towel or toilet paper plastic wrap, produce and bread bags.	Most are recycled into composite lumber.

Also, check out these helpful websites:

- www.Earth911.com—Allows you to search by item and ZIP code, and then tells you where you can donate the item.
- www.donationtown.org—Enter a ZIP code, choose a charity, and schedule a free pick-up! They will leave you a tax-deduction receipt.
- www.ecosquid.com—Select your product to sell or recycle, find the best offer, send in device and get paid!

Contributor: Erin Gavinski

GREEN Your Exercise Routine

We exercise to stay fit and healthy—but how many of us consider the impact of our activities on the environment? With a little effort and a few small changes, we can do good things for ourselves and for Mother Earth.

- **Exercise outdoors.**

Because treadmills and other machines use electricity, one major step to a greener exercise routine is to ditch the indoor equipment and take advantage of fresh air and the great outdoors. This may sound challenging in cold Wisconsin winters, but it's also fun and invigorating. So bundle up and get out there!

- **Share your equipment.**

If you do buy exercise equipment, share it with friends and family. This way more people can benefit without having to buy their own equipment, and you may save some money, too.

- **Use reusable water bottles.**

Buying bottled water isn't just hard on your pocketbook; the environment pays a price as well. Carry a bottle of your own and refill it whenever you like.

- **Bring a towel.**

Paper towels create unnecessary waste. So save a tree—carry your own towel and use it every day.

- **Be creative!**

It can be fun to find alternative exercise options that do not require electricity or expensive equipment. Activities such as gardening and planting trees can be good for you and for the environment!



Contributed by Erin Gavinski
Source: www.greenhome.com

January is National Radon Action Month

The State of Wisconsin and local public health departments encourage you to test your home and prevent radon exposure during Radon Action Month this January. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

Facts about Radon gas:

- Radon is a colorless, odorless gas that is found throughout Wisconsin and the United States.
- Radon is naturally occurring and is harmlessly dispersed in outdoor air.
- When radon becomes trapped in buildings, it can be harmful at elevated levels.
- Radon can be a problem in both newly constructed homes and older homes.
- The health risks of exposure are much greater for smokers.
- Your family's risk of developing lung cancer from radon depends on the average annual level of radon in your home and the amount of time you spend there. The longer your exposure to radon, the greater the risk.



Fortunately, radon is easy and inexpensive to detect. Homes with high levels can be remedied with a simple mitigation system that vents the radon to the outside air. However, it's up to you to find out whether radon is a problem in your home. The best time of year to test is winter when the windows and the rest of the house are mostly closed. Radon levels are highest at this time.

Place the detector in the lowest area of your home that is occupied for several hours a day, where you and your family spend most of your time. Don't test your basement if it is unfinished and only used for laundry or storage. Special radon detectors are available from hardware stores or through your local public health agency or Radon Information Center for around \$20, including laboratory processing.

If an initial measurement indicates your radon exposure is higher than four picocuries per liter (pCi/L), you should test your home again to confirm the accuracy of your first result. The higher your confirmed radon results, the more important it is to address the problem.

If you have questions about radon or if you need assistance locating a contractor to install a remediation system in your home, contact your local health department for the location of the nearest Radon Information Center, or access the State Health Department's online map and list of resources.

Guest Contributor: Jessica Maloney, Public Health Educator, Wisconsin Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/radiation/radon/RadonInfoCenters.htm>

BEWARE OF PESTICIDES IN YOUR PRODUCE!

Fruits and vegetables are good for you—pesticides are not. Use the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce to help you determine which fruits and vegetables have the most pesticide residues and are the most important to buy organic.

Clean 15

(Lowest in pesticides)

- 1) Onions
- 2) Sweet corn
- 3) Pineapples
- 4) Avocado
- 5) Asparagus
- 6) Sweet peas
- 7) Mangoes
- 8) Eggplant
- 9) Cantaloupe (domestic)
- 10) Kiwi
- 11) Cabbage
- 12) Watermelon
- 13) Sweet potatoes
- 14) Grapefruit
- 15) Mushrooms

Dirty Dozen

(Think about buying these organic)

- 1) Apples
- 2) Celery
- 3) Strawberries
- 4) Peaches
- 5) Spinach
- 6) Nectarines (imported)
- 7) Grapes (imported)
- 8) Sweet bell peppers
- 9) Potatoes
- 10) Blueberries (domestic)
- 11) Lettuce
- 12) Kale/collard greens

Contributed by Jeff Hlavacka
Source: <http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/>



HEALTH ACTION CENTER

Visit the WPS Health Center (www.wpsic.com/healthcenter) and take a more active role in your health. Search the Healthwise Knowledgebase to find answers to your health questions, use our interactive symptom checker when you have an illness or injury, and get tips for living a healthier lifestyle. Every topic is reviewed by medical experts and based on the most reliable, up-to-date information.

Below we've highlighted some tools and resources from the Healthwise Knowledgebase to get you started. **Just visit the Health Center on the WPS website to access the links.**



Why should you quit smoking?

More public places are going smoke-free. And you know that smoking isn't good for your health. Plus it's expensive. But are these reasons enough for you to stop smoking? It's easier to quit if your reason is yours and yours alone. **Visit the WPS Health Center on the WPS website for some tips to help you figure out why you want to quit.**

Risky business

If you smoke, you raise your risk for heart disease, lung cancer, emphysema, and more. Even having just one of these health conditions can hurt you and the people you love. **Visit the WPS Health Center on the WPS website for a tool that will show you how smoking increases your risk for a heart attack.**

At what cost?

Looking for ways to save money? Little things add up. If you smoke, you might be surprised at how much it's cutting into your family's budget. **Visit the WPS Health Center on the WPS website for a tool that will show you how much smoking is costing you.**

www.wpsic.com/healthcenter

We Want to Hear from You

We value your feedback and suggestions. How can we improve the *Alive & Well* newsletter? If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Jeff Hlavacka, senior coordinator of preventive health services, at (608) 226-7869 or email jeff.hlavacka@wpsic.com.

Meet the WPS Wellness Team



JEFF HLAVACKA, senior coordinator of preventive health services

Jeff graduated from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, earning his bachelor of science degree in exercise physiology with minors in health education and sports coaching. Jeff holds certifications in personal training, group exercise, tobacco cessation, and worksite wellness management.



EMILY MOENCK, health promotion specialist

Emily has a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in health promotion and wellness and a graduate certificate from the Medical College of Wisconsin in public health. Before joining WPS, Emily spent four years with Kohler Co. working on occupational safety and wellness initiatives. She is also a certified American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking facilitator.



SARAH BOTH, health promotion specialist

Sarah graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a bachelor's degree in kinesiology and a submajor in exercise and fitness. She received her wellness coach certificate from the Health for Life Institute, and is also certified in ACE group exercise, Turbo Kick, PiYo™, and yoga.



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