



# The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

## Mind over matters

*Learn how to multitask mindfully*

How can people practice mindfulness in a multitasking business? Dr. Romie Mushtaq, a neurologist with expertise in mind-body medicine and mindful living, offers these three tips:

1. **Focus on a single task for an allotted amount of time.** You might say, "For 15 minutes, I'm going to read through my emails, and then for 1 hour, I'm going to make my phone calls".

If your job comes with constant interruptions that demand your attention, take several deep breaths and then prioritize them. Resist the urge to answer the phone every time it rings—unless it's your boss. If someone asks you to drop what you're doing to help with a problem, it's OK to tell them, "I'll be finished with what I'm doing in 10 minutes, then I'm all yours."

2. **When you get "stuck" in a task, change your physical environment to re-stimulate your senses.** Sometimes we bounce from one task to another because we just don't have the words to begin writing that strategic plan, or we're staring at a problem and have no ideas for solutions.

"That's the time to get up, take a walk outside, and look at the flowers and the birds—change what you're seeing," Dr. Mushtaq says. "Or turn on some relaxing music that makes you feel happy."

Offering your senses pleasant different stimulation rewires your brain for relaxation, reduces the effects of stress hormones, and helps to unfreeze your creativity center.

3. **Delegate!** We often have little control over the external stresses in our life, particularly on the job. How can you not multitask when five people want five different things from you at the same time?

"Have compassion for yourself, and reach out for help," Dr. Mushtaq says. "If you can assign a task to somebody else who's capable of handling it, do so. If you need to ask a colleague to help you out, ask!"



This will not only allow you to focus on the tasks that most need your attention, it will reduce your stress.

And who knows? The colleague you're asking for help wants to feel appreciated and part of your team!"

### news & notes

#### MINDFUL MULTITASKING

Mindfulness is not just a corporate trend, but a proven method for success says Dr. Romie Mushtaq ([www.brainbodybeauty.com](http://www.brainbodybeauty.com)).

"Even if a company doesn't make it part of the culture, employees and managers can substitute their multitasking habits with mindfulness in order to reduce stress and increase productivity," she says. "The result is that they and their colleagues will notice that they're sharper, more efficient and more creative."

Dr. Mustaq says that the physiological benefits of clearing away distractions and living in the moment have been documented in many scientific and medical studies.

"Practicing mindfulness, whether it's simply taking deep breaths, or actually meditating or doing yoga, has been shown to alter the structure and function of the brain, which is what allows us to learn, acquire new abilities and improve memory", she says. "Advances in neuroimaging techniques have taught us how these mindfulness-based techniques affect neuroplasticity."



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# Can you take the heat?

## *What you need to know*

Take these precautions to avoid heat stress:

- Gradually build up hours spent working in the heat.
- Wear light, loose clothing and a hat.
- Drink water steadily before and during working in the heat.
- Don't overexert yourself; work at a steady pace.
- Take regular breaks in cool places.

Take these actions to treat specific heat illnesses:

- **Heat cramps:** Drink water.
- **Heat exhaustion** (weakness, dizziness, sweating moist, pale, or flushed skin): Move to a cool place; loosen clothes and apply cool compresses; drink water slowly; and elevate feet 8 to 12 inches.
- **Heatstroke** (lack of sweating, high body temperature, dry and hot skin, chills; strong rapid pulse, confusion): Treat as a medical emergency; call for a doctor immediately; move to cool area immediately; use cool water to soak person's clothes and body; fan the body; and don't give fluids if victim is unconscious.

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## Got News?

**Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you**

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. [www.bxsi.com](http://www.bxsi.com). In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.

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