



**LEAVES ARE FALLING...**

Fall 2024

## Back Problems: Proper Lifting

No one is immune to having a back injury. Whether you have a strong back or have hurt your back before, it's well worth it to:

- **Stop yourself** before casually picking up a light or heavy load.
- **Plan in your mind** for the best way to lift what's in front of you. This could include getting help from one or more people.
- **Lift and move** slowly and carefully.

The time you take to use the right lifting mechanics is far less than the days, weeks, or months it can take to heal from a back injury.

### How can you lift without hurting your back?

Follow these tips to avoid compressing the spinal discs or straining your lower back when you are lifting.

- **Keep a wide base of support.** Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other (karate stance).
- **Squat down, bending at the hips and knees only.** If needed, put one knee to the floor and your other knee in front of you, bent at a right angle (half kneeling).
- **Keep good posture.** Look straight ahead, and keep your back straight, your chest out, and your shoulders back. This helps keep your upper back straight while having a slight arch in your lower back.
- **Slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees** (not your back). Keep your back straight, and don't twist as you lift.
- **Hold the load as close to your body as possible**, at the level of your belly button.
- **Use your feet** to change direction, taking small steps.
- **Lead with your hips as you change direction.** Keep your shoulders in line with your hips as you move.
- **Set down your load carefully**, squatting with the knees and hips only.

### Keep in mind:

- Do not attempt to lift by bending forward. Bend your hips and knees to squat down to your load, keep it close to your body, and straighten your legs to lift.
- Never lift a heavy object above shoulder level.
- Avoid turning or twisting your body while lifting or holding a heavy object.



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## Exercise Guidelines

Are you getting enough physical activity to maintain good health? Odds are you aren't, according to the updated federal Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Only one in five U.S. adults is getting enough exercise. The good news is there are research-backed ways to get moving, feel your best, and help prevent future health problems.

The guidelines recommend most adults should aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise, or at least 75 minutes to 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity exercise (spreading exercise throughout the week is best).

Additional health benefits can be gained by even more physical activity a week. Adults should also include muscle-strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups on two or more days weekly. Consider lifting weights (starting with very light ones if you are new to this activity) or resistance training.

Of course, if you've been working in an office for years and spent most of your off-work hours sitting, it may seem daunting to exercise that much. Just start with 10- or 15-minute sessions, and gradually work up to 30 minutes and longer. Be patient. Get your health care provider's okay before starting.

Some physical activity is better than none. In fact, adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits. While adults with chronic conditions or disabilities may not be able to meet the recommended exercise goals, they can work with their health care provider to find a way to increase activities they can do.



## October is Liver Awareness Month

Here are six ways to protect this vital organ:

- 1 Watch your alcohol use, a leading factor in liver disease. High-risk drinking for women is having more than eight drinks weekly; for men, it's exceeding 15 drinks a week.
- 2 Get vaccinated if you're at increased risk of contracting hepatitis or if you've already been infected with any form of the hepatitis virus. Check with your health care provider.
- 3 Use medications wisely. Take prescription and nonprescription drugs only when needed and only in recommended doses.
- 4 Wash your hands thoroughly before eating or preparing foods. If you're traveling in developing countries, choose bottled water to wash your hands and brush your teeth.
- 5 Avoid risky behavior. Get help if you are using illicit intravenous drugs; don't share needles to inject drugs.
- 6 Bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer if you travel to developing countries.

### Dr. Zorba's Corner Sleep Benefits

**Sleeping is more important than we ever realized.** Recent research of more than a million people showed that if you didn't get enough sleep (fewer than seven hours), you were more likely to develop high blood pressure. Other studies have linked sleep deprivation to obesity, depression, anxiety, diabetes, heart attacks and stroke. It's estimated that one in three people don't get the seven to nine hours of shuteye they need, and teens and children need eight to ten hours for their growing bodies. To get more sleep, go to bed the same time every day, wind down an hour before you go to sleep, avoid a heavy meal for a few hours before bedtime, cut down on caffeine and keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. Getting enough sleep is as important as eating right and getting enough exercise. — Zorba Paster, MD

# Anthem

## Employee Assistance Program Service Summary

Conejo Valley Unified School District

Available 24/7,  
365 days a year  
Everything you share  
is confidential.\*

When you need help meeting life's challenges, the Anthem Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here for you and your household members. Check out some of the services we offer — at no cost to you:



#### Counseling

- Up to 3 visits per issue
- Face-to-face counseling or online visits via LiveHealth Online
- Can call EAP or use the online Member Center to initiate services



#### Legal Consultation

- 30-minute phone or in-person meeting
- Discounted fees to retain a lawyer
- Online resources, including free legal forms, seminars and a library of articles



#### Financial Consultation

- Phone meeting with financial professionals
- Consultation available during regular business hours — no time limits or appointments needed
- Online resources, including articles, calculators and budgeting tools



#### ID Recovery

- Identity theft risk level checked by specialists
- Help with reporting to consumer credit agencies
- Assistance filling out paperwork and negotiating with creditors



#### Dependent care and daily living resources

- Information available on child care, adoption, summer camps, college placement, elder care and assisted living through the EAP website
- Phone consultation with a work-life specialist
- For help with everyday needs, like pet sitting, relocation resources and more



#### Other anthemEAP.com resources

- Well-being articles, podcasts and monthly webinars
- Self-assessment tools for depression, anxiety, relationships, alcohol use, eating habits and more



#### Crisis consultation

- Toll-free number for emergencies
- Round-the-clock help available
- Critical event support online to help with planning, coping and recovery resources when tragedy strikes



#### On-demand digital resources

- The WellPost blog at anthemEAP.com, featuring Health & Wellness topics written by experts in the field

**Need help? Give EAP a try today.**

Call us at 800-999-7222. Or go to [anthemEAP.com](http://anthemEAP.com) and enter your company code: conejoud.

## STUDY: Climb Stairs to Live Longer

### Climbing stairs is associated with a longer life.

Research presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress suggested that climbing stairs as a form of physical activity can help reduce risks of cardiovascular disease and death. The investigators collected the most reliable data available and conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis. Ultimately, studies involving 480,479 participants, comprised of healthy individuals and those with a history of heart attack and peripheral arterial disease, were incorporated into the final assessment. Participants ranged from ages 35 to 84 and women constituted 53% of the study.

**Report of the research results:** Compared to not climbing stairs, stair climbing exhibited a 24% reduction in the risk of all-cause mortality and a 39% decrease in the likelihood of succumbing to heart disease. Additionally, stair climbing was associated with diminished risks of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

**To be heart-healthy, take the stairs as often as you can** (with your health care provider's okay). Whether at work, home or anywhere else, if there are stairs, climb them to improve your heart and lung functions.

## STUDY: How Memory Works

**Certain experiences are better remembered by most people**, while other experiences, such as if we shut the garage door, are more easily forgotten. Rice University psychologists assessed memory by presenting participants with a variety of images. Among these images, some were new, some were repeated and some were very similar, making them more difficult to distinguish from one another. The similar images were meant to disrupt memory, akin to the way mundane daily occurrences, such as forgetting where you put your keys, can blur together. The images that stood out most were those the participants were most likely to remember.

### Highlights of the study:

- Memorable images were better remembered for general and detailed memory measures.
- Memorability interacted with similarity but depended on how much time passed — participants correctly recalled images but memories began fading after 24 hours.
- Emotion interacted with memorability to impact detailed memory — while emotional memories may have been more resilient, details may have slipped away over time.
- Not everything in an image could be memorable. Our brains tend to use selective forgetting for mundane things.

## "Knock, knock. I'm baaack!" — the Flu

### Protect yourself and your family from the flu — get a flu vaccine at your local pharmacy

Before you know it, the flu will be visiting again. The good news is the flu shot can help protect you, your family, and community — especially those at high risk for illness and those with chronic conditions. It's best to get the shot before flu cases rise, since it takes up to two weeks for the vaccine to build up your immunity and make you more protected.<sup>1</sup>

Your Anthem plan covers preventive flu vaccines at 100% when you go to a pharmacy in your plan's network. Many pharmacies offer convenient evening and weekend hours so you can fit a shot into your busy schedule.

### The flu shot works

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates the flu shot prevented:<sup>2</sup>

**1.8 million**  
flu-related illnesses

**1 million**  
doctor visits

**22,000**  
hospitalizations



### Find a flu shot

Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to find a local pharmacy in your plan's network and get a flu shot.

<sup>1</sup> Mayo Clinic: Flu shot: Your best bet for avoiding influenza (accessed May 2023): mayoclinic.org.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 2021-2022 Estimated Flu Illnesses, Medical Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Prevented by Flu Vaccination (accessed May 2023): cdc.gov.




 Immunizations


# Get immunized and stay protected

Immunizations are a safe and effective way of protecting yourself and the people around you. Most of the time, immunizations come in shots, which we call vaccines. From the flu and COVID-19 to other serious illnesses, here are some great reasons to get immunized.



### Scan the QR code

or visit [kp.org/immunizations](https://kp.org/immunizations) to learn more about the benefits of immunizations.



**Immunizations are effective** Rather than treating a disease after you get it, immunizations can prevent you from getting sick in the first place. They can also make the illness much less serious if you do get sick.



**Vaccines help everyone** Vaccinations can help reduce missed school days for children, which may help improve academic performance. Vaccinated adults also remain active at home and in the workforce, and contribute to herd immunity.



**It's better than getting sick** Getting immunized costs less than getting treated for the diseases that the shots protect you from. And the risk of getting sick is much greater than the risk of having a serious reaction to the vaccine.



American Heart Association®

Healthy for Good™

Learn more at [heart.org/HealthyForGood](https://heart.org/HealthyForGood)

## Stress Less With Healthy Habits

- 1. Slow down.** Plan ahead and allow enough time to get the most important things done without having to rush.
- 2. Sleep well.** Try to get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. To fight insomnia, get regular physical and activity during the day.
- 3. Let worry go.** The world won't end if a few things fall off your plate. Give yourself a break and just breathe.
- 4. Laugh it up.** Laughter makes us feel good. Don't be afraid to laugh out loud, even when you're alone.
- 5. Get connected.** A daily dose of friendship is great medicine. Make time to call friends or family so you can catch up.
- 6. Get organized.** Use "to do" lists to help you focus on your most important tasks and take big projects one step at a time.
- 7. Practice giving back.** Volunteer your time or spend time helping a friend. Helping others helps you.
- 8. Be active every day.** Exercise can relieve mental and physical tension. Find something you enjoy and stick with it.
- 9. Give up the bad habits.** Too much alcohol, tobacco or caffeine can increase blood pressure. Cut back or quit to decrease anxiety.
- 10. Lean into things you can change.** Make time to learn a new skill, work toward a goal, or to love and help others.

