STRESS MANAGEMENT TIP
To increase your stress resistance, get adequate, regular amounts of sleep. According to a recent study, adults who sleep 6 or fewer hours each night are significantly more likely to feel stressed every day. In contrast, only 14 percent of adults who sleep seven to eight hours each night feel stress daily.

BALANCING WORK/FAMILY
To change counterproductive habits that influence work/family balance, ask yourself these questions and then strive for improvement:
- Where do I begin to change things that negatively impact my work/family balance?
- What do I need to do to clearly draw the line between work and family?
- What habits can I change?

BETTER PARENTING
Give your child unconditional love. Love, security and acceptance should be at the heart of family life. Your child needs to know that your love does not depend on his or her accomplishments. Mistakes and/or defeats should be expected and accepted. Confidence grows in a home that is full of unconditional love.

Strategies To Decrease Overeating
Do you overeat on a regular basis? Do you often feel “out of control” with food? Are you unable to maintain a healthy weight? Below are suggestions to help you decrease overeating:

1. Eat breakfast. A recent study reports that when you skip breakfast your chances of overeating at lunch increase by as much as 50%. Overeating is best prevented through healthy, satisfying eating. Get each day off to a good start by eating a nutritious breakfast. If time is an issue, a cup of low-fat yogurt topped with low-fat granola and banana slices makes for a quick and nutritious breakfast.

2. Don’t skip meals. Skipping meals to maintain or lose weight almost always leads to overeating. The biological wisdom of your body prompts you to eat more whenever you restrict your caloric intake. When you skip a meal you actually set off a series of physiological changes in the body which intensify your preoccupation with food and your urge to eat. Most people mistakenly believe that when they later give in to this powerful urge to eat — and subsequently overeat — that it is because of a lack of will power. Actually, it is the body’s own physiology which has urged them to make up for the caloric deprivation.

3. Untangle your emotional connections to food. Many people use food to fill emotional needs, contributing to overeating and being overweight. Do you use food to:
- relax or calm your nerves?
- comfort yourself?
- numb yourself from emotional pain such as sadness, hopelessness, or anger?

To eliminate emotional eating, use a food diary to identify when and why you eat for emotional reasons. Keep an accurate record for at least one week of what you eat, when, and where. Include how you feel when you were eating. Ask yourself:
- What happened today to make me feel this way? You may discover patterns that reveal the emotional cues that cause you to turn to food. Next, find healthier methods to deal with your emotions and find alternative behaviors to eating.

4. Manage your stress. When you’re stressed, a chemical produced by your brain called cortisol increases your appetite. Not surprisingly, more than two-thirds of overweight adults report that they eat when they’re stressed out. Instead of eating when you’re

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stressed, learn how to manage stress in healthier ways. Start by exercising regularly. Walking for 20 to 30 minutes a day will help release tension, drain stress-producing hormones circulating in the body, and reduce your appetite. Educate yourself about other ways you can eliminate, manage or dissolve stress.

5. Eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Your body needs you to give it nutrients for energy and to feel satisfied. If you aren’t giving your body a balanced diet from whole grains, vegetables and fruits, your body will crave more food in order to get the nutrition you need — and you overeat. Eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruits per day. Try substituting them for higher calorie, less nutritious foods. Note: Low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish and legumes are also important elements of a healthy diet.

6. Practice portion control. Overweight people have a tendency to eat a high percentage of their daily caloric intake in one meal. The calories they consume are often in excess, resulting in weight gain. If you’ve had a problem with overeating, following the recommendations above will help you cut back on your food portion sizes. Remember, overeating is best prevented through healthy and satisfying eating. You can maintain or lose weight and still eat your favorite foods, just decrease your portion sizes. Suggestion: Start a meal with soup or salad. Having a salad or cup of soup for starters can add nutrition to your meal and curb your hunger, which will help you keep portion sizes in check and prevent you from overeating.

GETTING HELP WHEN OVEREATING IS A PROBLEM

Issues with food and overeating often seem overwhelming. If you find that you overeat on a regular basis or you can’t seem to cope with your emotions without eating, your EAP can help you with counseling, referrals or information. Cognitive behavior therapy is extremely effective in treating overeating. Why not call an EAP counselor today? We’re here to help.

TAKING CARE OF AGING PARENTS

3 Important Legal Documents

Delaying preparation to deal with the illness, disability, incapacitation or death of a parent is understandable. It is something most of us would rather not consider. However, you can save yourself a tremendous amount of time, energy and perhaps money by being sure your parent has the following:

✓ An updated and valid will which ensures that your parent’s belongings, money or property will be allocated according to his/her wishes. A current will reduces the likelihood of family conflict and an extended and complicated probate process. If a valid will does not exist, the court may determine how property and possessions will be dispersed.

✓ A durable power of attorney which allows a designated person to make legally binding decisions for your parent (such as signing checks or making housing choices) should he/she become incapacitated. Having a Durable Power of Attorney in place means the family can avoid the harrowing process of going to court to have a guardian named to oversee your parent’s care and finances.

✓ Advance directives (a living will and durable power attorney for health care) which specify your parent’s wishes regarding medical care and name someone to make decisions in his/her stead, should your parent become unable to do so.

Recommended Reading: How To Care For Aging Parents by Virginia Morris, Workman Publishing Company, New York. A very comprehensive resource on the medical, emotional, legal and financial issues involved in caring for an elderly parent.