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February 2023

**10 Tools for  
Self-Care**

**Sit Less  
Strategies**

**Get More  
ZZZZs**

**Health Care  
Worker  
Hazards**

**Organizing  
is Time  
Well Spent**

**Company Care**

 CHI St. Alexius Health<sup>™</sup>





3 ERGONOMICS

## Sitting too much? Active workday strategies

If you have a job that requires you to be seated for long periods of time, take steps to reduce your sedentary habits.

5 WORKPLACE WELLNESS

## Build your self-care toolkit

Help you manage stress and frustration with 10 activities that can easily be completed in a minute or two.

8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Organizing is time well spent

These are help you use your time, resources, energy and mental bandwidth efficiently to achieve your goals

10 SUPERVISORY UPDATE

## Fine art of giving feedback

Research shows that feedback typically leads to improved decision-making, collaboration, productivity, performance and engagement.

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**About CHI St. Alexius Health**

CHI St. Alexius Health officially announced the formation of its regional health care system on April 19, 2016. The system is the largest health care delivery system in central and western North Dakota and is comprised of a tertiary hospital in Bismarck, and critical access hospitals (CAHs) in Carrington, Dickinson, Devils Lake, Garrison, Turtle Lake, Washburn and Williston and numerous clinics and outpatient services. CHI St. Alexius Health manages five CAHs in North Dakota - Ashley, Elgin, Linton, and Wishek, as well as Mobridge Regional Medical Center in Mobridge, S.D.

4  
LESSONS  
LEARNED

**Get more  
ZZZZs**

5  
WORKPLACE  
WELLNESS

**10 self-care  
tools**

7  
OCCUPATIONAL  
HEALTH

**Common  
health care  
hazards**

9  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

**3 areas to  
organize**

# Sitting too much?

## Active workday strategies

If you have a job that requires you to be seated for long periods of time, you need to take steps to reduce your sedentary habits. Our bodies are made to move, so sitting for long periods of time can be bad news for your health. It is well documented that being sedentary for long periods of the day comes with consequences, such as increased risks for:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancer (especially of the colon or breast)
- Premature death

Even if you are actively working, there is a chance your lower body is relatively static, resulting in decreased circulation and more general aches and pains throughout the day. While most of us can't control having to be at our desks throughout the day, there are things you can do to be an "active sitter:"



*Stephen Guy,  
PT, DPT, CLT*

### 6 sit less strategies

- 1. Take- breaks often.** Take micro-breaks to stand, stretch and walk around to get your blood pumping and circulating. Set an alarm on your phone or computer to remind yourself to stop working and stretch.
- 2. Try a standing desk.** If you can, invest in a standing desk or find tasks where you can stand, such as talking on the telephone or reading hard copy reports. Put your file cabinet on the other side of the room so that you have to walk over to it. If you do have a standing desk, alternate between sitting and standing every hour. Movement is your best defense for a desk job!
- 3. Walk and meet.** Find reasons to go for a walk or do walking meetings. Instead of sending an email, walk to your colleague's office down the hall.
- 4. Squeeze in exercise.** Incorporating some time before or after your workday to workout at home or go to the gym will help offset the sitting you may do throughout the day.
- 5. Commute actively.** Instead of taking the car to work, turn your commute into a workout by biking to work. Take the stairs instead of the elevator if and when possible.
- 6. Step away from your desk at lunchtime.** Leave your cube or home office. Climb some stairs. Take a 10-minute walk around the block.

While it may be hard to break away from your desk, these are just a few of the things you can do to help increase your activity level and continue to be productive at work. If you aren't able to get up frequently, remember to ensure that your desk is set up ergonomically to help prevent aches, pains or loss in productivity.







# Tossing and turning? Get more ZZZZs



Tara Vander Laan,  
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RPSGT

In my late teens and early 20s, I often wondered how anyone could have insomnia. In my early 20s I felt it would never happen to me.

Fast forward a couple of decades and I find myself waking up more and more throughout the night. At times, it would last for hours.

Many times it is stress related. Whether it is a big work project I'm worried about or other stresses at home, it's difficult to turn my brain off in the middle of the night. Has this happened to you? Nothing is more frustrating than waking up and not being able to go back to sleep. Insomniacs are great at math as we are always calculating how much more sleep we could get if we could just fall back asleep before our alarm goes off.

At first, the more time I spent lying there, the more awake I became. It is amazing how many scenarios your brain can come up with at 3 am. Here's some things I tried to improve my sleep:

- **Jot it down.** I found it helpful to keep a journal beside my bed to document what I was worried about so I could rest assured that I would not forget about it in the morning.
- **Get up.** The worst thing for me was staying in bed when I was wide awake. Oftentimes I would read in a different room until I became drowsy.
- **Delay it.** One of the biggest influences for me was pushing my bedtime back later. This was the hardest as it seems wrong to limit your time in bed. But it ended up being the most helpful, even though I pushed through some very exhausting evenings.

The good news about sleep disturbances from stress is that they are usually only around during the stress itself. Once the stress resolves, the insomnia improves.

For more helpful tips, visit: [Sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/how-to-relieve-stress-for-bedtime](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/how-to-relieve-stress-for-bedtime)



# Build your self-care toolkit

Feeling stressed? This list may help you manage stress and frustration. Most of these activities can easily be completed in a minute or two. See what works for you, or tweak them to your specific circumstances.



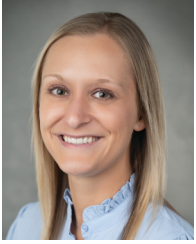
*Melissa Lutman,  
RRT, CTTS, AE-C*

## 10 tools for self-care

1. **Schedule time to relax.** Read a book, garden or go for a walk.
2. **Get enough sleep.** Develop a nighttime routine without electronics nearby.
3. **Don't judge yourself too sternly.** Hold yourself to high standards, but don't expect more from yourself than you would from others.
4. **Make yourself a priority.** You can't care for others if you don't take care of yourself.
5. **Be healthy.** Get regular check-ups, eat well and exercise.
6. **Prioritize.** You can only do one thing at a time, so select the most important task and tackle that.
7. **Talk to a friend.** Just getting something off your chest can help you feel better.
8. **Choose to be around positive people.** Seek out friends and family who see the bright side rather than doom and gloom.
9. **Listen to upbeat music.** Choose tunes that make you feel good.
10. **Seek humor.** Laughter can be a great tension reducer.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, seeking the professional help of a counselor may be needed. If you or a family member are employed, check to see if you have an Employee Assistance Program where you can receive a certain number of sessions without charge.





*Molly Buzakovic,  
DNP, FNP-C*

## Hazards in health care: What's being done for workers?





Health care heavily relies on health care workers (HCWs) to deliver patient care, but who is taking care of the health care workers? HCWs are those who deliver care and services to the sick and ailing, through direct patient care and indirect patient care. Every day, HCWs expose themselves to occupational hazards.

## Common HCW Hazards

### Physical



- Musculoskeletal injuries are the most common physical hazards for HCWs, according to a review completed by the Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care.
- These types of injuries occur more than seven times more often than in other industries – nursing being the leading profession which suffers from this hazard.
- These injuries can occur with patient handling, positioning, lifting and transferring.

### Chemical



- Cleaning agents used for housekeeping throughout the hospital and waiting areas are among the chemical hazard exposures HCWs experience.
- Inhalation of aerosolized droplets, vapors and skin exposure are the primary routes of exposure to cleaning agents.
- These chemicals lead to irritation of the eyes and respiratory airways (causing sore throat, cough and nasal irritation).
- Prolonged exposure may result in pneumonitis, hypersensitivity and asthma.

### Biological



- Influenza, measles, rhinovirus and varicella are examples of biological hazards HCWs are exposed to via droplet and airborne transmission.
- HCWs are exposed to a variety of infectious diseases, primarily by direct contact, droplets or airborne transmission.
- Over 40% of needle-stick injuries (NSIs) are suffered by nursing personnel, according to a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report. The most common bloodborne risks are of HBV, HCV, and HIV infection.

Identifying these hazards in the work environment is essential for prevention. Ensuring HCWs are protected and physically well enables HCWs to provide optimal care for patients. These hazards create barriers, leading to suboptimal care, lower patient satisfaction, decreased access to care and increased health care costs.

Applying healthy measures of wellbeing and engagement amongst HCWs about promoting hazard awareness in their workplace, and making changes to enhance its realization, will allow HCWs to thrive in their service to patients.

The American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) completed a study which supported the implementation of six standards to help produce effective and sustainable outcomes for patients and HCWs. These 6 standards include:

- 1. Skilled communication**
- 2. True collaboration**

- 3. Effective decision making**
- 4. Appropriate staffing**

- 5. Meaningful recognition**
- 6. Authentic leadership**

Health managers must ensure health care is geared toward assessment of hazards suffered by HCWs, their reasons, and do everything possible for prevention.

For more information on the AACN's healthy work environment (HWE) standards, visit

[aacn.org/nursing-excellence/healthy-work-environments](http://aacn.org/nursing-excellence/healthy-work-environments)



Jessica Clement,  
MS, LPCC  
Licensed  
Professional  
Clinical Counselor

## Organizing is time well spent

I'm not one to set forth a New Year's resolution; however, in 2023 I do hope to become more organized at home and in the office. Merriam-Webster defines the verb "organize" as "to form into a coherent unity or functioning whole" and "to set up an administrative structure" or "arrange by systematic planning."

The concept of organization impacting functioning levels and systems allows for a broader understanding of the role that being organized has in the office (or home office).

In general, when I think of organization, I think of grouping or eliminating things (filing papers or donating used clothing, for example).

Organization in the workplace not only involves our workspaces and items, but also involves the organization of our time, thoughts and future planning. In an article from The Muse, the author states:

*Organization skills are what help you use your time, resources, energy and mental bandwidth efficiently to achieve your goals and get your job done with less stress.*



Regardless of your specific job, most of us want to be able to do our work well and efficiently. In turn, employers value workers who are productive and capable of structuring their time well.

For many of us, the main motivator for becoming more organized is to not only do better, but to feel better. Not only do we want to be able to accomplish goals, we want to feel good while checking off the to-do list.

Studies have shown that individuals who describe their spaces as disorganized tend to have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol. One of the many reasons that a lack of organization contributes to more stress is likely because when we look around and see chaos, we see a bunch of things to do (more demands).

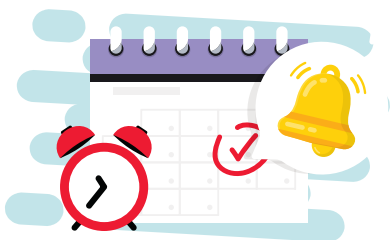
Disorganization also creates more stress because it is harder to get things accomplished when we can't find what we need to complete tasks or there are too many distractions!

As I'm working on this article, I look around my desk and see two staplers, one of which is dusty and unused and has no staples! That item is a visual distractor and takes up time when I go to use it and have to look elsewhere for something that functions better.

A Wall Street Journal article stated that executives can waste as much as six weeks each year searching for "misplaced information and files." Organization = time well spent and time well spent = less stress.



## Three areas to organize



**1. Your schedule.** Take a few minutes before the start of each day to think about which tasks need to be accomplished.

- Write or type a list of those items or insert the tasks into a visible calendar.
- Break down tasks into smaller steps—for example, if the task is to write an article, steps might include brainstorming ideas, researching the topic and writing and proofreading the article.
- A calendar can list tasks at certain times of the day, ensuring the tasks are not overlooked and time is not wasted (e.g. 8-8:15 am brainstorm topics, 8:15-9 am research topics, 9-10am write article, etc.).
- Experts recommend scheduling more difficult tasks for times in the day in which one generally feels the most energetic and productive. If the afternoon tends to result in feelings of drowsiness, that might be a good time in the day to respond to emails and schedule meetings.
- If there are big projects with further out deadlines, scheduling time for the beginning stages of the project can make the end goal less overwhelming.



**2. Your digital world.** This is a good reminder for me, as I have 47,580 emails in my personal gmail inbox! Organizing your digital items allows you to access material more easily and efficiently and also reduces visual digital clutter.

- Create folders in your workplace email to file emails according to categories and delete emails that are no longer needed.
- Organize your desktop by removing unnecessary items and making resources that are used often very easy to access (bookmark links or making often-used icons front and center).



**3. Your physical work space.** Organized work spaces create areas that feel calm and clutter-free. When we arrive at an organized workspace, we can get right to our tasks rather than become preoccupied with the mess.

- It can be helpful to schedule 5-10 minutes at the end of each day (and put it in your calendar) for tidying up.
- In order for organization to be efficient, create labeled folders and drawers for filing and return items to where they belong.
- Look around your space and get rid of items that are not useful and put items that are useful in spaces that are easy to access.
- It's recommended to keep no more than three personal items on your desk and these items should either be useful (hand lotion) or motivating (a family picture).
- If organizing feels daunting, start small by looking around and finding one type of object to organize, such as books, pens or loose papers. Find a "home" for each item and donate/throw/recycle as needed.

Remember that organizing your workspace is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process. Happy New Year and Happy Organizing!



Sarah Olson  
MS, LAPC

# Fine art of giving feedback

Constructive feedback has been found to benefit employees by helping them feel and become more competent. Research shows that feedback – positive and negative – typically leads to improved decision-making and collaboration, as well as increased productivity and performance.

It also helps employees feel more engaged, connected and satisfied at work. This benefits the individual and the team as a whole because it creates stronger contributors.

Tony Schwartz, CEO of The Energy Project, conducted a study and found higher levels of feedback related to:

- **89% greater thriving at work**
- **63% more engagement**
- **79% higher job satisfaction**

Additionally, those who receive more feedback are 1.2 times more likely to stay with their employer.

Giving and receiving feedback can be challenging. Kim Scott, author of “Radical Candor,” states that ruinous empathy occurs when feedback isn’t given to spare people’s short-term feelings.

Radical candor, on the other hand, is the ability to care personally while challenging directly. It’s guidance that is kind, clear, specific and sincere.

## Tips for constructive feedback

- Use the situation-behavior-impact model. Describe briefly and succinctly the situation in which the behavior occurred. Then, describe the result of the behavior and how it impacted others.



- Avoid the “feedback sandwich.” Putting negative feedback in the middle of positive may result in it getting lost in the sandwich. Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist, explains we tend to remember the first and last things we hear. Also, we anticipate a negative so we may fail to

appreciate the positive if we think the compliment is meant to soften the blow.

- Explain why you’re giving the feedback. Starting with an intention can lower defenses. For example, state the expectations, and tell the employee you’re confident they can accomplish them.
- Level the playing field. Share that you’ve received, and grown from, feedback yourself. This lessens the likelihood a person will feel threatened as you make yourself vulnerable and human.
- Try to offer feedback immediately. Offering feedback right away or shortly after the event in question ensures people will remember details of what you’re describing.
- Choose the right setting. Positive feedback is appropriate in public; constructive criticism is better given privately.
- Pay attention to your non-verbals and facial expressions. How you say things is as important as what you’re saying. The delivery can be as important as the message in terms of how it will be received and remembered.
- Don’t forget positive feedback. Use the above tips to also give positive feedback. A sense of progress is a powerful motivator in the workplace and people’s strengths are encouraged by providing feedback on how they are helping your team or community.





# Is it time to schedule your DOT Physical?

## \$90 DOT Physicals.

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### Company Care

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## Company Care

*Keeping Your Workforce Healthy*

# Going above and beyond for our communities businesses

At CHI St. Alexius Health Company Care our skilled experts work to save your business time and money while keeping your employees healthy and productive. Customizable services to fit your company's needs.

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