

## Stress Busters

**Facing a new normal during the pandemic and an uncertain future**, many of us are stressed. And, stress is often tied to health problems and mental problems, leading to accidents on the job.

**Here are some tried and true stress busters designed to keep your mind and body healthy and safe.**

**Take a deep breath.** This is one of the easiest ways to calm down in a stressful situation. Stop what you are doing. Inhale and exhale deeply three times.

**Evaluate the situation.** Is it beyond your control? If so, take your deep breaths and tell yourself to calm down and know that it is beyond your control.

**Choose one thing (even a small thing) that you have been putting off and do it.** Sometimes just lightening your load can energize you and make you calmer.

**Get outside.** Taking a break and getting fresh air is rejuvenating. Natural settings can induce calming thoughts.

**Exercise.** Physical activity releases mood-boosting endorphins. Make exercise part of your everyday routine, and if you feel particularly stressed, take a short break to move around.

**Try positive self-talk.** Self-affirmation can go a long way toward blocking negative and stressful thoughts. When you get overwhelmed, stop, take a break and give yourself a pep talk. Smile while you do it. Practice these pep talks regularly — twice a day to make them a habit.

**Write in a journal,** on your computer or use an app. Be honest about your feelings as you write, and you might even come up with solutions to what stresses you.

**Grab a stick of sugarless gum.** Research has confirmed that chewing gum can reduce stress.



**February is American Heart Month.**

## 4 STEPS to Safe Respirator Use

**We've all had practice wearing masks.** Wearing a respirator at work has similar steps. Let's review these steps from OSHA:

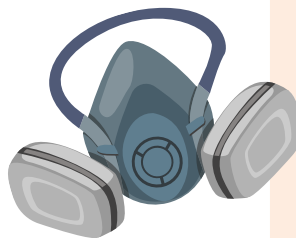
**Wash your hands or use a 60% alcohol-based sanitizer before touching your respirator.** (If you are reusing a respirator, wear gloves when inspecting it and putting it on. Avoid touching your face.)

**1 Inspect the respirator for any damage.** If it is damaged or worn, dispose of it and get a new one.

**2 Put on the respirator by cupping it with your hand,** with the nosepiece part at your fingertips. Cover your mouth and nose, making sure there are no gaps. Place the strap over your head and make sure it sits tightly on the back of your head. If there is a metal nose clip, use your fingertips to mold it to your nose.

**3 Adjust the respirator and test it** by holding both hands over it, inhaling and then exhaling. If you feel air leaking out, adjust the nosepiece and straps until you get a proper seal. Avoid touching the respirator after that. If you need to adjust it during wear, wash your hands before doing so.

**4 Wash your hands before removing the respirator** and dispose of it properly or store it properly if you plan to wear it again.



## SAFETY CORNER

### Icy Walkways

**In many parts of the country, icy walkways are a part of winter.** Even if you walk on cleared pathways, you may still encounter ice. Here's how to navigate the ice without taking a spill:

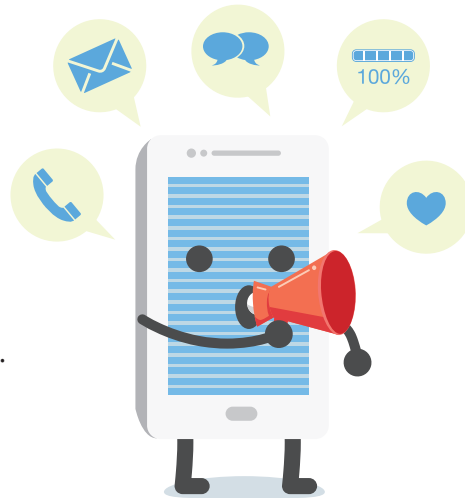
- Presume all wet, dark areas on pavement are slippery and icy.
- Don't keep your hands in your pockets or try to carry something across an icy surface. Extend your arms out to the side to maintain balance. Keep in mind that a heavy backpack or purse can throw off your balance.
- Go slowly, watch where you walk and use small shuffling steps when crossing an icy surface.
- Always use hand railings when walking down snowy or slippery steps.

# Take Action Against Distraction

**Cell phones. Conversations. Social media. Daydreaming. Deadlines. Pressure.**

All are distractions and, on the job, these distractions can lead to accidents or injury. That's why it's so important to be observant and pay attention to the task at hand, whether it be working at your job or simply walking across the street. Here's how you can help eliminate distractions on the job:

- ➔ **Plan** your day if you can.
- ➔ **Complete** one task at a time.
- ➔ **Take** your time. Do not rush through a job under pressure.
- ➔ **Pay** attention to the task at hand.
- ➔ **Tell** others that you need to focus. Likewise, don't disturb coworkers while they are performing their jobs.
- ➔ **Take** a break after finishing a task or if you feel your attention starts to wane.



- ➔ **Don't** use your cell phone on the job. Save it for your breaks.
- ➔ **Never** text and drive. According to OSHA, studies show that drivers who receive or send text messages take their attention away from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. If you are driving at 55 mph, that is like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.
- ➔ **Deal** with stress. If you find yourself becoming overly stressed, take a short break to take a deep breath or exercise.



Burn Awareness Week is February 7 to 13.

## Prevent Electrical Burns

An electrical burn is a serious burn that can occur when electricity comes in contact with your body. **IMPORTANT:** If you get an electrical burn, see your health care provider immediately.

**Why?** While electrical burns may only cause mild skin damage, there can still be severe internal organ and tissue damage.

**Here's how you can prevent electrical burns:**

**Turn off the circuit breaker** before working on anything electrical.

**Use child safety covers** on electrical outlets if you have children or if children visit your home.

**Stay away from water** when using electricity.

**Follow all manufacturer's instructions** when using electrical equipment or appliances.

**Throw out damaged electrical cords.** Do not use electrical tape to repair a frayed or damaged cord.

**Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)** in wet locations, construction sites and other high-risk areas.

**Keep away** from downed power lines.

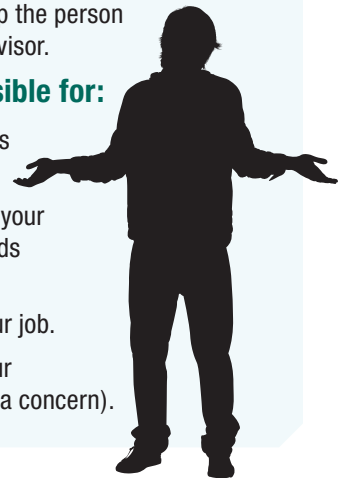


## Safety Behavior: It's Not My Problem

**"It's above my pay grade." "It's not my job." "It's not my problem."** How many times have we heard these phrases on the job? Unsafe practices are your problem when it comes to your workplace. If you observe someone who is performing a task unsafely, skipping important safety steps or creating a hazard, then it is your duty to stop the person or report the incident to your supervisor.

**Remember, you are responsible for:**

- ✓ Adhering to all workplace policies and procedures.
- ✓ Complying with your state's and your employer's OSHA safety standards and procedures.
- ✓ Attending regular training for your job.
- ✓ Raising safety concerns (use your organization's procedures to file a concern).



### CORRECTION

In "Wood Stove Safety" (December 2020 issue) we stated that the wood stove should be kept 36 feet away from any combustible item. The correct distance is 3 feet.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Q&A: Heart attack signs?**, is at [personalbest.com/extras/21V2tools](https://personalbest.com/extras/21V2tools).

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