

A Stop, Pause, and Reflect Habit Can Save Your Life!

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You are ocean swimming and the lifeguard yells, “SHARK!” You hurry to shore without hesitation. Yet the chance of getting attacked by a shark is small compared to many of the dangerous choices people make every day in spite of warnings from the media, surgeon general, and safety and health professionals.

Rare is the adult who has had no safety training, but not all always (or ever) use the information. Either they get cocky (I’m tough or invincible) or careless, distracted or so rushed that short cuts are taken or they ignore what they know. Add alcohol or drugs and the judgment wiring in the brain unplugs and safety may not be thought about at all.

For these and other reasons, people continue to have accidents and injuries that are preventable. People continue to take chances with the safety, well-being and perhaps even lives of themselves and/or others.

It may help to keep several things in mind. We bring our “being” to everything we do. If injured at work, it affects our lives at home and hinders our ability to do the things we enjoy doing. If we’re hurt outside work, it affects our ability to work and earn a living. The lives of loved ones will also be altered if we are hurt, disabled or killed. Carelessness on our part can put others at risk as well.

Behaving safely can be done on purpose by practicing a Stop, Pause, and Reflect habit before taking action. That is thinking beforehand about everything you set out to do: the hazards, the tools and protection needed and who needs to be present. Next, stop and reflect on what could happen if you don’t behave safely and on the possible life-long, life-altering consequences. You then change tactics based on the information reflected on. I know a man who became a paraplegic because he didn’t stop and think before jumping into unfamiliar water.

USING THE STOP, PAUSE, AND REFLECT HABIT

1. The gutter needs cleaning but your ladder is rickety. Stop! Reflect: I could fall if I use an unsafe ladder. How would a fall injury affect my life and the lives of those around me?

2. You can’t find the guard to your table saw. Stop! Reflect: What is the worst that could happen if my hand slips? How would that affect the rest of my life?

3. You set out to kayak in the ocean and strong winds are producing white caps. You are a dare devil and like doing “on the edge” things. Stop! Reflect: Rough water could capsize my kayak. What could happen if my head hits a rock or the water is too cold and I suffer hypothermia? How would this affect my life and that of those around me?

4. You are addicted to texting and do it while driving. Stop! Reflect: Who besides myself could I kill or maim by an accident caused by distraction? If I lived and killed some innocent party, how would I deal with that the rest of my life?

5. You planned on getting your wood cut but the chain saw is dull. You’ll waste time if you go get it sharpened. Stop! Reflect: What could happen to my arm or leg if the saw slips and how would that affect my life and that of those around me?

6. An item is on the top shelf. The step ladder is outside. A chair is closer. Stop! Reflect: Using a chair could result in a fall. How could that affect my life and that of those around me?

7. The sidewalks are covered with ice. You can’t find your cleats. You don’t want to miss your daily walk. Stop! Reflect: How could a fall on the ice affect my life and that of those around me?

Unless someone is holding a gun to your head, everything you do in life is your choice. All choices have consequences. If you develop the Stop, Pause, and Reflect habit every time you set out to do something potentially hazardous, being safe is accomplished on purpose. Think before you act and don’t take chances. Weigh the consequences of unsafe behavior such as a long-lasting or permanent disability, lost time at work, loss of income, or pain and suffering for you and your family. Stop, Pause and Reflect. It saves lives and helps prevent injuries.

The Big Sweat About Dehydration

We need water to survive. Sixty percent of the body is water. But here are some facts you may not know:

- Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue, drowsiness and loss of energy. It can trigger fuzzy short-term memory loss, headaches, difficulty focusing, dizziness, light-headedness, feeling faint, or the sensation that the room is spinning.
- Caffeinated drinks including coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks and alcohol contribute to dehydration. They cause you to urinate more frequently resulting in loss of body water.
- A water deficit affects the condition of all organs. Effects include, but are not limited to, reduced muscle endurance, cramps and loss of balance. Dehydration can cause nausea, dry skin and can worsen muscle, back and joint conditions and contributes to constipation and bloating. It can also cause collapse and, if severe, death.
- NOTE: Drinking too much water, too quickly can cause water intoxication. Intake should be over an entire day, not all at once.

TIPS TO AVOID DEHYDRATION

- Don't wait to feel thirsty before drinking water. In 35% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is weak and is often mistaken for hunger. If thirsty, always drink.
- Drink water before you exercise, during and after. The more your level of activity, the more water you need.

- When it is hot and dry, drink more.
- If you eat water-heavy foods like fruits, you may need less water but if you are drinking eight, 8-oz glasses (8 x 8 rule) of fluid a day, you will typically replace all lost body fluids. If you produce urine that is either colorless or pale yellow (not dark orange) during the day, your fluid intake is probably adequate. (Source: www.mayoclinic.com)

Summer Safety Tips

SUN SAFETY

Always wear sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher when in direct sunlight. Don't forget the lips and remember to protect your eyes with sunglasses. Take shade breaks. Remember that sun can affect your skin through a car window. Have all suspicious moles or skin eruptions checked by your doctor.

BEST WAY TO REMOVE AN INSECT STINGER

Don't squeeze the area or use tweezers because it may push more venom into the skin. Remove the stinger by scraping your fingernail over the area, or by using a straight edge like a credit card. Wash the area with soap and water. If there is swelling, apply ice.

Disclaimer: This is for information only. Always consult your doctor before implementing changes in lifestyle habits, if you have physical problems or are taking medications.

EAP Can Help!

Your EAP is a confidential, assessment, short-term counseling and referral program for you and your family members. It is a free benefit provided to you by your organization.

1.800.769.9819 ~ TTY dial 711 for TRS then dial 800.769.9819

Online Work/Life Services

If your organization offers Online Work/Life Services, visit our 24-hour internet resource for information, advice and support on a wide variety of issues. Contact your human resources department for a company code then check our Work/Life Services at www.affiliatedeap.com

