



Laughter is the best medicine



When you hear or see something that's funny, laugh out loud. Tell a joke to a friend or share a funny story about yourself with someone you know. Watch your favourite comedy or record a show that makes you laugh so you can watch it whenever you need a boost.

Laughter improves mental functioning, it exercises and relaxes muscles, and it improves respiration and stimulates circulation. Even smiling widely can set off a happy response in your body.

Here are a few more ways to help you laugh more:

- Set the intent to laugh more. Make a resolution, or set the intent, of laughing heartily as often as you can. Setting a goal to laugh more is as important as setting the goals to get more exercise, eat healthier, and drink more water. Tell yourself: "I resolve to laugh more".
- Include laughter in your morning routine. One way is to get yourself a joke book and read one joke every morning. And if you find the joke really funny, let everyone know it by laughing out loud.
- Smile more. Even though smiling is not laughing, it has a myriad of benefits. When you smile, happy changes begin to take place automatically.

Mother Nature has given the signal for the change of seasons; cue cooler temperatures and shorter daylight hours. The idea of facing long nights may not be that appealing, but at least there is comfort in knowing that certain things in the world stay the same, even during these times of uncertainty. The trick is to stay positive.

A "gloomy day" can very easily turn into a gloomy week, or even a gloomy month, especially at this time of year. Add one stubborn pandemic and your gloom can easily be combined with doom. Don't quit reading quite yet though, there is hope. There are always bad days for everyone. You are never alone in feeling a little gloomy.

So what can we do to not let gloominess overwhelm us? Try laughing.

According to the Statistics Canada Workplace Wellness Committee, planning enjoyable and pleasurable moments is one way to chase the gloom away. Set aside some time for laughter or just let it happen naturally.

Laughter triggers your body's natural stress-release mechanism. It will increase the level of health-enhancing hormones like endorphins, and will reduce the level of stress hormones like cortisol, adrenaline and dopamine.

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Personal safety and shorter days



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How to ready yourself for a snowier-than-usual winter

(NC) According to the Farmer's Almanac, this year's winter will be colder and snowier across Canada than usual. So, whether you love the picturesque landscapes or dread the oncoming days, preparing now is the best way to ensure you make the most out of winter.

Heat up your home

We can all appreciate the importance of staying warm, and winterproofing your home early is the easiest way to keep cozy this season. Start by adding or replacing weather-stripping on windows and doors where you feel drafts coming through. Have a professional clean and inspect your fireplace, chimney and heating systems, and don't forget to change your furnace filter. Have an older thermostat? Consider swapping it with a programmable one is a great way to save money on heating costs as it allows you to pre-set your temperature preference and even adjust it remotely.

Prepare for snow removal

Do an audit of your snow removal supplies from the previous winter and see if anything needs to be replaced. Ensure you have plenty of salt or sand on hand for the first big snow. If you have a snow blower, make sure it's working properly. Check your user's guide and follow its maintenance instructions before use. Here are a few tips to remember when using a snow blower:

- Make sure guards are properly installed.
- Never use hands to clear snow from chutes or moving parts. Many snow blowers now come with a special tool for this.
- Turn the snow blower off before clearing snow.
- Do not wear scarves or other loose clothing while operating a snow blower.
- Be aware some snow blower surfaces can become hot enough to cause burns.
- Wear appropriate PPE including hearing protection, safety glasses with side shields, proper footwear and protective gloves.

These winter driving mistakes might be putting you in danger

(NC) The winter months make for some of the most challenging driving conditions. With icy roads, poor visibility and harsh conditions taking a toll on our vehicles, it's important to prepare yourself and your car for the season to come.

Here are some common driving mistakes drivers make that may put you in danger.

Using all-seasons instead of winter tires

Winter tires are designed to perform on wet, cold, snow-covered and icy surfaces by providing hundreds of extra biting edges for better traction and staying soft in frigid temperatures. All-seasons don't offer security in winter due to their inability to maintain road contact in cold weather. Live in Quebec? Winter certified tires are mandatory by law from December 1 to March 15. In British Columbia winter tires are compulsory for certain highways from October 1 to April 30. You may have to pay hefty fines for using anything that doesn't have the approved mountain snowflake symbol.

Driving without adequate ride control

Ride control is crucial for your vehicle's stability. Excessive bounce or vibration while driving may mean your suspension system is due for a tune-up. To help ensure you have full control of your vehicle, avoid expensive repairs, and keep you and your passengers safe, consider preventive maintenance.

Not being prepared

When driving, it's important to have everything you need in case of an emergency – and this is even more essential in winter. In addition to carrying a snow brush and ice scraper, prepare an emergency kit complete with jumper cables, a first aid kit, portable cell phone charger, road maps, water bottles and a flashlight.

Depending on four-wheel drive

Vehicles equipped with four-wheel drive tend to be better at navigating in winter conditions. That said, four-wheel drive is no match for icy patches that cause your vehicle to skid and shouldn't be depended on when driving fast. Traction is all in the tires, so during the winter months it's best to invest in winter tires and to slow down.

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Emergency flu recovery tips

(NC) Flu season is upon us, and for the unfortunate ones who have to suffer through it, the road to recovery can be a tough one.

Here are a few tips to help recover from the flu.

Stay home and stay well rested

The flu takes a lot out of us and getting plenty of rest will help with recovery. Staying home and resting have the added benefits of curbing the spread of illness.

Drink plenty of fluids

Fluids fuel your immune system by helping move important proteins around your body. We're also losing a lot of them in the form of mucus. Do your best to get plenty of liquids, whether they come in the form of tea, soup or plain old water.

Consume foods with the right vitamins and minerals

It takes a lot of work for our bodies to fight the flu, so getting the vitamins and minerals we need is important both to strengthen our immune systems and recover from illnesses. Vitamin C, zinc and vitamin A contribute to a good immune system and overall health, so foods that contain them are a good place to start. Think oranges, bananas, whole grains, greens and nuts.

Consider the flu shot

The flu shot is still your best way to avoid the illness. While the flu shot won't protect you from COVID-19, flu also takes an enormous toll on the health-care system, so it's vital that people do what they can to reduce their chances of getting it. Otherwise, hospitals and health-care facilities could become overwhelmed if they need to treat both flu and COVID-19 patients. And health experts are reporting that you could become co-infected with both flu and COVID-19 at the same time. What the consequences of that combination are is unknown, but why take the risk?



Tips to cope with a pandemic as winter approaches

(NC) 2020 has been a year full of surprises, and as we head into the colder months many people are concerned about what winter has in store. While we continue to face uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are looking for ways to lead a somewhat normal life while staying safe and following official recommendations. Check out these tips to help cope with the pandemic.

Change up your routine

Routine is important and gives us stability in our daily lives, but a new season is a perfect excuse to make some small changes. Usually work out in the evening? See if waking up early gives you an extra boost. If you usually scroll on your phone before bed, try listening to a podcast or reading a book. These simple shifts can keep your day-to-day routine from getting stale.

Give your space a glow up

Many of us are working from home and spending way more time in our pads than we ever anticipated, and with winter approaching we won't have the option of being outside. Having a space you love is one of the best ways to ensure having to spend most of your time there is enjoyable. If you've been putting off a much-needed renovation project now

is the perfect time to consider tackling it or beginning to plan it for spring. On a tighter budget? A simple coat of fresh paint or updating bed linens can make a huge difference towards creating a place you'll love this winter.

Make an escape plan

Cabin fever can get the best of us, so when it strikes, remember you can still enjoy outside, even if the weather is not as inviting. The most important thing to remember is to dress appropriately. Opt for nylon, polyester, or water-repellent materials to keep your outer layers dry. Use wool, fleece, or down as a thick middle layer that will insulate your body, and avoid wearing cotton as your base layer. Thick boots, gloves, and a good hat are essential to staying warm when it's particularly frigid out. Take a walk around the neighbourhood, or follow your favourite walking trail in the park. The view will be quite different at this time of year, rest assured. Just be sure to keep your distance from others, but keeping your distance does not mean you can't be polite. Wave hello or give a polite nod to those you pass by. And when you get home, mix up a nice hot beverage and see your home as a warm refuge you are happy to get back to. A positive mind set always helps.

Safety



Health

Improve indoor air quality in time for winter

As we head into the colder months with no sign of COVID slowing down, it might be a good idea to consider the air quality of your home and ways you can improve it. Indoor air quality tends to be worse in the winter months because there is often no flow of fresh air from the outside, meaning allergens stay trapped inside.

Here are a few tips:

- Keep it clean. A clean house may be a healthier house, because good indoor hygiene can greatly cut down on dust and animal dander. Focus on the following:
- Vacuuming the carpets and area rugs at least once or twice a week with a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter. Opting for hard-surface flooring instead of wall-to-wall carpeting may also cut down on allergens in the home.
- Regularly cleaning bedding, drapes, and other items that tend to attract allergens—particularly if you have pets. Also consider using dust mite-proof covers on pillows, as well as mattresses and box springs, whenever possible.
- Clearing clutter, because it traps and holds dust that can trigger an allergic reaction.
- Change your filters. If you have a forced-air heating system, be certain to change the filters regularly. Electrostatic filters can help ensure that dust and other airborne irritants get trapped instead of being recirculated throughout your home.
- Also consider having your ducts cleaned or at least checked to remove trapped dust.
- Let the fresh air in. Even in the cold months, open windows from time to time to allow fresh air to move into the house. Also, move potential air contaminants out by using fans in the kitchen to remove cooking fumes.

Place your computer monitor correctly

A properly designed computer workstation will help you feel comfortable, increase your productivity and avoid fatigue.

Let's assume you know how to adjust your chair so it will support your back properly, allow you to keep your elbows close to your sides and keep your feet resting on the floor or a footrest.

Your keyboard and mouse are beside each other, close to the edge of your desk, and you can type with your wrists straight and resting on the desk.

Materials you need to perform your tasks are accessible without reaching or twisting your body.

All done? No. One more thing: Is your monitor placed properly?

You might not realize it, but monitor placement should happen last because any of the other changes made could affect it.

Acceptable monitor placement varies slightly from person to person. Basically, any position that forces you to tilt your chin, or otherwise bend or tilt any part of your body, is incorrect.

There is a good chance this will result in shoulder and neck pain and discomfort. An upright, neutral posture is the desired one. If the monitor is positioned too high, neck extension by raising the chin can result. If the monitor is too low, neck flexion — lowering the chin toward the chest — is likely.

The widely accepted way to achieve a neutral position is to have the top of the monitor screen at or slightly below eye level. This is not a good guideline for everyone, however. Some people's necks aren't built perfectly upright. Those with a forward rounding of the upper back need the monitor positioned lower because their viewing angle is downward. Someone wearing bifocals might have a similar requirement.

Your monitor should also be placed:

- In a location that eliminates glare on the screen, which can cause eyestrain and also might cause you to assume an awkward position to read the screen.
- At a right angle or away from the windows and task lights, which are another source of eyestrain. If you can't adjust the angle of your monitor, try closing the window blinds or turning off/changing the lights if there is a bright light behind the screen.
- Directly in front of you to prevent twisting your head and neck from viewing the screen.
- At least an arm's length away from you, allowing a full view of the screen without too much twisting of your head and neck.

For shared computer workstations, whether in an office or industrial environment, monitor weight and adjustability can be achieved by using an articulating arm. A wide variety of these are available, with every conceivable type of mounting orientation.

When two monitors are used at the same workstation, appropriate set up is essential to help reduce work-related musculoskeletal injuries.

First, determine how much you use each monitor — both equally or one most of the time?

If you use both equally, place them so the inner edges touch are directly in front of you, at an angle, creating a semi-circle.

If you use one monitor more often (about 80/20), place the monitor you use most directly in front of you as if it was a single monitor and the secondary monitor on one side, at an angle (half a semi-circle). Place the secondary monitor on the side of your dominant eye.

Give your fridge a good cleaning

Thanksgiving has come and gone as well as Halloween, so perhaps this may be a good time to give your refrigerator a good cleaning, including tossing those leftovers. It is important to regularly clean your fridge because of the build-up of mold and spillage from various perishable items kept in there.

Here is some advice from pgeveryday.ca:

Decide what stays and goes

Begin removing items shelf by shelf. As you do, inspect each item. Does it look or smell fresh? Is it before its expiration date? If the answer to any question is “no,” pitch it or toss cleaned, non-reusable containers in the recycling bin.

Place the food you’re keeping in coolers filled with ice. If you find duplicate items, group them together so you can take stock of what you have.

The clean sweep

Before you begin, unplug the refrigerator. Remove shelves and bins and wash them with dish soap. Avoid abrasive sponges and opt for a common cellulose sponge. If your bins or shelves fit in your dishwasher, save time by washing them on the bottom rack.

Use a solution of warm water and dish soap to clean the interior of the refrigerator and rubber seals. As you’re cleaning, don’t miss the shelf supports. If they’re especially sticky, use a toothbrush to scrub lightly around them.

Be sure to give all surfaces a final rinse, using paper towels to wipe up.

Clean the exterior

Remove dirty handprints from your refrigerator door exterior with the kitchen scrubber. Use dusters to pick up dust and dirt on the top of the refrigerator. Clean the coils of your refrigerator to keep it running as efficiently as possible — but be careful, they’re fragile and surfaces may be sharp. Consult your owner’s manual or search online for instructions specific to the model.

Plug in your refrigerator and allow to cool completely before returning items.

Proper training vital for rigging work

Rigging — the preparation of fibre or wire ropes, chains, slings or other attachments to lift and move objects — should be performed only by qualified workers or under the direct supervision of qualified workers.

Here’s why: Workers are injured or killed every year when rigging equipment failed or is used improperly.

And that’s not all. Less severe incidents occur that result in sprains, falls, crush and struck-by injuries and electrocutions.

Many if not most of these incidents could be avoided if riggers are thoroughly familiar with rigging techniques and equipment and are able to anticipate problems before they happen.

For starters, many lifting operations should not take place unless a written lift plan has been prepared. This ensures that thought is given to such factors as required rigging, angles of equipment and lifting capacities. The plan should include the travel area and potential “lines of fire,” which helps to avoid striking other objects or having to move objects or equipment after the load is in the air.

Riggers must also know what to look for when inspecting equipment. This should also be done before a lifting operation takes place.

They must know the weight of the rigging hardware and the load, the capacity of the hoisting and the working load limit of the equipment.

Always following safe work practices is a must.

Those practices include but are not limited to these:

- As you rig the load, protect slings from cuts and tears.
- Hoist from directly over the load. If not centered the load may swing when lifted.
- Seat the load properly in the hook.
- Do not insert the point of the hook in a link of chain.
- Never hammer a sling into place.
- Remove all loose materials, parts, blocking and packing from the load before starting the lift.
- Pay close attention to detail at the time of the lift.
- When lifting, stand completely clear of the load. Where possible, use tag lines or push sticks to ensure space from the load.
- Move hoist controls smoothly. Remove slack from the sling and hoisting ropes before lifting the load. Avoid “shock loading.” Sudden starts and stops increase stress in the sling and crane hoist rope.
- Do not allow anyone to walk under a suspended load.
- Do not use hoisting equipment for lifting people.
- Use a designated spotter during lifting to ensure proper clearances are maintained.
- Keep wire ropes and chains lubricated.
- Continuously check the integrity of the equipment throughout the day if there are multiple lifts.
- Replace items not operating properly. Tag defective items and remove from service for repair by a competent person.
- Never use makeshift rigging or attempt to repair any rigging components.
- Do not raise loads higher than necessary to clear objects.
- Do not leave suspended loads unattended.
- Determine the weight of the load to be lifted and its centre of gravity.
- Select the proper hitch and sling based on the type of load.
- Understand the relationships between angles and tension as they pertain to slings and hardware.
- Hang hoists solidly in the highest part of the hook area. Rigged this way, the hook support is directly in line with the hook shank.

Your winter car cleaning guide



(NC) It's a common misconception that you don't need to clean your car as often in the winter. However, regular maintenance like car washes are necessary to maintain the health of your vehicle and prevent rusting, which is more prevalent in colder weather. Here is some advice to cleaning your car this winter:

Preparation

- Get a layer of wax on your car before the season hits to protect the paint.
- Apply lubricant to all latches, doors and locks to prevent freezing of the exteriors.
- Identify the signs of clogged fuel injectors and have them cleaned.
- Replace your carpets with rubber mats to deal with winter slush.

Exterior maintenance

- Rinse your car once every two weeks and more frequently in the event of bad weather. This will allow you to fend off sand, salt and other dirt without scrubbing, which will help protect your wax layer and keep your paint from scratching.

- Clean the nooks, crevices and underneath the car and monitor the areas around the tires and front grille for any rust build-up.
- Don't forget to clean between the windshield and hood to avoid blockage, and as soon as you're done washing your car, start the washer fluid and let the wipers run. This prevents ice from forming on the wiper blades. Wipe your car dry to prevent the fresh water from freezing.

Interior maintenance

- Facing constant snow and rain, the interior of your car can accumulate a lot of dirt. Make sure you use proper cleaning liquids to wipe the salt off the mats.
- Vacuum inside your car to remove any dry dirt particles and use a separate brush to get rid of stubborn stains from the seats and mats.
- Clean the dashboard and insides of the doors with a disinfectant.
- Dry the interiors with a microfibre cloth before locking the car shut.

Tips for a fun online shopping experience

(NC) Online shopping is a fun, convenient way to purchase items for yourself, and even gifts for others, right from the comfort of your home.

But with so many options to choose from, sometimes making a purchase online can be overwhelming, and it can be confusing trying to find a reputable seller to buy from.

Unfortunately, like most things on the internet, online shopping can pose a lot of cybersecurity risks. Here are a few clues that a shopping site may not be trustworthy:

- The site looks poorly designed, unprofessional and contains broken links – those that are clickable but take you to a blank page rather than a fully functional website.
- You can't find an address or phone number for the business.
- Sales, return and privacy policies are hard to find or unclear.
- The back button is disabled. In other words, you get stuck on a page and can't go back.
- You're asked for credit card information anytime other than when you are making a purchase.

It might not always be clear when an online store is legitimate or not, but there are some steps you can take to make sure you're making purchases safely.

- Shop only on secure Wi-Fi networks, not public internet. Unsecured Wi-Fi can allow hackers to compromise your device and payment information.
- Make sure shopping sites have a lock icon in the url.
- Don't allow sites to store your information. Leaving your personal details, passwords and payment information on a website can make it easier for cybercriminals to access it.
- *Review your credit card statements regularly for any unauthorized or suspicious purchases.

Cough and cold products are not recommended for children under six

Coughs and colds can make kids, not to mention their parents, miserable. The symptoms are uncomfortable, last a long time, and can make sleep a challenge. Parents want a fast way to get their little one back to his or her active, happy self. Unfortunately for your kids, there is no magic in curing the common cold. Over-the-counter cold medicine is not recommended for kids six and under. After age six the directions on the package can be followed under the advice from your health care professional.

Here are a few more reminders from Health Canada:

- Always check the label first to make sure the medication is suitable for your child.
- Do not give children medications labelled only for adults.
- Do not give children aged 6 and up more than one kind of cough and cold medicine (unless under the advice of your doctor). Combining medicines with the same ingredient(s) may cause side effects.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about using cough and cold medicines in children.
- A cold is not the same as the flu. Cold medications are not effective against the flu.
- If you have any concern with your child's condition or if symptoms do not improve within 6 to 10 days, or worsen, talk with your doctor.

Try these non-medicinal measures that may provide temporary relief:

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Clear nasal passages.
- Ensure plenty of clear fluids such as water, diluted non-sweetened fruit juice, or clear soups to prevent dehydration while keeping the throat moist.
- Provide a comfortable environment with enough humidity.



Safety tips for outdoor holiday decorating

One of the first signs of the holiday season is the homes in your neighbourhood shining brightly in the night. Outdoor holiday decorating is a tradition that everyone can appreciate.

If you are planning to light up your house for the first time or if you are an old hand at it, remember that your safety is important. Colder temperatures, windy conditions, using a ladder, and working with electricity means there are a few safety tips to keep in mind:

- Make sure to use the proper type of holiday lights. The lights and extension cords need to be rated for outdoor use. Consider using LED lights, as they are cool to the touch and more energy efficient.
- Inspect all lights and extensions cords before use. Don't use damaged lighting sets, including those that have unstable connections, exposed wires or broken or cracked sockets.
- Before you begin installing, verify how many strands of lights it is safe to connect together. Never connect more than the recommended number of light strings.
- Check the weather report before you start. It's best to hang the lights when it's nice and bright outside. It's easier and more comfortable to work outdoors in mild weather.
- Hanging lights is not a solitary job, especially when you are using a ladder. Get a helper.
- Make sure your ladder is sturdy and inspect the ladder before use. Use

wooden or fiberglass ladders when decorating outdoors as metal ladders conduct electricity.

- Make sure to use the right ladder height; ensuring ladders extend past the edge of the roof. If the only way you can get to your gutter is to step on the top step of the ladder, then you are using the wrong ladder.
- Be cautious by doors. If you're working by a door that can open toward the ladder, let your family know you're working there. A good idea is to tape a note on the door reminding your family you're working.
- Make calculated movements while on the ladder. Before making your next move, think about what you want to do and move slowly. Sudden jerks or overreaching can cause you to lose balance.
- If installing lights on your trees, do not install them if that tree is in contact with any power lines.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets; make sure you have enough extension cords for the amount of lights. Place and secure the extension cords out of the way so they do not cause tripping hazards.
- Always turn off all lights before going to bed or leaving the house. Consider using a timer.
- If the task seems overwhelming or if you are at all nervous about heights, find someone who can help you. A brightly-lit house is not worth injuring yourself.

Reverse culture shock and COVID-19

Most of us are familiar with the term culture shock. It describes the disorientation people can feel when they have to adapt to an unfamiliar culture, such as moving to a new country, or in our case this year, having to adapt to restrictions to our lifestyle.

Our hope is that we will one day return to what we know as normal life. But what exactly will our normal be? This feeling can be considered reverse culture shock; returning to a former way of life after a lengthy period of absence.

Here are a few struggles we may face in the future and what we can do according to clinical psychologist and author Karen Nimmo:

1. Real life may overwhelm you.

In some ways, Covid-19 has given us all a giant break from life. It's forcibly simplified our lives and cut down on all we have to do.

When the floodgates open fully again, feeling overwhelmed will be common. So pace yourself — perhaps your kids don't need to do as many activities or sports as they previously did, or perhaps you need to say no to more things.

2. You (secretly) liked lockdown.

You're going to miss it or, at least, some aspects of it, such as having time to yourself and the simplicity of life? There's no shame in that. In fact, it's great. Take time to identify what you liked and see what you can integrate into your life now.

3. You feel like you wasted all the time you had.

Productivity took a hit on all fronts and we had to reset our expectations. But you don't have to emerge from COVID-19 having written a novel or learned a new language. You will have learned other things like how to work remotely, or how your kids learn best. Or maybe you learned things about yourself — how you react to stress, how you deal with frustration or anxiety, or what triggers you.



4. Not all families will be closer.

It's a rare family, or lockdown group, that has no issues at all. Anxiety/worry, tears, anger, frustration and conflict head the list. Underlying mental health issues, old wounds and addictions may have made things worse. Some will have found it tougher emotionally than others; some will be distraught in the face of new challenges.

If your group has struggled under lockdown, talk about the weirdness of it, and the stress it placed on everyone. Don't just ignore it and let things build up or they'll flare again.

5. It's hard to get back up and going again.

Being quarantined has encouraged a sluggishness that may be hard to shake. We've done our best but most people have had bad days and reports of increased fatigue are common. Mental health issues and feelings of despair will be widespread. There will still be bad days. Don't expect to be firing from all cylinders as soon as you're "set free". And don't expect others to either.

How to wear a mask without fogging glasses

Face masks and glasses can be an awkward combination that causes your lenses to fog up, making it hard to see. How can you avoid this? Try these tips from the Association of Optometrists:

Fit your mask to your face

If your mask doesn't fit your face well, warm air is likely to escape and fog up your lenses. When putting on your mask, make sure to pinch the top of the mask to fit the shape of your nose. If your mask allows it, tighten the sides as well for a good fit.

Use medical or athletic tape to close the gap between the bridge of your nose and the top of your mask. If you don't have tape, try an adhesive bandage.

Wipe your lenses before wearing them

An anti-fogging solution or even gently washing your lenses with soap and water before wearing them may help. This will keep water droplets from building up and fogging your lenses.

Adjust your glasses

Pushing your glasses forward on your nose will allow more air to circulate and keep your breath from fogging up your vision.

Rest your glasses over your face mask

Try pulling your mask up over your nose and rest your glasses on top of it. This will block the air from escaping and prevent fogging. If you try this, make sure your mask still fits properly over your face. Your nose and mouth should be completely covered.

Shorter days remind us to be vigilant

Today's safety meeting includes tips to ensure your safety and security as the days get shorter.



As the days continue to become shorter, many of us will be starting and ending our days while it is dark outside. Now is the time for a good reminder to be aware of our surroundings — especially when it comes to parking lots and other dark spaces we can encounter.

You can increase your safety and security by identifying areas that may be of particular concern — such as areas with limited access of visibility. Often times these include alleys and trash disposal sites. This can also include areas where trees/shrubs are overgrown.

It's important that you have a clear view of your surroundings when walking to and from your car to your workplace or to your house. For example, consider pruning overgrown shrubs and trees that obstruct your view from your car to your home. And make sure the walkway to your house is well lit.

Here are a few more tips:

- Evaluate where you park. If possible, be sure the parking area is properly lit — so that shadows and hiding spaces are at a minimum. Take a moment to identify which areas are dimly lit or which light bulbs need to be replaced.
- Establish a buddy system if possible so that you don't go to your car in the dark alone. If you may be working later than your co-workers, take time before others leave to position your car closer to the building if you can, so that you have a shorter walk to your car in the dark.
- When it is time to leave, keep your head up and remain free from distractions such as your cell phone. Check your cell inside, before exiting the building, then put it away when you leave and head to your car.

- Take a look around the area before you open the door of your building, to see if there is something or someone out of the ordinary. If so, stay inside and call security, or if needed, call the police to check out the situation.
- Have your keys in your hand and walk with a sense of purpose. Do a quick walk around of your vehicle and check the backseat. If you see anything suspicious, keep walking until you are inside a building and call 911. If everything appears fine, step inside your vehicle, lock your doors first, and then set up any electronic devices such as your GPS or your music streaming service.
- If someone is approaching your car and you do not know who he or she is, do not roll down your window no matter how friendly or distressed the person seems to be. Looks can be deceiving. Just open your window a crack so you can hear him or her. Stay inside your car and if the problem seems serious, offer to call 911 or a relative who can help the person.

Remember that most incidents happen when we get closer to home because we feel a sense of relief once we reach our destination. It is just as important to remain vigilant while parking your car at home and walking to your front door.

These tips are provided in your handout. Thanks for your attention today.

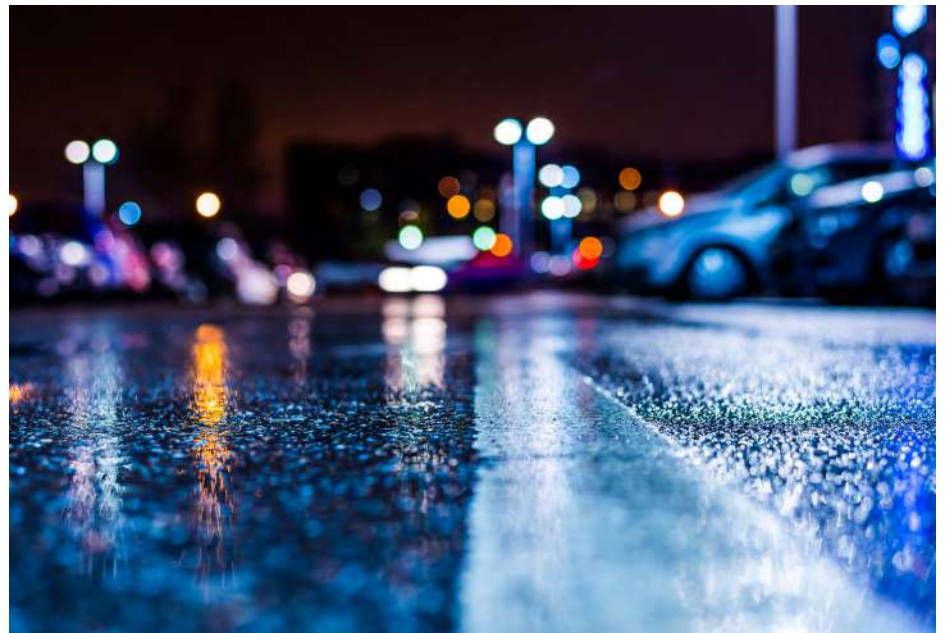
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Shorter days remind us to be vigilant

As the days continue to become shorter, many of us will be starting and ending our days while it is dark outside. Now is the time for a good reminder to be aware of our surroundings — especially when it comes to parking lots and other dark spaces we can encounter.

Here are a few tips:

- Evaluate where you park. If possible, be sure the parking area is properly lit — so that shadows and hiding spaces are at a minimum. Take a moment to identify which areas are dimly lit or which light bulbs need to be replaced.
- Establish a buddy system if possible so that you don't go to your car in the dark alone. If you may be working later than your co-workers, take time before others leave to position your car closer to the building if you can, so that you have a shorter walk to your car in the dark.
- When it is time to leave, keep your head up and remain free from distractions such as your cell phone. Check your cell inside, before exiting the building, then put it away when you leave and head to your car.
- Take a look around the area before you open the door of your building, to see if there is something or someone out of the ordinary. If so, stay inside and call security, or if needed, call the police to check out the situation.
- Have your keys in your hand and walk with a sense of purpose. Do a quick walk around of your vehicle and check the backseat. If you see anything suspicious, keep walking until you



are inside a building and call 911. If everything appears fine, step inside your vehicle, lock your doors first, and then set up any electronic devices such as your GPS or your music streaming service.

- If someone is approaching your car and you do not know who he or she is, do not roll down your window no matter how friendly or distressed the person seems to be. Looks can be

deceiving. Just open your window a crack so you can hear him or her. Stay inside your car and if the problem seems serious, offer to call 911 or a relative who can help the person.

Remember that most incidents happen when we get closer to home because we feel a sense of relief once we reach our destination. It is just as important to remain vigilant while parking your car at home and walking to your front door.

- ① When walking to your car you should:
 - A. Check your Facebook newsfeed.
 - B. Check the traffic currently on your route.
 - C. None of the above.
- ② You should stay inside the building and call security if you see something suspicious outside.

True False
- ③ A clear view of your surroundings does not matter when walking to and from your car.

True False
- ④ It's a good idea to choose a well-lit place when parking your car.

True False
- ⑤ If a person approaches your car you should:
 - A. Get out and confront them.
 - B. Stay in your car.
 - C. Ignore them.
- ⑥ Establishing a buddy system when walking to your car at night is a good idea.

True False

ANSWERS: 1. C 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. B 6. True

Date of Meeting: _____ Topic: _____

Location: _____ Department: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Meeting Leader: _____

Have meeting attendees sign this sheet:

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