



**LAWYER TO LAWYER MENTORING PROGRAM
WORKSHEET U
INTRODUCTION TO TIME MANAGEMENT**

Worksheet U is intended to facilitate a discussion about effective time management skills and techniques.

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- Discuss ways to handle situations where the new lawyer becomes overloaded with work. If in an in-house relationship, discuss realistic expectations about the workload of new lawyers in your office and ways to cope with those expectations.
- Share with the new lawyer techniques you use which have proven successful in the management of your time.
- Discuss the suggestions for time management provided in the attached excerpt. KIMM ALAYNE WALTON, WHAT LAW SCHOOL DOESN'T TEACH YOU...BUT YOU *REALLY* NEED TO KNOW (2000).
- Discuss the suggestions provided in the attached LawCare excerpts about how to say no gracefully and time management at work. *Stress*, Lawcare Health Support and Advice for Lawyers, <http://www.lawcare.org.uk/stress.htm>.
- Share stress management techniques. Discuss the attached article. Pat McHenry Sullivan, *You Can Find Time to De-Stress*, LAW PRACTICE TODAY, Feb. 2006.
- Discuss how to endure the sustained demands for high achievement that accompany the practice of law. Discuss this attached article's relevancy to the practice of law - Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz, *The Making of a Corporate Athlete*, Harvard Business Review, January 2001.
- Review the attached *LawCare Anti-Stress Worksheet* and discuss whether the suggestions are practical for planning a new lawyer's time. Discuss specific ways that the worksheet could be tweaked to improve its usefulness.
- Together, work on a practical plan for managing the new lawyer's time, including how to prioritize work, ways to refuse work without jeopardizing the new lawyer's job, and ways to stay organized.



- Discuss strategies to achieve the following components to balancing personal and professional life:
 - How to create expectations from your employer and clients that are compatible with a healthy and balanced lifestyle.
 - How to give your all at work while saving energy and emotion for family.
 - How to maintain physical health with a busy schedule and how doing so contributes to your productivity and success.
 - How to develop and maintain friendships or other relationships when time seems to be in critically short supply.
 - How to be efficient and productive at work, as well as how to prioritize and delegate tasks.
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RESOURCES

LawCare Health Support and Advice for Lawyers: <http://www.lawcare.org.uk/stress.htm>

Life in the Balance: Achieving Equilibrium in Professional and Personal Life, American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division 2002-2003 Members Service Project
<http://www.abanet.org/yld/about/writtenguide03.pdf>

C. HELP! I'M DROWNING! WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'VE GOT TOO MUCH WORK (OR TOO LITTLE . . .)

1. Why does overload happen? It's usually a compliment!

It's important to avoid assuming that they're out to get you if they're loading you down with work! The "too-much-work" syndrome has several sources.

a. If your work product is perceived as great, they'll ladle on more.

As American's Matt Pascocello explains, "If you are cursed with the ability to work well and hard, that's like waving a red cape in front of a bull. They'll charge forward and give you more. Anyone who does well and keeps saying 'Yes' to more work is a person partners will keep going back to." The solution isn't to tank your work quality or snap 'no' at new projects (we'll discuss what you *should* do in a minute). But the fact is, being overloaded tells you that superiors *want* to work with you, and that's a compliment!

b. It's an occupational hazard. Everybody belongs to the circus. Everybody has to juggle.

In this one respect, work is something like law school. In school, you don't take one class at a time and concentrate on it exclusively (instead, as a third year, you take five classes, blow them all off and go to Happy Hour). At work, whether you're a public interest lawyer or a private lawyer, you'll have lots of plates in the air, and, as Georgetown's Marilyn Tucker points out, it can be *very* frustrating. "It's important to accept the fact that you'll always have a lot of work to do, and be comfortable with that feeling," say lawyers at Goulston Storrs. "Just as you learn substantive legal skills, developing the ability to juggle a large volume of work is part of your professional development. It *does* get easier!"

c. You're not the focus of your superiors' world. They often honestly don't know how much work you have on your plate.

It's true that some law firms, corporations and government employers have people who control the flow of assignments to new lawyers. Even in those situations, lawyers will often skirt the system and assign work to new lawyers, particularly ones they like. No matter whether your employer has a formal assignment system or not, remember that "Senior lawyers usually don't know what others have given you," says UCLA's Amy Berenson Mallow. "They don't know what the demands of your other projects are," adds a lawyer at Goulston Storrs. Your superiors are typically very busy and won't know without hearing it from you that you're overloaded. So don't feel incompetent because you're loaded to the gills when new work is offered to you. It's often a misunderstanding about exactly how much work you already have on your plate!

d. Senior attorneys often forget how long it takes to complete projects when you're at the front end of the learning curve.

Sometimes it's been a while—occasionally a *long* while—since the people who give you work were beginners themselves. As lawyers at Goulston Storrs point out, "In most cases, it takes new associates *much* longer to complete a project than a more senior lawyer would require." If an assigner isn't thinking about it, they won't remember that what would take them one hour will take *you* four. That quickly leads to overloads.

e. If you're making huge green, it'll come out in the workload.

To put it bluntly, if they pay you more, they'll work you harder. The more money you make the more of an overload you need to expect. You *still* shouldn't kill yourself, and you *still* need to turn down work when you're truly overloaded (and we'll talk about how to do that in just a minute). But as the senior partner at one firm bluntly points out, "With these salaries, all I want to hear when I assign work to a new associate is overjoyed gratefulness." Turning down work when you're hauling in megabucks is a true exercise in diplomacy. But as a baseline, you've got to expect to be busier if you're making lots o' dough as a newcomer.

2. Don't kill yourself! A dead associate is not a source of revenue . . . and other reasons to avoid taking on too much work.

When you're new, you *want* to be seen as super-competent, and you figure if they're giving you work, they must think you have time for it. As I've already explained, that's not true. And it's also dangerous. Here's why:

a. You get evaluated on the basis of the work you complete not what you *don't* do.

Taking on more work than you can handle and screwing it up as a result will trash your reputation. *Everybody* agrees on this. Florida State's Stephanie Redfearn says, "The *most* important thing is being able to turn in quality work!" Lawyers at Sidley & Austin point out that "It's better to have one great review and one slightly disappointed lawyer who *doesn't* fill out a review form than to have two bad reviews." Lawyers at Winston & Strawn add that "No one will ever remember that you said you were too busy to take on a new assignment . . . they'll always remember that you said you could take it on and then were too busy to do a good job." And Georgetown's Marilyn Tucker points out that "Written work lives on!"

We'll talk in a minute about how to say "no" without torquing anybody off. The point here is: Don't take on more than you can handle. Your enthusiasm won't compensate for half-assed work.

b. Missed deadlines will make you look bad.

When you've got too much to do, something's got to give. If it's not quality, it's timeliness. It's easy to think, "I'll hand it in a little late. At least I'm getting it done." When I talked about deadlines in the "How To Crush Research And Writing Assignments" chapter, I talked about the importance of making deadlines (and warning *ahead* of time if you think you can't). Often there are "outside" time pressures, from clients and courts, that make deadlines real. If you take on too much and can't finish in time, as lawyers at Sides & Harbison point out, "While you may be trying to make a good

impression, it's detrimental to your reputation if you can't deliver work product in a timely manner."

c. Nobody's interested in the quality of your life as much as you are.

As Matt Pascocello points out, "They expect *you* to respect your time, your life, your balance!" You're ultimately the one who benefits the most if you keep your workload sane.

3. How to avoid getting overloaded—before you get the assignment that breaks the camel's back!

Before you get too much work in the first place, there are a few things you can do to stave off an overload. They include:

a. Give your supervisor a weekly memo outlining what you're doing.

If you keep your supervisor informed of your workload, you'll go a long way to preventing a deluge. Even without your saying a word, your supervisor can pass along to others at the office the fact that you've got all you can handle right now. That way, you can avoid being in the awkward position of having to turn down work.

b. Keep an updated list of everything you're working on.

Make a point of having an updated list, *every day*, of the projects you're working on, who they're for, and when they're due (also include a *realistic* time estimate, if you have one). Not only does it help *you* if you can visualize what you've got to do, but if an attorney stops by your office (or calls you to theirs) to give you an assignment, you can say, "I'd love to do it. Here's what I'm working on now"—and hand over your list. "Can you tell me how to prioritize your work?" If you're loaded down, you're showing them rather than telling them! Lawyers prefer to draw their own conclusions. You'll avoid overloads without having to say "No" to work.

c. Get organized!

I talk in the "Getting Off On The Right Foot" chapter about how to get organized. Once you *are* organized, you'll find you can get

stuff done more quickly because you waste less time hunting around for what you need. It'll help you avoid being overloaded, because you'll be able to get more done in less time.

d. Find out who the six-hundred pound gorillas are: Lawyers whose work you can't turn down.

In a minute, I'll talk about how to turn down work artfully. But at *every* office, there are some powerful lawyers whose work you *cannot* turn down *no matter what*. You need to know up front who they are! Ask your mentor (if you have one in-house), the recruiting coordinator, or associates more senior than you. As a rule of thumb, "The biggest partner gets their work done first," advises Georgetown's Beth Sherman. If the head of your department comes to you with an assignment, you probably can't turn it down.

One partner talked about an experience where, as a junior associate, he turned down an assignment from the head of his department, a guy named Mike, because he was too busy to handle it. Right after that, he was talking to a junior associate in the department, who told him: "Here's something you need to know: Don't say no to Mike. Don't *ever* say no to Mike." The partner says, "I immediately went back to Mike, and said, 'I've reshuffled things. I can do whatever you need me to do.'" The partner comments, "There are people you need to put on a pedestal. If they need it, you do it. That's it."

On the other hand, there are people you can afford to push back, and you have to be subtle about finding out who they are. One associate talked about being loaded down with work, back-to-back hearings and traveling. A partner came in and assigned him something on Friday that he needed completed by the following Wednesday. The associate tried to explain about his busy schedule instead of saying an out-and-out "no." The partner got exasperated and said, "Can you do it by Wednesday or not?" The associate said, "No." The partner stormed out and the associate was worried about honking him off. The associate mentioned it to a colleague, asking "What should I have done?" The colleague shrugged and

said, "Don't worry. Nobody cares about that guy. He's a jerk. Some people you can piss of and nobody cares."



CAREER LIMITING MOVE . . .

New associate at a large firm. He's so busy he "can't see daylight." The managing partner of the firm walks into his office and says, "Can you do a project for me?" The associate, at the end of his rope, responds, "Honestly? No." The managing partner turns on his heel and walks out.

Several hours later, the managing partner summons the associate to his office. When the associate walks in, the managing partner is shaking with anger. He's bright red. He says, "Young man, let me give you a piece of advice. Don't you *ever* say no to me. *Ever.*"

e. Ask your colleagues about the best way to turn down work from individual lawyers.

Although I'm going to give you general strategies for turning down work, it always pays to learn the quirks of people who assign work to *you*. Missouri's Gerald Beechum advises you to "Ask about people's styles, how to approach them." Do some people prefer you to be blunt and say, "No, I can't do it right now . . ."? Or do you have to be more subtle? Determining people's styles ahead of time can save you from making a misstep. And figuring out where you're likely to be tagged with more projects when you're loaded down can help you avoid those situations.



SMART HUMAN TRICK . . .

Mid-level associate, large firm: "At my firm, we used to have a 'First Friday of the Month' party at work, in the late afternoon. They had to change it to Wednesday, because partners knew that if associates went to that party, they had time and the partners

would jump on the associates to do work for them over the weekend. So associates started not showing up!”

f. Find out if your organization has a ‘gatekeeper’ to keep an eye on your workload.

Depending on where you work, you may have a work allocator or mentor to help control your workload. If so, *always* keep that person informed of what you’re doing, especially if someone outside your “chain of command” gives you work to do. There’s no point in stressing yourself out if someone’s built into the system to help you sort out your workload.

g. Fine-tune your own time estimates.

One of the most difficult things you need to do as a new lawyer is to figure out how long projects will really take you to complete. Senior attorneys don’t remember what it’s like to be you, and their estimates can be *way* off. The reason it’s important to learn how to estimate more accurately is that without that skill, you don’t really know whether you’re overloaded or not. One clue you have is your pre-work pace. As Brooklyn’s Joan King says, “You may not have done work assignments before, but you *have* done research assignments in school, and you know your work pace from those. Are you fast, or slow and meticulous, or somewhere in between? Whatever your pace is, it’s OK. It’s *you*. But it helps you plan accordingly.”

Once you have a few assignments under your belt, you’ll quickly learn how to gauge how long projects will take you—and have a better grasp of your workload as a result!

4. It’s not *whether* you turn down work—it’s *how* you do it: How to turn down work without saying the dreaded “no.”

Here’s the thing. You can’t take on assignments you’re too busy to handle. But at the same time, you don’t want to develop a reputation for turning down work. How do you negotiate between the Scylla and Charybdis? It has everything to do with *what you say* to the attorney

who’s trying to assign you work. As American’s Matt Pascoello says, “Saying no isn’t the kiss of death—if it’s done responsibly!” Here are some successful strategies to try:

a. Come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

That is, profess a willingness to do the work at the outset, and move on from there. Say, “Yes, when do you need it?” It may be that the deadline is far enough away that you really can squeeze it in. If not, say “I’d love to help out. Here’s what I’m working on now.” As I mentioned before, if you hand over a list of your current assignments, the assigning attorney may figure out from that alone that you can’t do the new assignment. Or you can say, “I’m happy to take your assignment, but I have assignments for X, Y and Z, and I don’t know if I can make your deadline.” You may find that the attorney will talk to X, Y and Z to rearrange your schedule, and that by itself gets you off the hook. “Let them duke it out between themselves,” as Milbank Tweed’s Kathleen Brady advises.

b. Suggest that the assigning attorney talk directly with the person you’re doing work for now.

For instance, you can say, “I’d love to help you out, but I’m working on this project for Partner Porky. If you need me to help out, perhaps you could talk to Porky and see if he’d be willing to switch.”

c. Have the assigning attorney help organize your priorities.

As Brooklyn’s Joan King says, “It’s hard at first to judge how much time projects take.” If an attorney approaches you with new work and you just don’t have the experience to tell you how long it will take to finish off what’s already on your plate, *tell* them what you’re doing. Say, “Yes, I’d love to do the work for you. Right now I have these four assignments with these deadlines. You know more about how long these things take than I do. Can I fit in your work? They’ll probably decide for you.” As Georgetown’s Abbie Willard says, “Asking for advice about organizing your priorities shows sensitivity, not a lack of competence.”

d. Don't prioritize your own assignments. Defer to people who assign your work.

As one hiring partner advises, "There will always be many demands on your time from lots of different people, all of whom think their project is the most important." Whatever you do, *don't* take it on yourself to decide whose work takes priority. As one lawyer told me, "There are likely to be politics you don't know about. If *you* go to the partner whose work you're doing and say, 'X just asked me to do this project for him right now. Can I switch?' You might hear, 'What do you *mean*? You're doing *my* work!' You're dealing with busy lawyers. It's dangerous to throw them off schedule. Let *others* prioritize your work." Don't take the heat if you don't have to.

e. Don't be a sap. Always say "yes" when you're asked if you're busy.

You don't want to cultivate the image that you're not busy. It will make people wonder, "Why doesn't (s)he have a lot to do? Maybe (s)he's not competent, and everybody knows it but me." Obviously, if an assigning attorney walks up to you while you're photocopying your body parts, it's hard to say you're busy—at least, not with a straight face. But if they come to your office or call you to theirs, and say, "Are you busy?" *always* say, "Yes, but I'd love to help you out."

f. If your projects *do* get shuffled, apprise all your assigning attorneys of the shift.

Valparaiso's Gail Peshel advises that "If someone gets shoved to the back burner, give them a status report so they know where you are. That way they won't be mad at you."

g. If you do have to turn down work, state your enthusiasm for working with the assigning attorney imminently.

Chicago-Kent's Stephanie Rever Chu advises that "If you have to turn down work, say 'I'm sorry I can't work with you right now, but I'd really like the chance to work with you. I'm hoping that by

next week I'll be free, and I'll come back to you." And follow up—as soon as you're free, go visit to see if they have projects for you. Brooklyn's John King agrees, suggesting that you say "you're working on a memo for John Doe which is due next week, and that you'd be pleased to work on the new project then." Another way to accomplish this is with a reference to the client's needs, saying "I can get my current work out of the way by Friday, and do this for you then. Would that meet with the client's needs?"

5. If you've already taken on too much work—don't be a martyr!

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you just get bogged down. As Boston University's Betsy Armour points out, "It's *hard* for new lawyers to balance their workload. Maybe you're facing conflicting or constricting deadlines. You can't be a martyr! Don't tell yourself 'I can figure this out.' You need to communicate what's going on." "Go to a recruiting coordinator, practice group head, your mentor, or the assigning attorneys for help in prioritizing or redistributing your work," advises Carlton Fields' Elizabeth Zabak. Other people can help you figure out what really does need to be done right away, what can be offloaded, and which projects have more "wiggle room." Don't suffer in silence!

6. What if your problem isn't too *much* work, but too little? It's not the time to polish up your computer Solitaire skills!

As I discuss in the "Being Your Own Career Coach" chapter, taking the initiative in getting the work you want is the biggest favour you can do for your career. Whether you're underloaded because people are suspicious of your competence (Yikes! I hope not!) or they just don't know that you're not busy, the solution is the same. Be proactive! As Kentucky's Drusilla Bakert advises, "No matter where you work, there may be occasions when you're not busy. If this happens, whatever you do, don't stretch out the work you *do* have. Don't take two weeks to perfect a two-page memo! Don't spend your time on personal matters or on the phone complaining loudly to friends working elsewhere. And don't hang out in the office library reading newspapers! Whether the lack of work is your fault or not, your employer won't reward what they see as laziness

or a lack of initiative. Drum up the work yourself. If there is someone in charge of your assignments, go to them and volunteer your time. If nobody is in charge of the work you get, go around and ask other lawyers if there's something you can work on for them. If there's a particular practice area that interests you, be sure to get to know the attorneys who work in that area and ask if you can help them. You may shake loose not just a memo or two but some work that really excites you! If you aren't able at first to find any more work, hide that as best you can by boning up on your legal reading. Don't let yourself be seen twiddling your thumbs!

D. ETHICAL ISSUES: HOW TO AVOID BEING LED AWAY IN HANDCUFFS AND AT THE SAME TIME AVOID TORQUING OFF YOUR BOSS

I don't have to tell you that if you do something unethical, you risk losing your license to practice law. But in practical terms, things are often not quite so cut and dried. If they *were*, nobody would ever do anything unethical. You can be under *lots* of pressure as a lawyer, and that's what causes ethical problems. Your boss may press you to do something that makes you uncomfortable, and you worry that if you speak up you may lose your job. A major client wants you to bend the rules a little, implying that if you don't, you'll lose their business. You're at a prosecutor's office, and your boss pressures you to "get a conviction," and you interpret that to mean, "Do *whatever* it takes, ethical or not." You're still in school, and the employer you'll be working for when you graduate asks you to use your Lexis or Westlaw student ID to do research for them. You worry that if you don't, you'll jeopardize your job before you even *start*.

In this section, we'll talk about how to handle ethical dilemmas, and how to resolve ethical issues without destroying yourself politically at the office. We'll also discuss what to do if you determine that the behavior being pressed on you is truly unethical. (As we'll see, it's pretty straightforward. Refuse to do it. If they insist—leave.)

1. Protect yourself up front from ethical problems.

Ideally you never want to be in the situation where your boss comes to you and says "Hey—bury this gun for me, will you?" There are a couple of prophylactic measures you can take to protect yourself from ever having that happen. One is to "establish yourself from the start as a rule-following, I-dotting, T-crossing person," says DePanfilis & Vallerie's Carrie Colangelo. Don't brag about how you've gotten away with things in the past, and don't make approving noises when other people tell you about what *they've* done. "The kid at the checkout missed the case of soda under my cart," "I wrote off more miles on my car than I *drove* last year"—don't respond, "Wow!" When you turn in your time sheets, make them precise, and let your supervisors *know* that. Don't pad expense reports. Don't suggest in any way that you've got lax standards. That may well encourage an unscrupulous supervisor to ask you to do something unethical at work.

Secondly, make sure that you keep accurate records. I talk all about that in the "Getting Off On the Right Foot" Chapter in the section called "Getting Organized." If you keep accurate records of what you do, communications with clients, and you have memos to file and backup e-mails, you'll help protect yourself if you're ever charged with an ethical breach.

2. When you're faced with an ethical issue, don't jump to the conclusion that what you're being asked to do is unethical. There are a *lot* more 'gray areas' than you think.

Some things are obvious. Destroying evidence. Paying bar dues out of trust accounts. Padding bills. But many lawyers told me that new lawyers tend to think that a lot of behavior is unethical when it really isn't. It's important to figure out if something is really an ethics problem—or you've got something on your mind making you *think* it is. It could be that you don't approve of the client or what they want to do. Perhaps you're *sure* that the client is lying but you have nothing to prove it. Or maybe you think you heard someplace that something's unethical, but when you look it up you find that the rule you thought you heard wasn't accurate.

How to Say NO Gracefully

(Courtesy of Coach Dianna Keel)

Many people have difficulty saying “no,” and boundary invaders take full advantage of this difficulty. If a request or a question makes you feel uncomfortable, it is probably an attempt to invade your boundaries, even if the other person is not fully aware that this is what s/he is doing. If a straight-out “NO” is too difficult for you, try some of the following alternatives. (But also practice saying a plain NO. It strengthens your boundaries.)

- I’m really over-committed right now and if I take this on I can’t do it justice.
- I appreciate your confidence in me. I wouldn’t want to take this on knowing my other tasks and responsibilities right now would prohibit me from doing an excellent job
- I’d be happy to do this for you but realistically I cannot do it without foregoing some other things I’m working on. Of tasks a and b, which would you like me to do? Which can I put aside?
- I can do that for you. Will it be okay if I get back to you in the middle of next week. I currently have a, b and c in the queue.
- If you had let me know earlier we could have talked about it, but it’s just not possible for me now.
- I can see something needs doing, but it should be done by the person who caused the problem in the first place, not by me.
- It would be far more appropriate for you to do that yourself.
- Thank you very much for the invitation. That’s the day of my son’s football match and I never miss those. *Great reasons also include birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, christenings..... Just be sure you’re not making it up. Tell the truth.*
- Thanks but I’ll have to pass on that. *When you use this plain “No”, say it, then shut up. You don’t want to ruin the effect.*
- I really appreciate your asking me but my time is already committed. *This is a gentle way to say no.*
- I wish I could, but it’s just not convenient. *The real masters of the “I’m Sorry” No somehow get the other people to apologize for even asking. I’m always amazed when I see this happen.*
- I promised _____ I wouldn’t take on any more projects without discussing them with her first. *This not only makes it someone else’s decision but also postpones it and allows you to decide if you really want to say no. Only use when you’re not sure which one you actually want to say – the yes or the no.*
- I just don’t have the time to help you but let me recommend someone else I know. *A great way to say no while still helping the person by giving another option.*

Never ever say “maybe”. Maybe is only a way of postponing a decision. When you know you want to say no, say no. Otherwise you’re not playing fair with yourself – or others. And saying “maybe next time” makes it harder and harder to say no the next time. Don’t fall into this trap.

Remember – whatever you say “yes” to means you are saying “no” to

something else. Make sure you that what you say "yes" to represents your priorities or you will find you are living a frustrated and unrewarding life.

Time Management at Work

There is so much to do... and not enough time! Struggling to keep up leaves you stressed and depressed. Try these tips for making minutes count.

Ensure you get up on time by putting your alarm clock across the room so that you have to get up to turn it off.

- Before you begin your day, think of three things that will give you pleasure that day. Don't think about any negative things, and forget yesterday completely. Think of one (realistic) thing you want to achieve today - even if it's only "Eat lunch".
- Leave for work earlier than usual. You'll be less stressed at red lights and late trains, and if you do get there early you'll have a few peaceful minutes before the phone starts ringing.
- Open mail with the waste paper bin handy, or get an assistant, if you have one, to sort your mail first and weed out all the junk.
- **PRIORITISE!** Put all the things you have to do in order of importance. Think about how much time each task will take, then add half that time again plus five minutes for stretching, relaxing, putting things away and getting another cup of coffee. Using the task time you have calculated, work out how much you will realistically be able to achieve in a day. In an eight hour work day you have six hours of actual working time, plus one hour for a lunch break (which is important), and another hour for unavoidable and unforeseen matters. Put everything you're not going to be able to deal with today out of the way. Then gather together all the information, files, documents and telephone numbers you'll need. The best time to do this might be first thing in the morning, or perhaps before you leave the office at night so that you can get started right away the next day.
- Each day list which tasks are essential, which you would ideally like to do if possible and what it would be good to do if you have time at the end of the day - "Must, Should and Want" lists. (If those unavoidable unforeseen things *don't* happen, you'll have an extra hour and a real sense of achievement when you get onto the third list!)
- If someone asks you to do another task, don't be afraid to say "If I do this I won't have time to deal with this other file. Which would you like me to do?" Let the onus of your being unable to do everything fall on someone else. Turning down additional work will not make you look half as bad as failing to do work you have accepted, or doing it badly.
- If a matter arises, such as a phone call, which isn't important, don't be afraid to say "This isn't a good time, please call back later". You may find it helpful to establish an hour each day when you make and receive phone calls or meet with clients.
- When meeting with someone busy, you are less likely to have to wait if you ask for the first appointment of the day.
- Don't subscribe to journals and periodicals you never have time to read.
- Fifteen minutes before you're due to leave work - stop working! This is the time to organise everything ready for the next day, clear away files, pat yourself on the back for getting so far through your "Must, Should and Want" lists, and start winding down and switching off. That way you should actually be ready to leave in time to catch your train.

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You Can Find Time to De-Stress

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February 2006

We spend the majority of our waking hours either preparing for work, working, or recovering from work. Being at work often feels like being Steven Covey's proverbial woodsman with a dull saw. Once we take the time to sharpen the saw, we'll work more efficiently. But how can we get away from the ever-growing workpile long enough to sharpen our tools or our wits?

"Every time I take a break," said a nurse, "Work is more satisfying and I'm better able to serve my patients. But we're so short staffed that there's always something urgent that needs attention right now."

Fortunately, it's possible to find wisdom for work without abandoning your responsibilities, even in the midst of whatever chaos confronts you right now:

Breathe deeply and with awareness. Under stress, it's easy to repress your breath. When your breathing is shallow, your energy level, your mental alertness and your confidence all drop. Conversely, when you breathe deeply, you become more alive. As you breathe consciously, you naturally trade concerns about the past and future for awareness of the present.

The connection between breath and vitality is honored in most of the world's religions. The Hindu physical yoga tradition teaches many different breathing exercises to increase physical and spiritual alertness. The ancient Greek word "pneuma" and the Latin "spiritus" both can be translated as breath or spirit. Throughout the Hebrew Bible are verses reminding us that without breath or spirit, we are dead; with it, we come alive.

Challenge the legal "dragons." It's as if the legal world is under the spell of two wisdom- and energy-draining dragons. The fire-breathing one's message is "hurry up, there's always more to be done." The one with the paralyzing breath warns, "Be careful. Everything you do could be wrong."

There's only one way to handle the dragons. Face them, and admit the truth of what they say. There is always more we can do, and everything we do could be wrong. But when we accept this reality of human existence *and* commit to doing our best, we can tap our wisest, most efficient self.

Challenge all your beliefs about work and discern which tasks are essential and which are not. Underlying a workaholic schedule may be repressed longings to feel appreciated or important. Much potentially productive time is wasted complaining about how overworked we are, or bragging about how hard we work.

In an effort to demonstrate loyalty to his firm, a senior partner in one firm said he had missed the births of all four of his children. Upon hearing that, another partner could no longer ignore the gnawing career dissatisfaction that until then she had kept at bay by being busy. Not long afterward, she found work that allowed her to have a satisfying life while she made a satisfying living.

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Pat McHenry Sullivan is the author of *Conscious Business Planning* (published by Visionary Resources) and *Work with Spirit, Work with Joy* (Sheed & Ward). This article is adapted from two of her 26 "Vision and Values" columns for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Pat often speaks to lawyers and other professionals about less stressful, more efficient and more meaningful work. Reach Pat at 510-530-0284.

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LawCare's Anti-Stress Worksheet

This worksheet has been prepared by LawCare to help you to learn to work effectively to minimise stress. Stress can lead to heart disease and mental health problems, but taking time to look at your working practices and environment can really help make a difference.

Work through the steps thoughtfully and slowly, and please let us know if you have any comments or feedback.

Always remember that if you have a problem with stress or another health issue, free confidential support and advice is available by calling LawCare on 0800 279 6888

Step 1—Value your Personal Time

Print off several copies of the Daily Workplan.

Note below the times you should, ideally, arrive at and leave the office.

My working hours are _____ to _____.

Did you often used to arrive early or stay late? Did you work weekends? You will no longer be doing this.

Step 2—Plan Ahead

As unbelievable as it may seem when the work is piling up, taking time makes time. If you take fifteen minutes each morning to prioritise, organise and galvanise, you will work more effectively for the whole day. Here's how it works:

- On the Daily Work Plan (see inside pages) block out the first fifteen minutes of your working day.
- During this time-
 - ✓ List on the first section of the plan one or two things which you really must do that day.
 - ✓ In the second section, list two or three things it would be nice to get done that day.
 - ✓ In the third section, list other tasks you will attend to if you have the time.
- Then gather up all the files, telephone numbers and information you will need for the tasks in the first two sections, and put them in a tidy pile, in the correct order, on your desk.
- Clear your desk of all unnecessary clutter. Put things you will not be dealing with today out of sight.
- You are ready to start work

Now inform your colleagues and secretary that you will be *incommunicado* for the first fifteen minutes of each day. And why not extend this another half hour or so to give yourself some quiet time to look through the post and email?

Step 3—Reward Yourself

Each time you complete a task, put away all the paperwork and then congratulate yourself. Enjoy the sense of achievement as you cross off the task on your list.

Take a break before you begin the next task. Get up and walk around, have a good stretch, have a refreshing drink

Step 4—Take a Proper Lunch Break

If at all possible, eat your lunch somewhere other than your desk. Take your full lunch break entitlement, and use it to get away from the office. Perhaps take a brisk walk in the park, or read a magazine in the library.

Step 5—Learn to Say No.

If someone asks you to take on a task, then explain that your time is already committed with other matters. You could even refer to your Daily Workplan. Suggest a day when you will be able to do it or someone else who is less committed. If they insist, then ask what you should drop in order to do this new task.

Step 6—Crisis Control

When you feel the stress building, stop, breathe deeply and slowly, and work through this list:-

- What is the worst thing that could happen if I didn't do this?
- Will this still matter next month?
- Would I feel better about this if I broke it down into smaller sections and tackled it a piece at a time?
- Must this be done now, or can I delay it until I am feeling better about it?
- Can I pass this on to someone else?
- Am I trying to do too many things at once?
- Would talking to someone about this make me feel better?
- Do I need a holiday/good night's sleep before I tackle this?

Step 7—Take Time for Yourself

Remember, your first duty is to yourself and your family.

- Ten minutes before you are due to go home, start closing down and clearing away everything you are working on so that you can leave on time.
- Aim to become known in the firm as someone who does not work late or take work home. There may be times when you need to do so, but make these very rare exceptions, and ask yourself whether there is any chance that the task can wait until the morning.
- Congratulate yourself on what you have achieved that day, and do not dwell on what did not get done.
- As you leave the office picture all the work with its troubles, problems and stresses being shut in behind the door.

The Making of a Corporate Athlete

Some executives thrive under pressure. Others wilt. Is the reason all in their heads? Hardly. Sustained high achievement demands physical and emotional strength as well as a sharp intellect. To bring mind, body, and spirit to peak condition, executives need to learn what world-class athletes already know: recovering energy is as important as expending it.

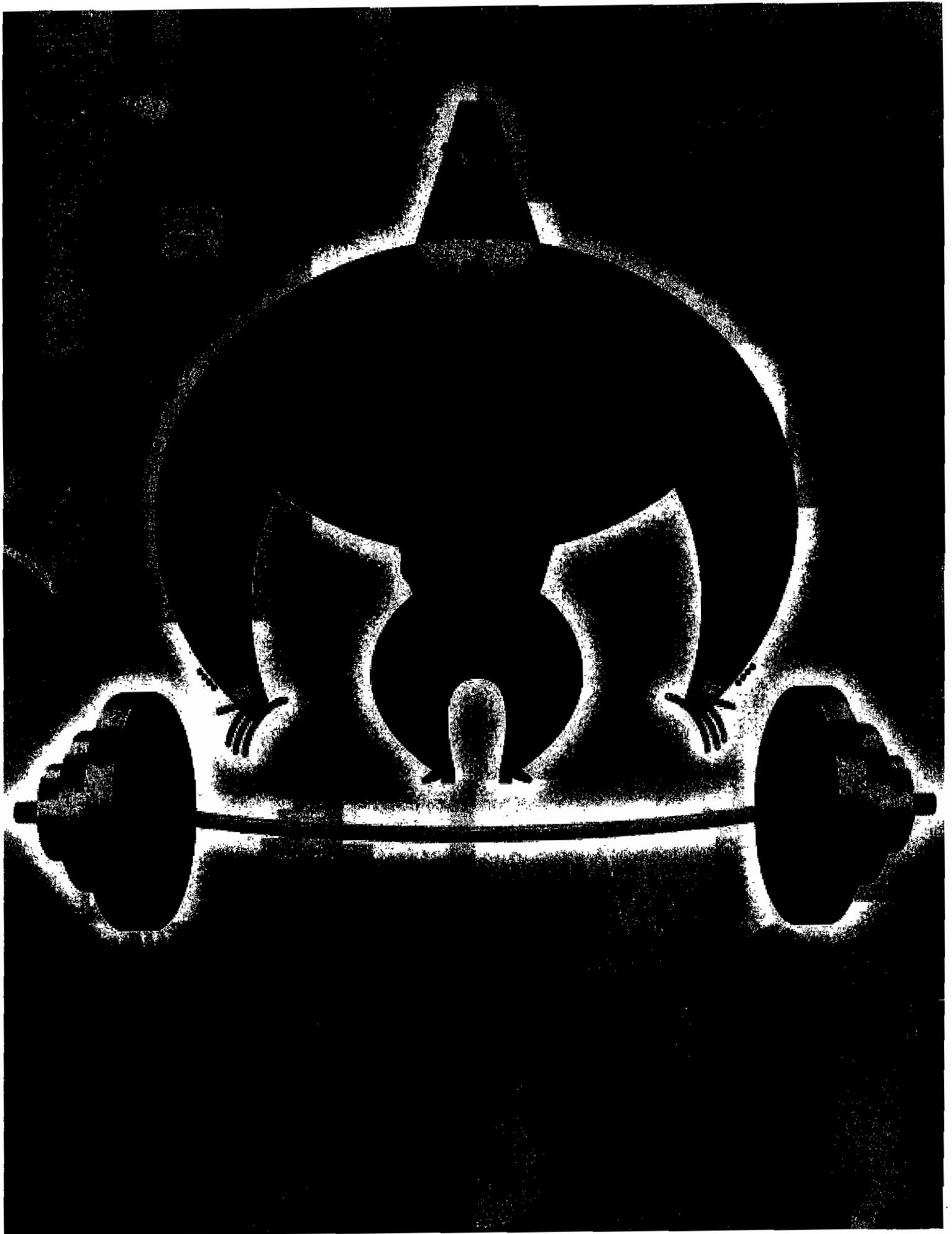
by Jim Loehr and
Tony Schwartz

IF THERE IS ONE QUALITY THAT EXECUTIVES SEEK for themselves and their employees, it is sustained high performance in the face of ever-increasing pressure and rapid change. But the source of such performance is as elusive as the fountain of youth. Management theorists have long sought to identify precisely what makes some people flourish under pressure and others fold. We maintain that they have come up with only partial answers: rich material rewards, the right culture, management by objectives.

The problem with most approaches, we believe, is that they deal with people only from the neck up, connecting high performance primarily with cognitive capacity. In recent years there has been a growing focus on the relationship between emotional intelligence and high performance. A few theorists have addressed the spiritual dimension—how deeper values and a sense of purpose influence performance. Almost no one has paid any attention to the role played by physical capacities. A successful approach to sustained high performance, we have found, must pull together all of these elements and consider the person as a whole. Thus, our integrated theory of performance management addresses the body, the emotions, the mind, and the spirit. We call this hierarchy the *performance pyramid*. Each of its levels profoundly influences the others, and failure to address any one of them compromises performance.

Our approach has its roots in the two decades that Jim Loehr and his colleagues at LGE spent working with

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL CUI/NERA



world-class athletes. Several years ago, the two of us began to develop a more comprehensive version of these techniques for executives facing unprecedented demands in the workplace. In effect, we realized, these executives are “corporate athletes.” If they were to perform at high levels over the long haul, we posited, they would have to train in the same systematic, multilevel way that world-class athletes do. We have now tested our model on thousands of executives. Their dramatically improved work performance and their enhanced health and happiness confirm our initial hypothesis. In the pages that follow, we describe our approach in detail.

Ideal Performance State

In training athletes, we have never focused on their primary skills—how to hit a serve, swing a golf club, or shoot a basketball. Likewise, in business we don’t address primary competencies such as public speaking, negotiating, or analyzing a balance sheet. Our efforts aim instead to help executives build their capacity for what might be called supportive or secondary competencies, among them endurance, strength, flexibility, self-control, and focus. Increasing capacity at all levels allows athletes and executives alike to bring their talents and skills to full ignition and to sustain high performance over time—a condition we call the *Ideal Performance State* (IPS). Obviously, executives can perform successfully even if they smoke, drink and weigh too much, or lack emotional skills or a higher purpose for working. But they cannot perform to their full potential or without a cost over time—to themselves, to their families, and to the corporations for which they work. Put simply, the best long-term performers tap into positive energy at all levels of the performance pyramid.

Extensive research in sports science has confirmed that the capacity to mobilize energy on demand is the foundation of IPS. Our own work has demonstrated that effective energy management has two key components. The first is the rhythmic movement between energy expenditure (stress) and energy renewal (recovery), which we term “oscillation.” In the living laboratory of sports, we learned that the real enemy of high performance is not

*Jim Loehr, a performance psychologist, has worked with hundreds of professional athletes, including Monica Seles, Dan Jansen, and Mark O’Meara. Loehr is also a cofounder and the CEO of LGE Performance Systems in Orlando, Florida, a consulting firm that applies training principals developed in sports to business executives. He can be reached at jloehr@lgeperformance.com. Tony Schwartz is executive vice president of LGE and the author of *What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America* (Bantam, 1996), and *Work in Progress*, with Michael Eisner (Random House, 1998). He can be reached at tschwartz@lgeperformance.com.*

stress, which, paradoxical as it may seem, is actually the stimulus for growth. Rather, the problem is the absence of disciplined, intermittent recovery. Chronic stress without recovery depletes energy reserves, leads to burnout and breakdown, and ultimately undermines performance. Rituals that promote oscillation—rhythmic stress and recovery—are the second component of high performance. Repeated regularly, these highly precise, consciously developed routines become automatic over time.

The same methods that enable world-class athletes to reach IPS under pressure, we theorized, would be at least equally effective for business leaders—and perhaps even more important in their lives. The demands on executives to sustain high performance day in and day out, year in and year out, dwarf the challenges faced by any athlete we have ever trained. The average professional athlete, for example, spends most of his time practicing and only a small percentage—several hours a day, at most—actually competing. The typical executive, by contrast, devotes almost no time to training and must perform on demand ten, 12, 14 hours a day or more. Athletes enjoy several months of off-season, while most executives are fortunate to get three or four weeks of vacation a year. The career of the average professional athlete spans seven years; the average executive can expect to work 40 to 50 years.

Of course, even corporate athletes who train at all levels will have bad days and run into challenges they can’t overcome. Life is tough, and for many time-starved executives, it is only getting tougher. But that is precisely our point. While it isn’t always in our power to change our external conditions, we can train to better manage our inner state. We aim to help corporate athletes use the full range of their capacities to thrive in the most difficult circumstances and to emerge from stressful periods stronger, healthier, and eager for the next challenge.

Physical Capacity

Energy can be defined most simply as the capacity to do work. Our training process begins at the physical level because the body is our fundamental source of energy—the foundation of the performance pyramid. Perhaps the best paradigm for building capacity is weight lifting. Several decades of sports science research have established that the key to increasing physical strength is a phenomenon known as supercompensation—essentially the creation of balanced work-rest ratios. In weight lifting, this involves stressing a muscle to the point where its fibers literally start to break down. Given an adequate period of recovery (typically at least 48 hours), the muscle will not only heal, it will grow stronger. But persist in stressing the muscle without rest and the result will be acute and chronic damage. Conversely, failure to stress the muscle results in weakness and atrophy. (Just think of an arm in a cast for several weeks.) In both cases, the enemy is not

stress, it's linearity—the failure to oscillate between energy expenditure and recovery.

We first understood the power of rituals to prompt recovery by observing world-class tennis players in the crucible of match play. The best competitors, we discovered, use precise recovery rituals in the 15 or 20 seconds *between* points—often without even being aware of it. Their between-point routines include concentrating on the strings of their rackets to avoid distraction, assuming a confident posture, and visualizing how they want the next point to play out. These routines have startling physiological effects. When we hooked players up to heart rate monitors during their matches, the competitors with the most consistent rituals showed dramatic oscillation, their heart rates rising rapidly during play and then dropping as much as 15% to 20% between points.

The mental and emotional effects of precise between-point routines are equally significant. They allow players to avoid negative feelings, focus their minds, and prepare for the next point. By contrast, players who lack between-point rituals, or who practice them inconsistently, become linear—they expend too much energy without recovery. Regardless of their talent or level of fitness, they become more vulnerable to frustration, anxiety, and loss of concentration and far more likely to choke under pressure.

The same lesson applies to the corporate athletes we train. The problem, we explain, is not so much that their lives are increasingly stressful as that they are so relentlessly linear. Typically, they push themselves too hard mentally and emotionally and too little physically. Both forms of linearity undermine performance.

When we began working with Marilyn Clark, a managing director of Salomon Smith Barney, she had almost no oscillation in her life. Clark, who is in her late 30s, runs the firm's Cleveland office. She is also the mother of three young children, and her husband is a high-powered executive in his own right. To all appearances, Clark lives an enviable life, and she was loath to complain about it. Yet her hectic lifestyle was exacting a cost, which became clear after some probing. In the mornings, temporarily fueled by coffee and a muffin, she was alert and energetic. By the afternoon, though, her energy sagged, and she got through the rest of the day on sheer willpower. At lunchtime, when she could have taken a few quiet moments to recover, she found that she couldn't say no to employees who lined up at her office seeking counsel and support. Between the demands of her job, her colleagues, and her family, she had almost no time for herself. Her frustration quietly grew.

We began our work with Clark by taking stock of her physical capacity. While she had been a passionate athlete as a teenager and an All-American lacrosse player in college, her fitness regimen for the past several years had been limited to occasional sit-ups before bedtime. As she learned more about the relationship between energy and high performance, Clark agreed that her first priority was to get back in shape. She wanted to feel better physically, and she knew from past experience that her mood would improve if she built regular workouts into her schedule.

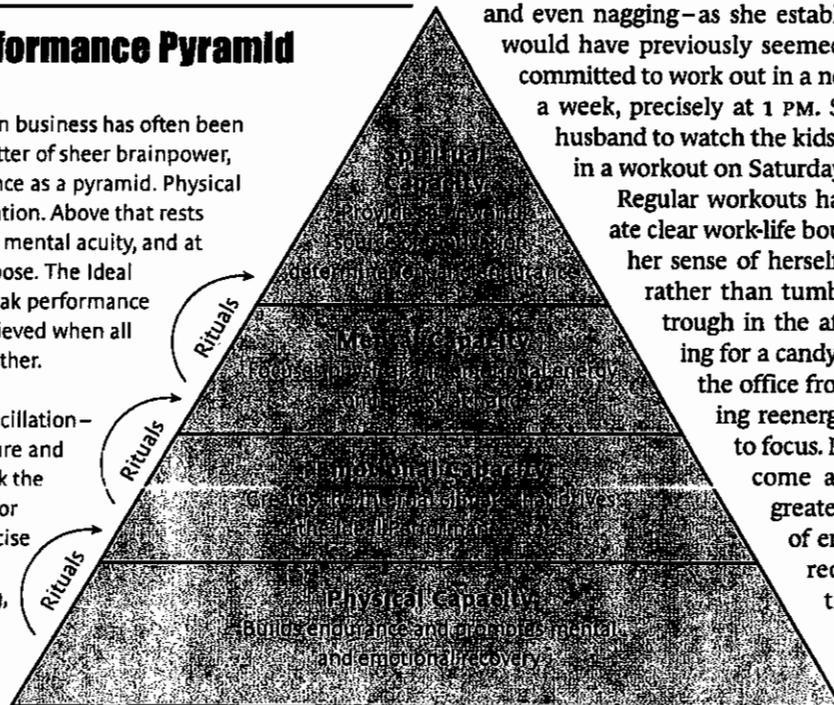
Because old habits die hard, we helped Clark establish positive rituals to replace them. Part of the work was creating a supportive environment. The colleagues with whom Clark trained became a source of cheerleading—and even nagging—as she established a routine that would have previously seemed unthinkable. Clark committed to work out in a nearby gym three days a week, precisely at 1 P.M. She also enlisted her husband to watch the kids so that she could get in a workout on Saturdays and Sundays.

Regular workouts have helped Clark create clear work-life boundaries and restored her sense of herself as an athlete. Now, rather than tumbling into an energy trough in the afternoons and reaching for a candy bar, Clark returns to the office from her workouts feeling reenergized and better able to focus. Physical stress has become a source not just of greater endurance but also of emotional and mental recovery; Clark finds that she can work fewer hours and get more done. And finally, because

The High-Performance Pyramid

Peak performance in business has often been presented as a matter of sheer brainpower, but we view performance as a pyramid. Physical well-being is its foundation. Above that rests emotional health, then mental acuity, and at the top, a sense of purpose. The Ideal Performance State—peak performance under pressure—is achieved when all levels are working together.

Rituals that promote oscillation—the rhythmic expenditure and recovery of energy—link the levels of the pyramid. For instance, vigorous exercise can produce a sense of emotional well-being, clearing the way for peak mental performance.



she no longer feels chronically overburdened, she believes that she has become a better boss. "My body feels reawakened," she says. "I'm much more relaxed, and the resentment I was feeling about all the demands on me is gone."

Clark has inspired other members of her firm to take out health club memberships. She and several colleagues are subsidizing employees who can't easily afford the cost. "We're not just talking to each other about business accolades and who is covering which account," she says. "Now it's also about whether we got our workouts in and how well we're recovering. We're sharing something healthy, and that has brought people together."

The corporate athlete doesn't build a strong physical foundation by exercise alone, of course. Good sleeping and eating rituals are integral to effective energy management. When we first met Rudy Borneo, the vice chairman of Macy's West, he complained of erratic energy levels, wide mood swings, and difficulty concentrating. He was also overweight. Like many executives—and most Americans—his eating habits were poor. He typically began his long, travel-crammed days by skipping breakfast—the equivalent of rolling to the start line of the Indianapolis 500 with a near-empty fuel tank. Lunch was catch-as-catch-can, and Borneo used sugary snacks to fight off his inevitable afternoon hunger pangs. These foods spiked his blood glucose levels, giving him a quick jolt of energy, but one that faded quickly. Dinner was often a rich, multicourse meal eaten late in the evening. Digesting that much food disturbed Borneo's sleep and left him feeling sluggish and out of sorts in the mornings.

Sound familiar?

As we did with Clark, we helped Borneo replace his bad habits with positive rituals, beginning with the way he ate. We explained that by eating lightly but often, he could sustain a steady level of energy. (For a fuller account of the foundational exercise, eating, and sleep routines, see the sidebar "A Firm Foundation.") Borneo now eats breakfast every day—typically a high-protein drink rather than coffee and a bagel. We also showed him research by chronobiologists suggesting that the body and mind need recovery every 90 to 120 minutes. Using that cycle as the basis for his eating schedule, he installed a refrigerator by his desk and began eating five or six small but nutritious meals a day and sipping water frequently. He also shifted the emphasis in his workouts to interval training, which increased his endurance and speed of recovery.

In addition to prompting weight loss and making him feel better, Borneo's nutritional and fitness rituals have had a dramatic effect on other aspects of his life. "I now exercise for my mind as much as for my body," he says. "At the age of 59, I have more energy than ever, and I can sustain it for a longer period of time. For me, the rituals are the holy grail. Using them to create balance has had an impact on every aspect of my life: staying more positive,

handling difficult human resource issues, dealing with change, treating people better. I really do believe that when you learn to take care of yourself, you free up energy and enthusiasm to care more for others."

Emotional Capacity

The next building block of IPS is emotional capacity—the internal climate that supports peak performance. During our early research, we asked hundreds of athletes to describe how they felt when they were performing at their best. Invariably, they used words such as "calm," "challenged," "engaged," "focused," "optimistic," and "confident." As sprinter Marion Jones put it shortly after winning one of her gold medals at the Olympic Games in Sydney: "I'm out here having a ball. This is not a stressful time in my life. This is a very happy time." When we later asked the same question of law enforcement officers, military personnel, surgeons, and corporate executives, they used remarkably similar language to describe their Ideal Performance State.

Just as positive emotions ignite the energy that drives high performance, negative emotions—frustration, impatience, anger, fear, resentment, and sadness—drain energy. Over time, these feelings can be literally toxic, elevating

A Firm Foundation

Here are our basic strategies for renewing energy at the physical level. Some of them are so familiar they've become background noise, easy to ignore. That's why we're repeating them. If any of these strategies aren't part of your life now, their absence may help account for fatigue, irritability, lack of emotional resilience, difficulty concentrating, and even a flagging sense of purpose.

1. Actually do all those healthy things you know you ought to do. Eat five or six small meals a day; people who eat just one or two meals a day with long periods in between force their bodies into a conservation mode, which translates into slower metabolism. Always eat breakfast: eating first thing in the morning sends your body the signal that it need not slow metabolism to conserve energy. Eat a balanced diet. Despite all the conflicting nutritional research, overwhelming evidence suggests that a healthy dietary ratio is 50% to 60% complex carbohydrates, 25% to 35% protein, and 20% to 25% fat. Dramatically reduce simple sugars. In addition to representing empty calories, sugar causes energy-depleting spikes in blood glucose levels. Drink four to five 12-ounce glasses of water daily, even if you don't feel thirsty. As much as half the population walks around with mild chronic dehydration. And finally, on the "you know you should" list: get physically active. We strongly recommend three to four 20- to 30-minute cardiovascular workouts a week, including at least two sessions of intervals—short bursts of intense exertion followed by brief recovery periods.

heart rate and blood pressure, increasing muscle tension, constricting vision, and ultimately crippling performance. Anxious, fear ridden athletes are far more likely to choke in competition, for example, while anger and frustration sabotage their capacity for calm focus.

The impact of negative emotions on business performance is subtler but no less devastating. Alan, an executive at an investment company, travels frequently, overseeing a half-dozen offices around the country. His colleagues and subordinates, we learned, considered him to be a perfectionist and an often critical boss whose frustration and impatience sometimes boiled over into angry tirades. Our work focused on helping Alan find ways to manage his emotions more effectively. His anger, we explained, was a reactive emotion, a fight-or-flight response to situations he perceived as threatening. To manage more effectively, he needed to transform his inner experience of threat under stress into one of challenge.

A regular workout regimen built Alan's endurance and gave him a way to burn off tension. But because his fierce travel schedule often got in the way of his workouts, we also helped him develop a precise five-step ritual to contain his negative emotions whenever they threatened to erupt. His initial challenge was to become more aware of signals from his body that he was on edge—physical ten-

sion, a racing heart, tightness in his chest. When he felt those sensations arise, his first step was to close his eyes and take several deep breaths. Next, he consciously relaxed the muscles in his face. Then, he made an effort to soften his voice and speak more slowly. After that, he tried to put himself in the shoes of the person who was the target of his anger—to imagine what he or she must be feeling. Finally, he focused on framing his response in positive language.

Instituting this ritual felt awkward to Alan at first, not unlike trying to learn a new golf swing. More than once he reverted to his old behavior. But within several weeks, the five-step drill had become automatic—a highly reliable way to short-circuit his reactivity. Numerous employees reported that he had become more reasonable, more approachable, and less scary. Alan himself says that he has become a far more effective manager.

Through our work with athletes, we have learned a number of other rituals that help to offset feelings of stress and restore positive energy. It's no coincidence, for example, that many athletes wear headphones as they prepare for competition. Music has powerful physiological and emotional effects. It can prompt a shift in mental activity from the rational left hemisphere of the brain to the more intuitive right hemisphere. It also provides a relief from obsessive thinking and worrying. Finally, music can be a means of directly regulating energy—raising it when the time comes to perform and lowering it when it is more appropriate to decompress.

Body language also influences emotions. In one well-known experiment, actors were asked to portray anger and then were subjected to numerous physiological tests, including heart rate, blood pressure, core temperature, galvanic skin response, and hormone levels. Next, the actors were exposed to a situation that made them genuinely angry, and the same measurements were taken. There were virtually no differences in the two profiles. Effective acting produces precisely the same physiology that real emotions do. All great athletes understand this instinctively. If they carry themselves confidently, they will eventually start to feel confident, even in highly stressful situations. That's why we train our corporate clients to "act as if"—consciously creating the look on the outside that they want to feel on the inside. "You are what you repeatedly do," said Aristotle. "Excellence is not a singular act but a habit."

Close relationships are perhaps the most powerful means for prompting positive emotions and effective recovery. Anyone who has enjoyed a happy family reunion or an evening with good friends knows the profound sense of safety and security that these relationships can induce. Such feelings are closely associated with the Ideal Performance State. Unfortunately, many of the corporate athletes we train believe that in order to perform up to expectations at work, they have no choice but to stint on

2. Go to bed early and wake up early. Night owls have a much more difficult time dealing with the demands of today's business world, because typically, they still have to get up with the early birds. They're often groggy and unfocused in the mornings, dependent on caffeine and sugary snacks to keep up their energy. You can establish new sleep rituals. Biological clocks are not fixed in our genes.

3. Maintain a consistent bedtime and wake-up time. As important of the number of hours you sleep (ideally seven to eight) is the consistency of the recovery wave you create. Regular sleep cycles help regulate your other biological clocks and increase the likelihood that the sleep you get will be deep and restful.

4. Seek recovery every 90 to 120 minutes. Chronobiologists have found that the body's hormone, glucose, and blood pressure levels drop every 90 minutes or so. By failing to seek recovery and overriding the body's natural stress-rest cycles, overall capacity is compromised. As we've learned from athletes, even short, focused breaks can promote significant recovery. We suggest five sources of restoration: eat something, hydrate, move physically, change channels mentally, and change channels emotionally.

5. Do at least two weight-training workouts a week. No form of exercise more powerfully turns back the markers of age than weight training. It increases strength, retards osteoporosis, speeds up metabolism, enhances mobility, improves posture, and dramatically increases energy.

their time with loved ones. We try to reframe the issue. By devoting more time to their most important relationships and setting clearer boundaries between work and home, we tell our clients, they will not only derive more satisfaction but will also get the recovery that they need to perform better at work.

Mental Capacity

The third level of the performance pyramid—the cognitive—is where most traditional performance-enhancement training is aimed. The usual approaches tend to focus on improving competencies by using techniques such as process reengineering and knowledge management or by learning to use more sophisticated technology. Our training aims to enhance our clients' cognitive capacities—most notably their focus, time management, and positive and critical-thinking skills.

Focus simply means energy concentrated in the service of a particular goal. Anything that interferes with focus dissipates energy. Meditation, typically viewed as a spiritual practice, can serve as a highly practical means of training attention and promoting recovery. At this level, no guidance from a guru is required. A perfectly adequate meditation technique involves sitting quietly and breathing deeply, counting each exhalation, and starting over when you reach ten. Alternatively, you can choose a word to repeat each time you take a breath.

Practiced regularly, meditation quiets the mind, the emotions, and the body, promoting energy recovery. Numerous studies have shown, for example, that experienced meditators need considerably fewer hours of sleep than nonmeditators. Meditation and other noncognitive disciplines can also slow brain wave activity and stimulate a shift in mental activity from the left hemisphere of the brain to the right. Have you ever suddenly found the solution to a vexing problem while doing something “mindless” such as jogging, working in the garden, or singing in the shower? That's the left-brain, right-brain shift at work—the fruit of mental oscillation.

Much of our training at this level focuses on helping corporate athletes to consciously manage their time and energy. By alternating periods of stress with renewal, they learn to align their work with the body's need for breaks every 90 to 120 minutes. This can be challenging for compulsive corporate achievers. Jeffrey Sklar, 39, managing director for institutional sales at the New York investment firm Gruntal & Company, had long been accustomed to topping his competitors by brute force—pushing harder and more relentlessly than anyone else. With our help, he built a set of rituals that ensured regular recovery and also enabled him to perform at a higher level while spending fewer hours at work.

Once in the morning and again in the afternoon, Sklar retreats from the frenetic trading floor to a quiet office, where he spends 15 minutes doing deep-breathing exercises. At lunch, he leaves the office—something he once would have found unthinkable—and walks outdoors for at least 15 minutes. He also works out five or six times a week after work. At home, he and his wife, Sherry, a busy executive herself, made a pact never to talk business after 8 P.M. They also swore off work on the weekends, and they have stuck to their vow for nearly two years. During each of those years, Sklar's earnings have increased by more than 65%.

For Jim Connor, the president and CEO of FootJoy, reprioritizing his time became a way not just to manage his energy better but to create more balance in his life and to revive his sense of passion. Connor had come to us saying that he felt stuck in a deep rut. “My feelings were muted so I could deal with the emotional pain of life,” he explains. “I had smoothed out all the vicissitudes in my life to such an extent that oscillation was prohibited. I was not feeling life but repetitively performing it.”

Connor had imposed on himself the stricture that he be the first person to arrive at the office each day and the last to leave. In reality, he acknowledged, no one would object if he arrived a little later or left a little earlier a couple of days a week. He realized it also made sense for him to spend one or two days a week working at a satellite plant 45 minutes nearer to his home than his main office. Doing so could boost morale at the second plant while cutting 90 minutes from his commute.

Immediately after working with us, Connor arranged to have an office cleared out at the satellite factory. He now spends at least one full day a week there, prompting a number of people at that office to comment to him about his increased availability. He began taking a golf lesson one morning a week, which also allowed for a more relaxed drive to his main office, since he commutes there after rush hour on golf days. In addition, he instituted a monthly getaway routine with his wife. In the evenings, he often leaves his office earlier in order to spend more time with his family.

Connor has also meticulously built recovery into his workdays. “What a difference these fruit and water breaks make,” he says. “I set my alarm watch for 90 minutes to prevent relapses, but I'm instinctively incorporating this routine into my life and love it. I'm far more productive

Have you ever suddenly found the solution to a vexing problem while doing something “mindless” such as jogging, working in the garden, or singing in the shower? That's the left-brain, right-brain shift at work—the fruit of mental oscillation.

as a result, and the quality of my thought process is measurably improved. I'm also doing more on the big things at work and not getting bogged down in detail. I'm pausing more to think and to take time out."

Rituals that encourage positive thinking also increase the likelihood of accessing the Ideal Performance State. Once again, our work with top athletes has taught us the power of creating specific mental rituals to sustain positive energy. Jack Nicklaus, one of the greatest pressure performers in the history of golf, seems to have an intuitive understanding of the importance of both oscillation and rituals. "I've developed a regimen that allows me to move from peaks of concentration into valleys of relaxation and back again as necessary," he wrote in *Golf Digest*. "My focus begins to sharpen as I walk onto the tee and steadily intensifies...until I hit [my drive]...I descend into a valley as I leave the tee, either through casual conversation with a fellow competitor or by letting my mind dwell on whatever happens into it."

Visualization is another ritual that produces positive energy and has palpable performance results. For example, Earl Woods taught his son Tiger—Nicklaus's heir apparent—to form a mental image of the ball rolling into the hole before each shot. The exercise does more than produce a vague feeling of optimism and well-being. Neuroscientist Ian Robertson of Trinity College, Dublin,

If executives are to perform at high levels over the long haul, they have to train in the same systematic, multilevel way that world-class athletes do.

author of *Mind Sculpture*, has found that visualization can literally reprogram the neural circuitry of the brain, directly improving performance. It is hard to imagine a better illustration than diver Laura Wilkinson. Six months before the summer Olympics in Sydney, Wilkinson broke three toes on her right foot while training. Unable to go in the water because of her cast, she instead spent hours a day on the diving platform, visualizing each of her dives. With only a few weeks to actually practice before the Olympics, she pulled off a huge upset, winning the gold medal on the ten-meter platform.

Visualization works just as well in the office. Sherry Sklar has a ritual to prepare for any significant event in her work life. "I always take time to sit down in advance in a quiet place and think about what I really want from the meeting," she says. "Then I visualize myself achieving

the outcome I'm after." In effect, Sklar is building mental muscles—increasing her strength, endurance, and flexibility. By doing so, she decreases the likelihood that she will be distracted by negative thoughts under pressure. "It has made me much more relaxed and confident when I go into presentations," she says.

Spiritual Capacity

Most executives are wary of addressing the spiritual level of the performance pyramid in business settings, and understandably so. The word "spiritual" prompts conflicting emotions and doesn't seem immediately relevant to high performance. So let's be clear: by spiritual capacity, we simply mean the energy that is unleashed by tapping into one's deepest values and defining a strong sense of purpose. This capacity, we have found, serves as sustenance in the face of adversity and as a powerful source of motivation, focus, determination, and resilience.

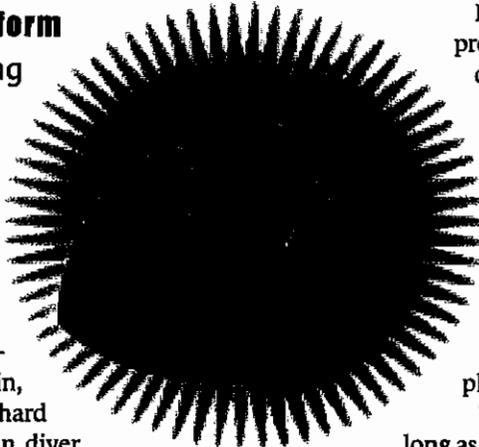
Consider the case of Ann, a high-level executive at a large cosmetics company. For much of her adult life, she has tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking, blaming her failures on a lack of self-discipline. Smoking took a visible toll on her health and her productivity at work—decreased endurance from shortness of breath, more sick days than her colleagues, and nicotine cravings that distracted her during long meetings.

Four years ago, when Ann became pregnant, she was able to quit immediately and didn't touch a cigarette until the day her child was born, when she began smoking again.

A year later, Ann became pregnant for a second time, and again she stopped smoking, with virtually no symptoms of withdrawal. True to her pattern, she resumed smoking when her child was born.

"I don't understand it," she told us plaintively.

We offered a simple explanation. As long as Ann was able to connect the impact of smoking to a deeper purpose—the health of her unborn child—quitting was easy. She was able to make what we call a "values-based adaptation." But without a strong connection to a deeper sense of purpose, she went back to smoking—an expedient adaptation that served her short-term interests. Smoking was a sensory pleasure for Ann, as well as a way to allay her anxiety and manage social stress. Understanding cognitively that it was unhealthy, feeling guilty about it on an emotional level, and even experiencing its negative effects physically were all insufficient motivations to change her behavior. To succeed, Ann needed a more sustaining source of motivation.



Making such a connection, we have found, requires regularly stepping off the endless treadmill of deadlines and obligations to take time for reflection. The inclination for busy executives is to live in a perpetual state of triage, doing whatever seems most immediately pressing while losing sight of any bigger picture. Rituals that give people the opportunity to pause and look inside include meditation, journal writing, prayer, and service to others. Each of these activities can also serve as a source of recovery—a way to break the linearity of relentless goal-oriented activity.

Taking the time to connect to one's deepest values can be extremely rewarding. It can also be painful, as a client we'll call Richard discovered. Richard is a stockbroker who works in New York City and lives in a distant suburb, where his wife stays at home with their three young children. Between his long commute and his long hours, Richard spent little time with his family. Like so many of our clients, he typically left home before his children woke up and returned around 7:30 in the evening, feeling exhausted and in no mood to talk to anyone. He wasn't happy with his situation, but he saw no easy solution. In time, his unhappiness began to affect his work, which made him even more negative when he got home at night. It was a vicious cycle.

One evening while driving home from work, Richard found himself brooding about his life. Suddenly, he felt so overcome by emotion that he stopped his car at a park ten blocks from home to collect himself. To his astonishment, he began to weep. He felt consumed with grief about his life and filled with longing for his family. Af-

Companies can't afford to address their employees' cognitive capacities while ignoring their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

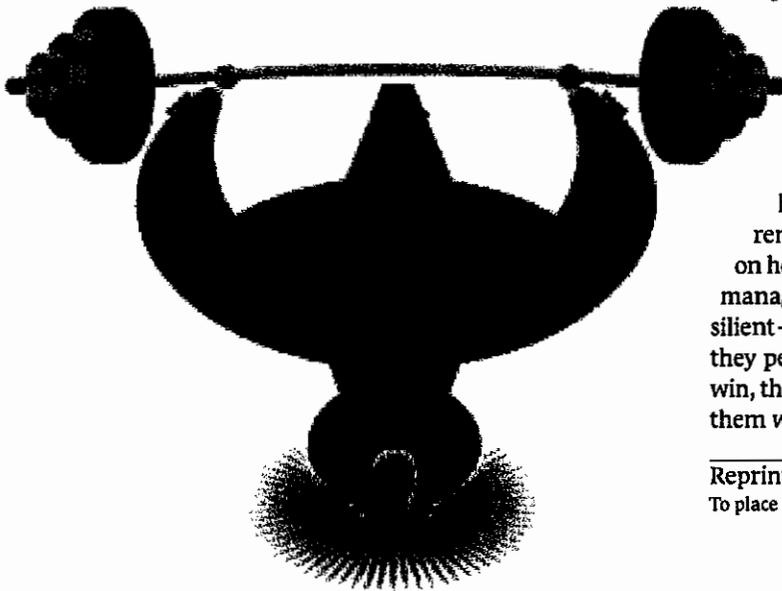
ter ten minutes, all Richard wanted to do was get home and hug his wife and children. Accustomed to giving their dad a wide berth at the end of the day, his kids were understandably bewildered

when he walked in that evening with tears streaming down his face and wrapped them all in hugs. When his wife arrived on the scene, her first thought was that he'd been fired.

The next day, Richard again felt oddly compelled to stop at the park near his house. Sure enough, the tears returned and so did the longing. Once again, he rushed home to his family. During the subsequent two years, Richard was able to count on one hand the number of times that he failed to stop at the same location for at least ten minutes. The rush of emotion subsided over time, but his sense that he was affirming what mattered most in his life remained as strong as ever.

Richard had stumbled into a ritual that allowed him both to disengage from work and to tap into a profound source of purpose and meaning—his family. In that context, going home ceased to be a burden after a long day and became instead a source of recovery and renewal. In turn, Richard's distraction at work diminished, and he became more focused, positive, and productive—so much so that he was able to cut down on his hours. On a practical level, he created a better balance between stress and recovery. Finally, by tapping into a deeper sense of purpose, he found a powerful new source of energy for both his work and his family.

In a corporate environment that is changing at warp speed, performing consistently at high levels is more difficult and more necessary than ever. Narrow interventions simply aren't sufficient anymore. Companies can't afford to address their employees' cognitive capacities while ignoring their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. On the playing field or in the boardroom, high performance depends as much on how people renew and recover energy as on how they expend it, on how they manage their lives as much as on how they manage their work. When people feel strong and resilient—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—they perform better, with more passion, for longer. They win, their families win, and the corporations that employ them win. 



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