

TP TOP PERFORMANCE[®]

Helping You Be Your Best.

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👂 The Art of Listening 🗣️

According to the International Listening Association, we remember about half of what someone says immediately after hearing it, and we only recall about 20% of what we hear over the long term. The key to learning and retaining more of what you hear — and to having more productive workplace conversations — is listening.

Practice the art of listening with these tips:

Seek to understand. Often, our goal in conversations is getting our own point across or trying to be right. Flip your attitude so you view workplace interactions as opportunities to understand your colleagues' opinions.

Observe. Instead of filling every conversational pause with words, closely observe the speaker. Check body language, vocal tone and facial expression, as well as words spoken. Give others a chance to complete their thoughts before you jump in with your own ideas and ask questions.

Listen. Maintain eye contact and give the speaker your full attention. Turn off your phone or tablet unless you're taking notes.

In today's fast-paced world, it may seem that talking is prized, but listening is crucial to a productive workplace.



Today's workforce is increasingly mobile, and you can work just about anywhere you have an electronic device and a reliable internet signal. Follow these strategies to stay productive and keep your information private while traveling:

Pack smart. Make sure you have everything you need on hand, including chargers and headphones, to ensure a smooth connection to those who need you.

Communicate. Set up check-in times with your home base and your supervisor. Automate outgoing work email and voice mail messages so people know you are out of the office and how to reach you.

Note: Don't leave a message on your personal phone that you're away from home, and don't advertise your absence on social media.

Plan connection spots. Internet on the road can be spotty depending on where you're traveling. Plan a stop in a hotel, café or business center that has free Wi-Fi, or explore mobile (Mi-Fi) services or tethering options for connectivity on the go.

Take precautions. Keep sensitive work and personal data safe from prying eyes by being cautious and using an encryption program when you access public Wi-Fi connections. Also, avoid leaving your work materials and electronic devices unattended or unlocked to prevent theft and damage.

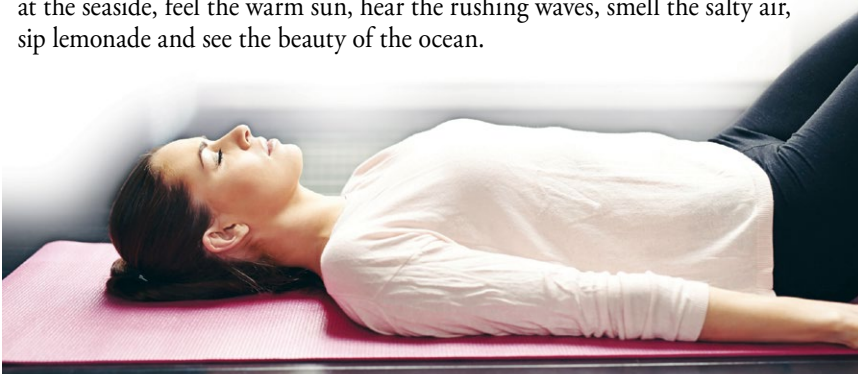
Easy Relaxation Techniques

When you feel tension rising, take a quick break with one of these easy relaxation techniques, and return to your work refreshed and ready to take on anything.

① **Breathe.** You can practice sitting, standing or lying down: Place your hand on your abdomen and breathe in slowly and deeply so you feel your hand rise. Count to three slowly as you hold your breath in, then breathe out and pause again for a count of three. Repeat this several times.

② **Scan.** Sit down, close your eyes and internally scan your body for any signs of tension, from your toes to your head. Consciously release any tension you find — for example, let your arms hang loose, open your mouth slightly, shrug your shoulders and let them drop, uncross your legs and feel yourself sink into your chair.

③ **Visualize.** Close your eyes, and picture yourself in a relaxing place. Engage all five senses in your mental picture. For example, if you're mentally at the seaside, feel the warm sun, hear the rushing waves, smell the salty air, sip lemonade and see the beauty of the ocean.



Working well or over-working?

Productivity experts agree there's more to productivity than checking off items on a to-do list and working longer, which doesn't ensure working better. Aim for efficiency and quality in your work, and always work toward your larger goals. **These three habits can help:**

- 1 Give one task your complete focus, instead of multitasking.
- 2 Identify the work that furthers your important goals, and spend more time and energy on it.
- 3 Batch low-priority tasks and schedule a standing appointment to complete them so you spend the bulk of your time on work that truly matters.

Parenting and Marriage

Parenting adds a new dimension to home life and relationships.

In particular, keeping a marriage strong through parenthood can be challenging. Here are ways to offset the stress:

Share the

duties. University of Missouri researchers found that when fathers shared the day-to-day household chores, beyond just child care, the marriage was happier. How the partners divided their duties didn't much matter. What counted was that both partners felt equally responsible for all aspects of running the home and raising the children.

Ask for help. Decades ago, extended families lived in close proximity and helped each other with child rearing. Today, that's often not the case. Build a support network so you can call upon friends, neighbors, fellow parents, a religious organization or babysitters to provide support.

Take time for yourself. Schedule time free of responsibilities to care for yourself and your relationship. Regular date nights help, even if they consist of ordering takeout and watching a movie after the kids go to bed. Be sure to exercise, eat nutritiously and do solo activities you enjoy. When both partners take care of themselves, the entire family is the better for it.



Turning Wishes Into **ACTIONS**



Too often, our goals go unrealized. Go beyond simply setting goals, and do something that will help you reach your mark.

According to Shane J. Lopez, a senior scientist with the Gallup organization and a leading researcher on hope, people can learn to be more hopeful and focus on a better future. In his book *Making Hope Happen*, Lopez outlines ways to cultivate hope and use it to turn wishes into actions, including the GPA method:

- ◆ **Goals thinking:** Set goals, and then refine them so they are reachable.
- ◆ **Pathways thinking:** Map out concrete strategies for how to get from where you are now to where you want to be.
- ◆ **Agency thinking:** Develop the skills, confidence and stamina you need to follow the path toward your goals.

As you work to think about your goals in these three different ways, use these strategies to help you along the path:

- ◆ **Focus.** Break down goals into small, achievable steps and focus only on the step you are working to complete.
- ◆ **Schedule.** Find creative ways to use the time you have, such as getting up earlier, using your work breaks productively, or giving up time spent watching television or using electronics to work on your goal.
- ◆ **Share.** Tell other people about your wishes and plans. This will strengthen your commitment and provide a ready-made support network to help you through the tough parts.



People in positions of power

perceive time differently, according to a University of California at Berkeley study. Researchers found that authority figures often think they have more control over time than their subordinates. However, as people gain power, they may tend to over-commit themselves or adhere to an unrealistic schedule.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Conquer That Cough**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V1tools.



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