

The Wellness Exchange



A Publication of
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Are You A Courteous Cell Phone User?



If you were in a store, train, or restaurant recently, you were likely unwillingly subjected to multiple, loud phone conversations in addition to the normal noise associated with such places. Or perhaps, were you the one subjecting others to intimate details of your uncle's illness, your recent breakup, or what you were having for dinner?

It seems the notion of a private conversation or discretion in public areas no longer exists with many people enjoying the instant gratification of immediate contact. Not only are we subjected to the typical one-way cell phone chat - cell phones with the walkie-talkie feature gives us full access to the entire conversation.

July is National Cell Phone Courtesy Month, a time for all of us to be aware of the impact we have on others when we forget our "wireless manners".

There were 207.9 million cell phone users at the end of 2005, a figure representing 69 percent of the total U.S. population.

A Part Of Everyday Life

With our lives increasingly on the run, more people are using wireless devices as a means of communication and doing business quickly and conveniently. We are using phones in restaurants, trains, and in every imaginable public area. Wireless phones are accepted as a part of the way we live and, when used properly, can provide a level of convenience and safety that is unmatched by other forms of communication.

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Mastering The Art Of Cell Phone Etiquette

Creating a more courteous cell phone environment for all of those around you begins by taking a look at your current behavior. Keep these guidelines in mind:

The person you are with is most important

It is not uncommon to see two people together, each rambling on separate cell phones instead of communicating with each other. Spend time communicating with those you are with.

Change your ring tones to match your environment

Choose your ring tones (and volume) wisely. What may be entertaining at times, may not be most appropriate for your work environment or in a crowded restaurant. Be sure to use vibrate or silent mode while in the office, especially when your cell phone is unattended.

Use text messaging

Are you expecting important information from a colleague but need to be in a public area? Are you "hooked" on nonstop communication? Try sending a text message to stay in touch without being disruptive to others.

Don't engage in cell yell

Most devices have sensitive microphones that can pick up even a whisper. There is no need to speak louder on your cell phone than you would on any other phone.

Turn off (or at least vibrate) your phone when in quiet & high profile places

Movie theaters, libraries, weddings, funerals, places of worship, courtrooms, and job interviews to name a few. Many venues have posted rules about cell phone use - obey the rules.

Protect the privacy of your conversation

When using your phone in public, talk in a low tone or move to a private/isolated spot. Be aware of your surroundings and avoid discussing confidential or private information. Don't use your phone in restroom, it's unhealthy and impolite.

Be safe while driving - use headsets

Practice wireless responsibility while you are driving. Use handsfree devices to help focus attention on your driving. Don't make or receive calls while in hazardous driving conditions. Always make safety your most important priority.



When it comes to practicing cell phone manners, common-sense courtesy should lead the way. Just remember, if someone at the table next to you gives you the evil eye while you are on a wireless phone in your favorite restaurant, don't say we didn't warn you!

Beat The Heat

Preventing Heat Stress In The Workplace



One of the most overlooked hazards that can be encountered in the workplace is heat. Heat stress is often considered a seasonal problem, associated with employees working outside in the hot summer sun. However, it can be found throughout the workplace at any time of year. The need for employees and supervisors to be aware and prepared for hot and sticky situations becomes a workplace priority. Heat stress is a serious problem that can affect a diverse group of employees on the job. It is not only dangerous to the employee's health, but to fellow employees as well because the victim may be unable to perform their job duties in a safe manner.

What Is Heat Stress?

Heat stress occurs when the body's means of controlling its internal temperature starts to fail. There are several factors that may reduce one's tolerance to heat stress, such as chronic illnesses, obesity, alcohol use, drug use, and temporary illnesses such as the flu. Although tolerance to heat stress will vary from person to person, heat stress will generally decrease an employee's judgment and workmanship. When an employee is subjected to sustained levels of heat stress, the real problems begin. The potential for accidents and the likelihood of the employee sustaining heat-related illnesses increase.



Sources of Heat Stress

There are six main factors involved in causing heat stress:

- **temperature**
- **humidity**
- **movement of air**
- **radiant temperature**
- **clothing**
- **physical activity**

In addition, the level of stress an individual faces can also be contributed to personal characteristics such as age, weight, fitness, medical condition and acclimatization to the heat.

Adjusting to these factors and/or controlling them may help reduce the chance of heat stress. It is important to understand the risks and take precautions to lessen the impact.

Adjusting to Heat Stress

Your body can adjust to working in a warm environment through a process called acclimatization. Acclimatization involves gradually increasing the amount of time you spend working in a hot environment. This gradual increase allows your body to properly adjust to the heat. Over time, your body learns to adapt, sweating more, conserving body salt, and reducing cardiovascular stress.



Keep in mind, if you're away from work for a few days or if you experience a brief period of cooler temperatures, you may need to re-acclimate yourself before you try to work the full shift in hot conditions.

By developing a good understanding of heat stress, you play an important role in providing for your own safety and the safety of those around you. Consider the tips below to aid in the prevention of heat stress:

1. **Proper Clothing** - Clean, loose-fitting clothing that allows airflow should be worn in hot, humid conditions.
2. **Fluid replacement** - Replace lost fluids by drinking cool water or electrolyte replacement drinks. Take in fluids on a regular basis. By the time you are thirsty, you may already beginning to experience the early symptoms of heat stress.
3. **Work Schedule** - Avoid heavy physical activity during the hottest parts of the day. Increase the frequency and duration of rest breaks.
4. **Monitoring** - Monitor the environment and the individuals around you for susceptibility to heat stress. Develop a "buddy system" to check on each other periodically to look for signs of heat stress.
5. **Education** - It is important to understand the dangers of heat stress, how to recognize symptoms, and how to decrease your risks of developing heat stress.

*For more information on heat stress and working in hot environments, visit:
www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress or www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress*