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# The Frontline Employee

## **COVID-19: Low Testosterone in Men, Higher Risk of Hospitalization**

A recent study demonstrated that men with low testosterone are 250% more likely to be hospitalized with a COVID-19 infection. Talk to a medical provider to learn more, but are you unwittingly lowering your testosterone level because of your lifestyle? Reduced testosterone can be caused by 1) physical and emotional stress (learn how to reduce it!); 2) chronic lack of sleep; 3) an unhealthy diet—particularly from eating fried foods, fast foods, and large amounts of food that are soy based; 4) daily use of alcohol; 5) heat in the groin area from overuse of a laptop, extended pocketing of a cellphone, and even frequent prolonged hot baths; 6) excess belly fat and excess use of sugar. Source: wustl.edu [search low testosterone COVID-19]

## **Online Coaching for Autistic Employees**

Are you an employee on the autism spectrum who, despite high motivation and abilities, faces common challenges regarding job performance, assertiveness, and interpersonal communication? Are daily workplace routines difficult? Talk to your EAP or a professional counselor to discover coaching solutions. ASD coaching is a growing specialization. An ASD coach specialist may help you develop the ability to successfully navigate workplace challenges that are unique to you. The goal is to help you feel more confident and less stressed and provide you with an ability to focus better on maximizing productivity.

## **Should I Get Help for a Crisis?**

Virtually everyone will experience a personal crisis at some point in their life. How long that crisis lasts, how adverse its effects are, and what benefits or undesirable outcomes are ultimately derived from it will vary depending on one's approach to intervention. Most of us are taught to be self-reliant. It is a worthy value, but self-reliance does not mean delaying taking advantage of—or avoiding—helpful resources, whether it is a fire extinguisher or professional mental health counseling. The real skill is your ability to define a crisis early; don't allow resistance to external resource solutions let the crisis you face become more difficult to resolve due to delayed intervention.

## **Avoid Relapse of Your Health Condition**

Relapse triggers are ever-present for many chronic illnesses that require attention to personal health. If you struggle with relapse triggers for a health condition, you may underestimate the power of complacency. Complacency is losing the healthy fear of your condition. Slowly you may drift toward doing things, going places, or participating in activities that make relapse likely and not participating in health practices that make it less likely. Willpower eventually becomes one's sole prevention strategy. All it takes to relapse at this point is a crisis or an emotion-filled event that triggers a rationalized decision to give up treatment or one's recovery program.

## **Build Resilience by Raising Self-Esteem**

Positive self-esteem is a resource tool when adversity hits. You are able to make decisions that are more effective, feel confident, and sense hope when the going gets tough. If you question the level of your self-esteem, try these action steps to boost it: 1) Identify the positive human qualities you possess by using this massive list: [<http://ideonomy.mit.edu/essays/traits.html>] This exercise will make you more aware of the real you. You may be surprised at how many positive qualities you actually possess. 2) Catch negative self-talk quickly and ask, “What is causing me to think this way right now?” This exercise will erode negative, knee-jerk reactions to the everyday mishaps we all experience. 3) When mistakes happen, do not target yourself for self-criticism. Instead, focus on the decision and changes you need to consider next time. 4) Everyone reacts with discouragement or emotions to mishaps and unfortunate events. The life skill to develop is learning to overcome a negative emotional response quickly and restoring your courage to try again. 5) Gravitate toward those who seem to validate your self-worth, particularly good listeners. 6) If you struggle with self-esteem, it can be easier to be critical of others, just as you are with yourself. The act of accepting others along with their shortcomings has a double-healing effect of improving relationships with others while you actually improve the one with yourself.

## **The Hazard of Using Alcohol to Manage Pain**

Do you use alcohol to manage pain? Some research shows more than 25% of people have tried it, but there is risk to the practice. Using alcohol to reduce pain can increase the risk of acquiring a substance use disorder (alcoholism), primarily by stressing susceptibility to the disease, particularly if you have a family history of substance use problems. Although gaining temporary relief from pain using alcohol (alcohol analgesia) might work, research shows that a safe level of consumption is not enough to manage pain. This means you are consuming daily amounts beyond what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes as safe (one drink for women and two for men.) Talk to your doctor or company employee assistance program for assessment and direction in managing pain. Consider an assessment for a substance use disorder. Source: [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov) [search “using alcohol relieve pain”] and [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/acer.14883](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/acer.14883)

## **Boost Your Team’s Positivity**

Many workplace teams experience stress, but it is often made worse by not nurturing a team culture that can maintain high morale and resilience. Take these steps to reinforce team positivity: 1) Decide to not just perform tasks. Instead, agree on a common vision and set up goals. Then post them. 2) Lose the cynicism and believe in the organization, or discover how to rekindle this loyalty so you have a foundational purpose with your employer and a real reason to engage that naturally pulls you forward; 3) Don’t avoid the manager; determine how to elicit praise for your successes. Praise from the boss is pure currency to boost morale. 4) Regularly set aside a few minutes to have honest discussions about issues—even if a moment of silence passes as members consider what is relevant. Do not allow only a concern or issue to be what prompts such meetings. You may miss the opportunity to resolve a problem early on. Recommended reading: “The Team-Building Tool Kit: Tips, Tactics, and Rules for Effective Workplace Teams.”

## **Stop Stress, Right Now: Absorbing Other People’s Stress?**

Some people are so empathetic that they may absorb coworkers’ stress and anxiety and, therefore, feel drained of energy needed to take care of themselves and loved ones at the end of the day. Do you absorb other people’s stress and anxiety in this way? If so, reach out for help. Empathy is a powerful and positive human trait but exploring how to set boundaries, protect yourself, and if needed, acquire skills to help release the tension you picked up during the day will help you be more productive without losing the ability to have deep and meaningful relationships with others on the job.

