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The In–Office Emergency Nutritional Kit

By Jon Gestl

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Tired of having stare–downs with those boxes of Krispy Kremes, trays of brownies, and platters of cookies some well–intentioned but nutritionally clueless co–worker brings into the office? Be prepared for these and other nutritional setbacks at your office by stocking up on a few key items that will have your desk a veritable nutritional emergency kit.

Water: Bottles and bottles of water. Small bottles, big bottles, plastic bottles, glass bottles, whatever it takes. Having enough water within your reach everyday will keep you well hydrated as well as keeping your stomach filled when you'd otherwise fall prey to the lingering office munchies.

Fruit: Each week, bring a bag of fresh fruit to the office and store it in your desk. And don't just stick with the common fare of apples and oranges. Berries, mangos, kiwi will keep for several days, more if you have access to an office refrigerator, and provide variety to whet your appetite for something other than those fudge brownies.

Protein bars: You can also use these as part of one of your daily meals. Be careful and read the labels. Many "nutritional bars" are nothing more than candy bars in deceptive packaging. Stay away from the ones with high sugar and fat content.

Vegetables: Bring a couple of small ziplocked bags of baby carrots, celery or your other favorite veggies that will keep.

Low–fat cottage cheese/low sugar yogurt: Small containers of these on hand will provide nutritional meal options.

Ricecakes: A bag of low–sodium ricecakes tucked away can satisfy a need to eat something crunchy. Just stay away from the ones loaded with flavored sugar coating.

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Toothbrush/Mouthwash: I learned this trick from a friend who was a competitive bodybuilder. During pre-contest dieting, he would attempt to deflect the temptation to eat blacklisted foods within his reach by brushing his teeth. He said the last thing he wanted to do after brushing with minty toothpaste was chew a gooey piece of fudge or candy. Not bad for keeping your breath fresh, either.

Utensils: Make sure you have a serving or two of utensils at your desk, along with something to cut your food if needed.

Thermal-Lunchbags: Perfect for storing food when a refrigerator is not available. Available in many sizes.

The first step to staying on track with your eating, particularly at work, is planning. You don't have the power to control what your co-workers bring into the office, but you can help ward off temptation by stocking up on a few items of your own. Remember, the point is to not make your own desk resemble

a supermarket aisle, but to have enough options on hand in order to substitute for the really bad stuff should the need arise.

Jon Gestl, CSCS, is a Chicago personal trainer and fitness instructor who specializes in helping people get in shape in the privacy and convenience of their home or office. He is a United States National Aerobic Champion silver and bronze medalist and world-ranked sportaerobic competitor. He can be contacted through his website at

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Emergency Kit For When You Travel

By Tim Lapkovski

A great idea for your car is a first aid kit. You can never be too prepared, right? This might help to save someones life until the paramedics can arrive if you get into a car accident as well. You may never need any of these items but in the event that you do, you will be extremely happy to have brought along this kit. It can be a real life saver in an emergency situation. You can also include car accessories such as a spare tire, tire iron, and more.

1. Be Prepared

In an emergency, you don't have a lot of time to think and respond to what you see. Having the right tools in front of you can make the difference between being stranded for days or being able to get the help you need. Depending on what you would like to include in the kit you might even be able to make it small enough to fit into your glove compartment. There are a few basic items that should be included in emergency kits for all seasons.

2. Kit Essentials

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– Band– aids – Bandages – Allergy pills – Painkillers – Medical tape – Gauze – Hydrogen Peroxide – Bottled water – Emergency rations

3. Seasonal Items – Summer

The summer season may require a few additional items in your emergency kit. You might wish to include tweezers for removing bee stings. Another helpful item for the summer is sunscreen. Even the cloudiest days can suddenly turn into bright sunshine leaving you in danger of being burned if you do not have an emergency bottle of sunscreen. Lotions for rashes and poison ivy are also extremely useful in the summertime.

4. Seasonal Items – Winter

During wintertime, your car may be exposed to black ice and other harsh road conditions. Be sure to include extra windshield fluid, a spare set of clothing, an emergency blanket, etc. You should also carry along items to deal with snow such as tire chains, a snow shovel, and a scraper so you can get the frost off of your windows.

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