



IRS Summertime Tax Tip 2011-11

July 29, 2011

Many taxpayers spend time during the summer months updating their résumé and attending career fairs. The Internal Revenue Service reminds job seekers that you may be able to deduct some of the expenses on your tax return.

Here are seven things the IRS wants you to know about deducting costs related to your job search:

1. To qualify for a deduction, the expenses must be spent on a job search in your current occupation. You may not deduct expenses you incur while looking for a job in a new occupation.
2. You can deduct employment and outplacement agency fees you pay while looking for a job in your present occupation. If your employer pays you back in a later year for employment agency fees, you must include the amount you receive in your gross income, up to the amount of your tax benefit in the earlier year.
3. You can deduct amounts you spend for preparing and mailing copies of your résumé to prospective employers as long as you are looking for a new job in your present occupation.
4. If you travel to an area to look for a new job in your present occupation, you may be able to deduct travel expenses to and from the area. You can only deduct the travel expenses if the trip is primarily to look for a new job. The amount of time you spend on personal activity compared to the amount of time you spend looking for work is important in determining whether the trip is primarily personal or is primarily to look for a new job.
5. You cannot deduct job search expenses if there was a substantial break between the end of your last job and the time you begin looking for a new one.
6. You cannot deduct job search expenses if you are looking for a job for the first time.
7. The amount of job search expenses that you can claim on your tax return is limited. You can claim the amount that is more than 2 percent of your adjusted gross income. You figure your deduction on Schedule A.

For more information about job search expenses, see IRS Publication 529, Miscellaneous Deductions. This publication is available on www.irs.gov or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

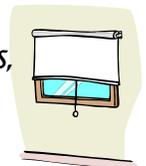


Barbara A. Evans, CEA/FCS
1225 Pearl Street, Suite 200
Beaumont, Texas 77701

409-835-8461 or toll free (409) 727-2191 ext. 8461

*"If a window of opportunity appears,
don't pull down the shade."*

Tom Peters





Source: Beaumont Enterprise
Wednesday, July 13, 2011

Quick Meals with about four ingredients

The Texas AgriLife Extension recently hosted a cooking demonstration at the Effie and Wilton Hebert Library showing Southeast Texans how to whip up a quick, healthy meal with just a few ingredients. But if you couldn't make it, no sweat. We've got you covered.

Stir Fried Cabbage & Zucchini

Materials: Measuring Cups and Spoons, Spoon, Small bowl, Cutting Board, Knife, Skillet

Ingredients:

Two medium zucchini (about 1 pound); 2 tablespoons vegetable oil; 6 cups packed sliced cabbage, 1 teaspoon garlic powder. * Carrots are option ingredient.

Directions:

Rinse and slice zucchini and carrots into thin circular strips. Heat the cooking oil over high heat in a wok or skillet. Add carrots and zucchini to the wok or skillet and stir quickly and frequently for a few minutes. Add garlic powder and cabbage, reduce heat to medium high. Continue stirring 7 to 8 minutes until vegetables are tender and crisp.

Garlic-Basil Halibut

Ingredients:

12 oz. fresh or frozen halibut steak (about 1 inch thick), 2 tablespoons snipped fresh basil, 1 tablespoons snipped fresh basil, 1 tablespoon melted butter, 1 clove garlic, minced.

Directions:

Rinse or thaw the fish, pat dry. In a small bowl mix basil, melted butter, and garlic, then apply the mixture to both sides of halibut.. Salt and pepper to taste. Place fish on the unheated rack of broiler pan and broil 4 inches from heat for about 8 to 12 minutes.

Roasted Pork with Apples

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon of snipped fresh sage or 1/2 teaspoon dried sage, crushed. 1-1lb pork tenderloin, 1 tablespoon canola oil, 1 medium red onion cut into thin wedges, 3 medium cooking apples, cored and cut into 1/4 inch thick wedges, 2/3 cup apple juice or cider

Directions:

Mix the snipped sage, salt, and pepper, rub on tenderloin. Brown all sides in hot oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Place browned pork in roaster, add onions. Roast uncovered at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Add apples and roast for 10-15 minutes more. Place pork and apple mixture on a serving platter and cover with foil. Let stand 10 minutes, boil apple juice in a small sauce pan uncovered for about 8 to 10 minutes drizzle over meat and apple mixture and serve.



With the help of Laura Begnaud, left, Jay Cockrell with Better Living for Texans demonstrates how to cook a healthy meal using four ingredients during the cooking demo at the Hebert Public Library.

Normal Is A Town In Illinois

Andrew B. Crocker, Extension Program Specialist – Gerontology Health

Webster's Dictionary defines normal as "conforming to the standard or the common type; usual; regular; natural." We are often quick to dismiss many of the challenges we face day-to-day as "just growing older" or "normal aging." In fact, the only thing "normal" about aging is that all beings grow older. As people age, a majority of them remain healthy and independent. In spite of this, some individuals begin to experience changes that are perceived as signs of deterioration or decline. Our society tends to focus on that decline, influencing our perception of "normal." We should forget stereotypes and look at all people, regardless of age, as unique individuals, each with a particular set of resources and challenges. As the body ages, it may undergo gradual changes which may or may not be experienced by friends, family or acquaintances. How your body ages may depend on heredity; however, studies show that your lifestyle choices may impact how well your body ages – to the tune of 50% of health risk factors – normal is as normal does. While the focus of this article is not to further the "normal aging" stereotype, there are some changes in body and function that you may look for as you grow older. Some of these changes may apply to you; others may not:

Hearing and Vision. Changes in the ear may make some sounds harder to hear and changes in tone and speech less clear. Too, over time the lens of the eye may become less flexible or develop cataracts. Night vision and visual sharpness may decline and you may experience increased sensitivity to glare.

Skin and Bones. Skin may become less elastic, more lined and wrinkled and/or bruise easily. Oil glands may produce less oil, making the skin drier than before. Over the course of a lifetime, it may be common to lose a couple of inches in height due to changes in posture and compression of joints, spinal bones and spinal discs. Bones may gradually lose some of their mineral content, becoming less dense and strong. In women, bone loss may increase after menopause.

Brain and nervous system. Beginning in mid-life, the brain's weight, the size of its nerve network and its blood flow may begin to decrease. However, the brain adapts to these changes, growing new patterns of nerve endings. Memory changes are not necessarily common in aging. Recall of names and details may slow and you may have more "tip of the tongue" moments but these may be offset by keeping the brain active throughout the lifespan.

Heart and Lungs. The heart may become less efficient as it ages and may work a little harder than it once did during activity. In inactive people, the lungs may become less efficient over time, supplying the body with less oxygen. For these reasons, among others, physical activity remains important throughout life.

Kidneys. The kidneys may decline in size and function causing wastes and medications to not clear the body as well and decreased tolerance for dehydration. This makes it increasingly important that you minimize alcohol and unnecessary medications and that you drink plenty of fluids.

The aging process may also bring social and emotional change and loss. Inevitably, older relatives and friends may grow frail and die, individuals may lose a spouse. Physical and social losses that may accompany aging may be very difficult emotionally. Grief and sadness are common reactions to such situations, and we cannot and should not try to lessen these reactions. Just as the physical losses of later life may be compensated for, so can the social and emotional losses be overcome with time. The physical aging process can be influenced in a variety of ways. The bulk of the changes that take place over the years may be strongly affected by physical activity and other lifestyle characteristics. Apart from heredity, people who live in areas with especially long life expectancy have the following characteristics: Regular physical activity, Well-balanced diet, Social involvement, Moderate or no alcohol, No smoking.

By keeping respect for the immense differences between individuals, especially older adults, and not assume or stereotype based on health and function, we all can do a lot to further the "normal is as normal does" philosophy of aging and health.

For more information, contact your County Extension Agent. You may also test your "Normal Aging IQ" through the Mayo Clinic website: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/aging/QZ00073>.



Home Water Conservation Tips

Water conservation begins at home, and we must all do our part. We need to develop an attitude of conserving water so we will be conscious of using less water in all aspects of our lives.



Stop leaks. The first step is to make sure your home is leak-free. Check indoor water-using appliances and devices for leaks. Many silent leaks allow water and your money to go down the drain. Dripping faucets that are leaking at a rate of one drop per second can waste 2,700 gallons of water per year. Not only is this a waste of water, it adds to the size of your water and sewer bill, or it puts a strain on your septic system. Toilet tank leaks account for much of the water wasted in homes. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons per day. Check for toilet tank leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes (flush as soon as you finish the test). Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available, and easily installed. Another large water waster can be irrigation system leaks; fix these leaks quickly.

Change behaviors. Examples of possible behavior changes that could save water in the bathroom include: taking 4-minute showers; turning the water off while shampooing your hair in the shower; turning water off while shaving or brushing teeth; and never using the toilet as a waste basket. Other simple behavior changes can save a lot of water in the kitchen and laundry area. In the kitchen: keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool; thaw food in the refrigerator overnight rather than running hot water over it; scrape rather than rinsing dishes when loading the dishwasher; and add food waste to a compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal. In the laundry area, wash only full loads of laundry, or use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine. Outside your home, consider sweeping sidewalks and driveways rather than hosing them off; use soaker hoses rather than sprinklers to avoid evaporation; and wash the car with water from a bucket, or consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.

Replace your equipment with water-efficient equipment. Homes with high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances save about 30 percent of indoor water use and yield substantial savings on water, sewer, and energy bills (EPA). Below are some examples of changes that can be made. The toilet is the largest water user in your home. Most toilets installed before 1992 do not have the water-saving 1.6 gallon per flush. For those toilets that do make the flush efficient, hold the lever down to complete the flush cycle, which alleviates the need for a second flush.

Make sure each showerhead releases 2.5 gallons per minute or less. Today, all showerheads sold are regulated to meet the 2.5 gallons per minute maximum requirement. To make the flow feel like more water is coming out, turn the head dial to reduce the number of sprays or inner spray settings. Replace your clothes washer – it is the second largest in-home water user. Energy Star™ rated washers, which also have a Water Factor at or lower than 9.5, use 35 to 50 percent less water and 50 percent less energy per load (EPA), saving you money on both water and energy bills.

Reduce water use in the landscape. From 50 to 75 percent of a home's total water use during the growing season may be for outdoor purposes. It's important that you develop a plan or convert your current landscape to include plants and design that are appropriate for your climate conditions. If you have an irrigation system, it also needs to be regularly adjusted and checked for leaks. Select plants that are appropriate for your local climate conditions. Having a yard with 100 percent lawn

turf area in a dry climate uses significant amounts of water. Also consider Xeriscape™ and a more natural landscape. Use only the amount of water that your plants need. Water during the coolest part of the day. Use soaker hoses or trickle irrigation for trees and shrubs.

Don't water plants that do not need the water. Be attentive to your watering time. Maintain your irrigation system. Make sure your irrigation controller has a rain shutoff device. Water trees and shrubs longer and less frequently than shallow-rooted plants. Mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface and to cut down on weed growth.

New home designs should make sense. Water Sense labeled new homes are designed to reduce residential water use indoors, as well as outdoors, compared to typical new homes. The Water Sense label (EPA) on bathroom sink faucets, showerheads, toilets, etc. makes it easy to find and select water-efficient products.

The placement of water heating systems is another design issue. Gallons of water are wasted while waiting for hot water to get to the shower in many homes. In new homes, this can be addressed by placing hot water heaters near points of hot water use. In older homes, one may simply need to catch the cold water and use it for watering plants or doing laundry. The waste may be as much as 3 gallons for each shower taken. Tankless water heating systems may save energy, but where they are located determines whether they save water or not.

Remember: What you do affects the quality and quantity of the water you have available. By keeping that in mind, you are helping protect water resources now and in the future. Help save Texas' water, and make every drop count.

Call the Extension office (409) 835-8461 for a complete WATER CONSERVATION CHECKLIST for the HOME

save water...save energy...save money

CONSERVE

*...Today for a
Better Tomorrow.*



For more info
check our website!
<http://Jefferson-tx.tamu.edu>



HOMWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

U.S. Department of Education

Homework can have many benefits for young children. It can improve remembering and understanding of schoolwork. Homework can help students develop study skills that will be of value even after they leave school. It can teach them that learning takes place anywhere, not just in the classroom. Homework can benefit children in more general ways as well. It can foster positive character traits such as independence and responsibility. Homework can teach children how to manage time.

★ **Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.**

Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

★ **Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.**

Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.

★ **Help your child with time management.**

Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

★ **Be positive about homework.**

Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.

★ **When your child does homework, you do homework.**

Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.

★ **When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.**

Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.

★ **When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.**

Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.

★ **If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.**

Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.

★ **Stay informed.**

Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.

★ **Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.**

Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.

★ **Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.**

Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.

★ **Reward progress in homework.**

If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.

READING HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ★ Have your child read aloud to you every night.
- ★ Choose a quiet place, free from distractions, for your child to do his nightly reading assignments.
- ★ As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as *cat, pat, hat*.
- ★ When your child reads aloud to you and makes a mistake, point out the words she has missed and help her to read the word correctly.
- ★ After your child has stopped to correct a word he has read, have him go back and reread the entire sentence from the beginning to make sure he understands what the sentence is saying.
- ★ Ask your child to tell you in her own words what happened in a story.
- ★ To check your child's understanding of what he is reading, occasionally pause and ask your child questions about the characters and events in the story.
- ★ Ask your child why she thinks a character acted in a certain way and ask your child to support her answer with information from the story.
- ★ Before getting to the end of a story, ask your child what he thinks will happen next and why.

MATH HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ★ Encourage your child to use a daily math assignment book.
- ★ Follow the progress your child is making in math. Check with your child daily about his homework.
- ★ If you don't understand your child's math assignments, engage in frequent communication with his or her teacher.
- ★ If your child is experiencing problems in math, contact the teacher to learn whether he or she is working at grade level and what can be done at home to help improve academic progress.
- ★ Request that your child's teacher schedule after-school math tutoring sessions if your child really needs help.
- ★ Advocate with the principal for the use of research-based peer tutoring programs for math. These tutoring programs have proven results, and students really enjoy them.
- ★ Use household chores as opportunities for reinforcing math learning such as cooking and repair activities.
- ★ Try to be aware of how your child is being taught math, and don't teach strategies and shortcuts that conflict with the approach the teacher is using. Check in with the teacher and ask what you can do to help. Ask the teacher about online resources that you can use with your child at home.
- ★ At the beginning of the year, ask your child's teacher for a list of suggestions that will enable you to help your child with math homework.



Tiny (but Tasty) Desserts

Bite-sized indulgences that can be made in small batches; By Tracey Neithercott/Recipes by Robyn Webb, MS, LN

Dessert and diabetes: Are they necessarily incompatible? Not if you know when to say “enough.” But when you’re faced with cakes, pies, tarts, and other desserts that are meant to serve eight to 10 people, it’s easy to overeat—especially since everyone’s idea of a slice differs.

That’s where individual-serving desserts come in. When the portion size is well defined, you lower your chances of overeating. A study in the May issue of the journal *Obesity* found that people ate less food when presented with four 100-calorie packages of crackers than they did when given a single 400-calorie bag of the same crackers. The very idea of a portion seems to have swayed their appetite. It’s also easier to be satisfied with less—and to savor every bit—when a dessert has a lot of flavor. That’s why most people only eat a few bites of a dense, rich, flourless chocolate cake but might inhale an entire box of cookies.

Preparing mini delicious desserts in small batches lets you enjoy the best things about dessert without risking a nutritional fiasco. You can enjoy cooking (without worrying about what to do with an entire bundt cake) and feel like you’re treating yourself—while, at the same time, you treat yourself well. A little goes a long way! You don’t need to stuff yourself when tiny desserts like these pack so much flavor into so few calories.

Mini Chocolate Coffee Ice Cream Cups

Ingredients: 8 oz. semisweet chocolate chips; 1 cup light coffee ice cream
1/2 cup chocolate syrup



Preparation: 24 servings; Serving size: 1 cup

Preparation time: 5 minutes; Cooking time: 2 to 5 minutes

1. Melt the chocolate chips in a double boiler over simmering hot water until completely smooth.
2. Using the back of a teaspoon or a small spatula, coat the sides and bottom of small or mini silver foil paper baking cups with chocolate. Put the cups in 24 mini muffin pan wells.
3. Set the muffin pan trays in the refrigerator, and chill until the chocolate shells harden, approximately 30 to 45 minutes.
4. Once the shells are hardened, working quickly, evenly scoop the coffee ice cream into each shell. Drizzle with chocolate syrup, and serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts: Carbohydrate exchanges 1; Fat exchanges 0.5

Amount per Serving

Calories 70; Calories from Fat 25; Total Fat 3 g; Saturated Fat 1.9 g; Trans Fat 0 g

Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 10 mg; Potassium 60 mg

Total Carbohydrate 11 g; Dietary Fiber 1 g; Sugars 9 g

American Diabetes Association ; Diabetes Forecast Magazine; Aug 2011 <http://forecast.diabetes.org/recipes/mini-chocolate-coffee-ice-cream-cups>

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes is FREE educational program for people with Type 2 diabetes. The primary goal is to help participants learn how to manage their blood glucose in the ranges recommended by the American Diabetes Association.



Our next series of classes are as follows:

BEAUMONT August 9th - Sept 13th
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

PORT ARTHUR August 14th - Sept 15th
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Beaumont Aug 25; Sept 22; Oct 27; Dec 22—6:00pm to 7:00pm.

Port Arthur contact (409) 853-5376

For other questions, contact (409) 835-8461

10 tips

Nutrition Education Series

choose MyPlate

10 tips to a great plate



Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips. Use the ideas in this list to *balance your calories*, to choose foods to *eat more often*, and to cut back on foods to *eat less often*.

1 balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

2 enjoy your food, but eat less

Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.



3 avoid oversized portions

Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

4 foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.



5 make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

6 switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.



7 make half your grains whole grains

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

8 foods to eat less often

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

9 compare sodium in foods

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," or "no salt added."



10 drink water instead of sugary drinks

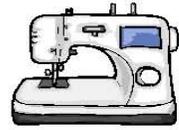
Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American diets.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING

Beginner Sewing Classes at Lamar State College-Port Arthur

October 10-13, 2011; 6:00pm – 8:00pm; \$20 Course Fee

Preregistration required; Seating is Limited; Registration **Deadline is October 3, 2011**



Name	Address	City; Zip Code

Telephone: _____	Email: _____	
Make checks (\$20.00) payable to: FCS Committee of Jefferson County		
Do you own a sewing machine? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

Managing Money in Tough Times

November 2, 2011; 6:00pm ----- \$10.00 Class Fee

Texas AgriLife Extension Office-1225 Pearl Street Suite 200 Beaumont, TX

- Money management basics
- Understanding Alternative Financial Services
- How to keep track of your money
- Pay yourself first: Why you should save, save, save (and how to save)
- New Credit Card Rules
- To your credit: How your credit history will affect your credit future (FICO Scores)
- Charge it right: How to make a credit card work for you



Name	Address	City; Zip Code

Telephone: _____	Email: _____	
Make checks (\$10.00) payable to: FCS Committee of Jefferson County		
Mail to: Texas AgriLife Extension Office-1225 Pearl Street Suite 200 Beaumont, TX 77701		



Marriage Education Workshops

Planning to say "I do" soon? Want to save money for your big day? Want to learn to love for life? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, a Together in Texas marriage education class is waiting for you.

September 21-22, 2011; 5:30pm to 9:30pm each night; \$10 per person

Name	Address	City; Zip Code

Telephone: _____	Email: _____	
Make checks payable to: FCS Committee of Jefferson County		
Mail to: Texas AgriLife Extension Office; 1225 Pearl Street, Suite 200, Beaumont, TX 77701		

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact Cary Erickson, Jefferson County Human Resources Director at (409) 839-2391, five working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made. Programs conducted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service serves people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A & M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners' Court of Texas Cooperating.