

CAMPING *Magazine*

May/June 2000

Top 10 Summer Survival Tips

Advice to help you stay focused and avoid burnout

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1. Eat nutritious meals

Your mom was right, you need to eat your vegetables to stay healthy. Eating well-balanced meals is especially important at camp because of your high activity level and because you probably won't be getting enough sleep (see tip #2). Try to avoid junk foods and eat fruits, vegetables, or cheese for snacks. You'll also set a good example for your campers (see tip #8)!

2. Get enough sleep

You are expected to give 100 percent to your campers when you are on duty. No one can do that if they aren't properly rested. Resist the temptation to stay up late night after night. Your body needs rest to replenish and be ready for the next day.

3. Exercise

There's nothing better for beating stress than exercise. Go for a run; walk or ride a bike instead of driving; join in activities. Exercise helps clear your head, promotes good health, and helps you feel rejuvenated and ready to go.

4. Make some time for yourself

As difficult as it might be, find some time when you can do something you enjoy that isn't related camp. Write in a journal; draw; spend your day off reconnecting with your needs and values.

5. Keep a good sense of humor

It's true that laughter sometimes is the best medicine. It can bring people together and diffuse some tense situation. Camp should be fun. Relax and don't take yourself too seriously.

6. Find a confidant

A stressful day is more bearable when you can share your experiences with someone else. Find someone who will listen to and empathize with your frustrations and successes. Vent negative emotions in a way that is productive and nondestructive.

7. Resolve problems quickly

Don't let conflicts build. Camp is a close-knit community and it's important that everyone be able to work effectively together. Be patient and tolerant of others.

8. Lead by example

Campers notice everything you do and don't do. Set a good example and your campers will follow your lead. Remember, you are the adult.

9. Expect the unexpected

No one can control all the variables in life, so be flexible and roll with the punches. It will rain, campers will get sick, and program activities will change. The difference between being a good counselor and being a great counselor is being able to improvise, maintain a positive attitude, and keep going.

10. Be firm and consistent

Campers quickly learn just how far they can push you. From the start, make sure to enforce all rules fairly and consistently. Once expectations have been established, you'll find you won't need to discipline campers as much because they will know what they can and cannot do.