Times of struggle and challenge are often some of the greatest periods of growth, and the pandemic has certainly created plenty of challenges. As we have risen to meet those challenges, though, COVID-19 has helped shine a light on crucial changes that needed to be made in the world of health and safety.

Though the lessons COVID-19 has taught us have been plentiful, a recent **Safety+Health magazine article** highlights two health and safety truths in particular: 1) none of us are immune to hazards, and 2) the quality of life is determined by health, more than anything.

OUT OF ADVERSITY COMES OPPORTUNITY.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

People have a common tendency to believe that the bad thing (in this case, a disease) "won't happen to me", and the pandemic has certainly been no exception. In January 2020, as we all heard headlines here and there about the disease in other countries, many of us thought, "How horrible. But that will never happen here." Then it did. When people in the US began to get sick, it was easy to believe it wouldn't happen to us or the people we knew. Then, in many cases, it did. **COVID-19 has issued a repeated reminder that none of us are immune to hazards, whatever they may be.**

So, what action can we take from this reminder? What can we do to protect ourselves from workplace hazards during a pandemic? First, and foremost, we can examine our safety practices—both in the workplace and in our personal lives—to make sure we are doing everything we can and should.

Since none of us are immune to hazards, it makes sense to **stay up to date on current information, trends, and practices in the world of health and safety** so that we can incorporate them into our daily lives. In a general sense, this means keeping certifications up to date, tracking industry best practices, and staying up to date on safety and health news. Where COVID is concerned, it's important to **stay current on recommended best practices like handwashing, proper PPE, vaccinations, and using appropriate distancing whenever possible**.

In addition to the reminder that none of us are immune, the pandemic has shown us that **quality of life is determined by health (mental, physical, *and* emotional), perhaps more than anything else**. To succeed in life, we must first take care of our health and well-being, both at home and at work.

Beyond the direct scope of COVID-19 and physical health, the past year has also been full of new stresses and challenges that have impacted mental and emotional health. In times such as these, how can we ensure that we are taking care of our health and quality of life so we can build successes? Here are a few basic suggestions:

- **Hydrate**—we often underestimate the power of water, but it does so much for our bodies, from assisting in basic physiological functions to improving sleep quality, cognition, and mood
- **Sleep**—people who are sleep deficient are less productive, more irritable, more prone to mistakes and accidents, and have a slower reaction time
- **Balance work and life**—especially in a time where so many people are working from home, the line between work life and home life can easily become blurred, which means people often end up working far more than they otherwise would

It's always a good idea to check with your employer to see what health and safety resources they offer. Additionally, the **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** and the **National Safety Council (NSC)** are great resources for work-related health and safety questions and concerns.