

Editor's notes:

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*The first of April, some do say,
Is set apart for All Fools' Day.
But why the people call it so,
Nor I, nor they themselves do know
But on this day are people sent
On purpose for pure merriment.*

-- Poor Robin's Almanac (1790)

Some scholars say that April was named for Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. Others contend that "April" is derived from the Latin word "aperire," which means "to open," referring to the buds that come out during this month.

We're sure glad that April is finally here. Here are some special dates for this month:

April Fools' Day, April 1 -- Also known as All Fools' Day. An annual funfest dating back hundreds of years. A time for practical jokes and tomfoolery.

Boston Marathon, April 18 -- The first Boston Marathon was run in 1897 with only 18 runners. The number of participants has increased steadily over the years. It is the oldest annual city marathon in the world. The largest field of runners was in 1996, when over 35,000 people finished the 100th Boston Marathon. This year, over 25,000 people are expected to participate. They will be cheered on by 500,000 spectators.

Good Friday, April 22 -- The name Good Friday is believed to be a corruption of God's Friday, the day Christ was crucified. Since the days of the early church, it has been dedicated to penance, fasting and prayer.

Easter, April 24 -- Christians celebrate Easter to commemorate the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ into Heaven. Its calendar date varies each year by as much as a month because it is supposed to occur on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after the spring equinox, the start of spring. Like many religious holidays, Easter had pagan origins. The word itself stems from the names of two mythological goddesses -- Ostra and Eastre -- who symbolized spring and fertility, as do eggs and rabbits.

Passover, April 19 -- Passover commemorates the freeing of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. It is celebrated with the seder, a special meal featuring a reading of the Passover story from a book called the Haggadah. Some of the foods have special symbolic meaning. For example, Jews dip a spring vegetable, representing rebirth, into salt water which represents the tears of the slaves. Bitter herbs are a reminder of the misery of slavery.

April Fools' Day

According to historians, April fools were folks who continued to celebrate the new year on April 1 -- the ancient start of years linked roughly to the spring equinox. They persisted even after the 1500s when the reformed calendar made January 1 the official date. Those who welcomed in the new year in April were considered simple minded because they apparently didn't know about the change. In admonishment, they were sent fake party invitations and prank gifts. Thus, April 1 evolved into a day of practical jokes and gags.

The Incredible Egg: More than just an omelet ingredient

As you try to figure out what to do with all those leftover Easter eggs, check out these interesting facts:

- ◆ A hen requires 24 to 26 hours to produce an egg. Thirty minutes later she starts all over again.
- ◆ The egg shell may have as many as 17,000 tiny pores over its surface. Through them, the egg can absorb flavours and odours. Storing them in their cartons helps keep them fresh.
- ◆ White-shelled eggs are produced by hens with white feathers and ear lobes. Brown-shelled eggs are produced by hens with red feathers and red ear lobes.
- ◆ To tell if an egg is raw or hard-cooked, spin it. If the egg spins easily, it is hard-cooked; if it wobbles, it's raw.
- ◆ Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain Vitamin D.
- ◆ Yolk colour depends on the diet of the hen. Natural yellow-orange substances such as marigold petals may be added to light-coloured feeds to enhance colours. Artificial colour additives are not permitted.
- ◆ Occasionally, a hen will produce a double-yolked egg. It is rare, but not impossible, for a young hen to produce an egg with no yolk at all.



BUSINESS SHORTS

Take These Steps Toward Professional Success

Setting goals is only the first step toward success. Achieving those goals is a matter of hard work, timing, and a certain amount of luck. Here are four essentials for generating the results you want:

Don't confuse goals with dreams. Dreams are vague and lack urgency. Goals lay down incremental, necessary checkpoints to your ultimate success. Your dream may be "Working as CEO of a large company by age 50," but the immediate goal that gets you started could be "Lead my department, above all other departments, in productivity this month."

Build your confidence. Accomplishing short-term goals will help you develop the sense that you're really accomplishing something. The stronger your sense of accomplishment, the more successful you'll be at tackling the larger goals.

Give yourself rewards. The reward doesn't have to be large, but it's important to celebrate small victories along the way.

Stick with one goal. It's easy to get sidetracked as you're heading toward the finish line. Focus on completing one goal before you place your energies elsewhere, or you'll end up with a sad surplus of half-completed goals.

10 Low-impact Ways to Chase Away Stress

1. Take deep breaths.
2. Take a walk outside the office.
3. Say no to what you don't have time to do.
4. Leave work on time.
5. Lower demands you put on yourself.
6. Ask questions of and talk with co-workers.
7. Take care of fazing tasks in the morning to get them out of the way.
8. Look at large projects as a series of steps to complete one by one.
9. Laugh at least once a day.
10. Live in the moment. Don't dwell in the past or worry about the future.

The Titanic's Fateful Voyage

The "unsinkable" luxury liner *Titanic*, on its maiden voyage (from Southampton, England, to New York City), struck an iceberg just before midnight on April 14, 1912, and sank at 2:27 a.m., April 15. Some 2,224 persons were aboard. Of these, more than 1,500 were lost. About 700 people were rescued from icy waters off Newfoundland by the liner *Carpathia*, which arrived about two hours after the *Titanic* went down.

The sunken ship was located and photographed in 1985. The next year, an expedition descended to the deck of the *Titanic* in a submersible craft and guided a robot on a search of the ship. Two bronze plaques were left on the deck of the ship as a memorial.

Men and Women and Goals:

Setting goals is an important prerequisite for success. But the way you set your goals, and pursue them, can be determined by many factors. One of them, according to a recent study by Leadership IQ, may be your gender.

The survey, in which 2,506 women and 2,184 men participated, led to these conclusions:

◆ Women are more emotionally connected to their goals than men. That makes them more likely to hang on when the going gets tough.

◆ Men visualize their goals better than women. This gives them greater direction and focus.

◆ Women are more likely to procrastinate. Females tend to feel less urgency about accomplishing their goals, which can undermine their efforts.

◆ Women tend to set hard goals. Men are less likely to challenge themselves and step out of their comfort zones.

Each individual is unique when it comes to setting and achieving goals, of course, but we can all stand to check our blind spots from time to time.

Get on the right sleep schedule

Do you have trouble getting to sleep before 2 or 3 a.m. getting and up at 7 or 8 in the morning is next to impossible? It may be due to a condition called delayed sleep phase (DSP) disorder.

DSP interferes with a person's internal clock, or circadian rhythm. Three in 2,000 adults, and 7-16 percent of teenagers, have trouble falling asleep within two hours of a "normal" bedtime. The causes of DSP are unknown, and by itself is not a threat to health as long as one gets sufficient sleep. It may create trouble with a standard work or school schedule because of sleep deprivation. Some sufferers may resort to alcohol or sedatives to help them fall asleep.

Some of the most common treatments include:

Light/darkness therapy. Avoid bright lights for up to two hours before going to bed. When you wake up, turn on the lights, or get outside as quickly as possible to trigger more wakefulness in your body.

Chronotherapy. Try resetting your body's schedule by gradually adjusting your bedtime. Go to bed 15-30 minutes earlier every night, and get up earlier by the same amount of time. Another strategy: Stay up all night, then go to bed an hour or so earlier than normal the next night and maintain that bedtime for a week. Repeat once a week until you're on a regular schedule.

Medications. Melatonin is a common, natural compound that can help people feel drowsy if taken an hour or so before bedtime. Prescription medications are also available; check with your doctor. Remember that you don't need a sleeping pill, since you're not suffering from insomnia.