



Start your Cybersecurity Journey with Password Security!

Do you have Cybersecurity Insurance? If you do and you get hacked, they will probably investigate what security measures you have in place before they pay for your breach. They'll most likely scrutinize how you were hacked and what actions you had taken to prevent it.

Although some hacks, like July's Kaseya breach, can't be stopped at your level, most security infiltrations are caused by your team. We recommend continual cybersecurity training for EVERYONE, keeping all software up to date, and a Password Manager to make individual long and secure passwords easy to maintain.

We're happy to introduce **Passly**. It's the ideal solution to answer the call. This multifunctional dynamo combines the most highly recommended mitigations against access-based cybercrime, like credential stuffing and password compromise, into a straightforward solution, thereby saving you time, money, and headaches.



Passly Includes:

Multifactor Authentication (MFA) - Universally recommended as a cybersecurity best practice by cybercrime experts at CISA (The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) and the FBI, multifactor authentication throws up an extra barrier between cybercriminals and your systems and data by requiring a second identifier for access. MFA is also a compliance requirement in many industries.

Single Sign-On - Control your access points with ease by assigning unique single sign-on

LaunchPads to every user. Adding and removing access to tools like business applications and databases is a snap, giving this feature extra potency as a quick way to quarantine a potentially compromised user account.

Secure Shared Password Vaults - Keep your company's most critical passwords in a central repository with maximum protection, enabling your team to access only the passwords they need.

Fast, Easy Deployment and Management - Seamless integration with over 1,000 typical business applications, including O365, Google Drive, and more, combined with intuitive remote management tools, means that Passly gets to work quickly, adding strong protection in days, not weeks.

Please don't wait until it's too late to add the protection you need to keep your systems and data safe from expensive cybercrime disasters. With Passly, practical, cost-effective protection is within reach for every organization out there.

We've adapted this program to fit every business and practice!

All we need to know is:

- How many employees access the internet?
- How many employees have company email addresses?
- How many employees do not have company email addresses?

**Start your Cybersecurity Journey
with Password Security**

Call us so we can help! 855-WOW-SERVICE

Call 781-826-9665 Ext 202 or email Pam@ACTSmartIT.com for more information

From the desk of

DAVID SNELL



The need for more and better cybersecurity weighs heavily on us as IT providers.

In June, we reported that President Biden calls for Private-Sector Investment in Cybersecurity. We started a weekday posting called **Safer Every Day** and gives everyone on our website, LinkedIn and Facebook a daily action to help you and your business become more cybersecurity aware by becoming a "Human Firewall."

Pam has posted nearly 50 of these **Safer Every Day** posts and is committed to continuing in the foreseeable future. If you don't get on to our website or social media regularly, sign up for daily delivery to your Inbox.

<https://actsmartit.com/safer/> They are each a quick read and could save you from being hacked!

Today's front-page article is about a new service that we will provide; Passly. It is a password manager for your business which allows you to control each team members password accessibility while making it easy for each person to have their own unique and secure passwords.

We'll be offering Passly, along with Cybersecurity Training and Dark Web monitoring as part of our **Safer Business Program**. Until now, businesses and practices whose employees don't use a company-provided email address could not participate in training, which is an integral part of becoming more secure. Pam has found a way to help so, give her a call at 781-826-9665 Ext 202.

**STOP
RANSOM
WARE**

Last month, as part of the ongoing response, agencies across the U.S. government announced new resources and initiatives to protect American businesses and communities from ransomware attacks. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), together with federal partners, have launched a new website to combat the threat of ransomware. StopRansomware.gov establishes a one-stop hub for

ransomware resources for individuals, businesses and other organizations. We'll be monitoring this website closely and will keep you up to date.

It's with bittersweet feelings that we said farewell to our Lexi last month.

After nine years, Lexi left our nest to pursue new challenges and opportunities. We hired Lexi right out of college as a graphic artist. Over the years, she has added many marketing skills to her resume and other attributes and has helped us with every concept we've had to make ACTSmart exceptional!

Most importantly, she is a dear part of our family.

Before the Pandemic, she helped nurture and support Xander and Sarah while they were here in our offices. She's also been our shining light and source of fun every day!

These are the things that we will miss the most!

David



Working out when working from home

Working out and the Pomodoro Technique

By Joe D'Eramo, I Work From Home



For years, I heard friends and family with full-time jobs talk about how difficult it was to find time to exercise. The envy/jealousy in their voices at a home office worker like yours truly could easily be heard. Yet working from home far from guarantees you will become a gym rat or even get out for a walk every day.

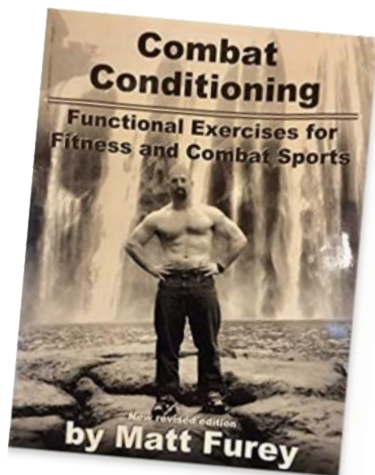
For those who worked from home during the pandemic, you soon discovered that the hours absorbed by a commute were transferred to work. And working out while working from home was not quite as easy as you first thought.

Welcome to the club.

True, it is far easier to get a workout from home when you work out of the home. It still requires some discipline and structure. Especially if you require a trip to the gym to get your workout in. Even if you don't, it still requires a plan.

About 16 years ago, I discovered bodyweight exercises through Matt Furey and his Combat Conditioning program.

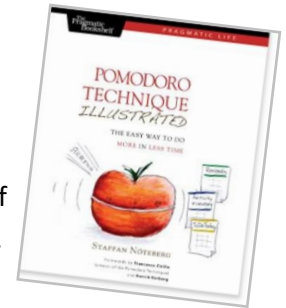
Through being a member of the Furey Faithful, an exclusive membership that features Matt's tips on these exercises and other self-improvement pointers. The beauty of el Furecat's exercises is many of them do not require more than a few minutes of your time. Remarkably, you get a great workout and results. Yet that's another tale.



With a core routine of Hindu pushups and Hindu squats, I have shaped a workout routine that works for my body and my day. Many of the exercises I do are incorporated into my workday.

How do I do that? Simple, the Pomodoro Technique.

For those unfamiliar, Pomodoro refers to the timers your mother or grandmother used to use in the kitchen. The concept works like this. Set your Pomodoro for 25 minutes of work. Then take a five-minute break. Work for 25 minutes, and then a five-minute break. After four 25-minute sessions, take a 15-minute break.



My exercise program, largely, is fit in some Combat Conditioning exercises during those breaks. Not every break. Some I use for the bathroom, to get the mail, refill my coffee, etc. Yet through the course of the day, I can knock out a number of reps on the exercises I do during the course of my workday.

There are other things I do to stay mentally and physically fit that require more than 15 minutes. Those are done outside the workday. Yet it's nice to know that I can go to work and end my feeling like I don't have to get out to the gym.

Of course, for me, exercise has not really been strictly about the physical benefits. It's mostly mental. And when you write for a living, knocking out 50 Hindu pushups on my five-minute break clears my head, gets my heart rate up, and puts me in a better position to continue writing.

But that's me?

How do you fit your exercise routine into work-from-home experience? Please drop a line to share.

If you're interested in learning more about the Pomodoro technique, there are many resources out there.

Again, if you want to learn some exercises that have this 50-something feeling better than he did in his 20s, check out Matt Furey's Combat Conditioning on Amazon.

Kick These Old Grammar Rules Away, Part 1

by Susan Rooks, www.GrammarGoddess.com | 508-272-5120



Why kick these old grammar rules away?

Because in the modern era of the 2020s, they're no longer considered correct by most writers and style guides.



So with apologies to stricter grammarians than I am, we're going to get rid of some stubborn-like-a-donkey old "rules" once and for all.

1. Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.

This one's been around for a long time, and it needs to be given the boot. It appears to come from early grammarians' attempts to force English to follow the rules of Latin, which it doesn't. This "rule" is unsupported by most modern grammarians because blindly following it can lead to some very awkward sentences.

Many of us are familiar with a quote widely attributed to Sir Winston Churchill, although there's some serious doubt he originated it. But no matter who did, it serves to point out how ridiculous that rule is! One of the versions is "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put." Awkward to say the least.

So much simpler for all: "This is the sort of English I will not put up with." (Yes, *with* is a preposition.)

The examples below show good grammar doesn't always translate into good communication.

For what is it good? or What is it good for?
With whom did you go? or Who did you go with?

Since clarity in business-related writing is crucial, abandoning a rule that never was a real one makes complete sense.

2. Remember to never split an infinitive.

The infinitive is verb form preceded by *to* – **to eat, to read, to learn**. Splitting the infinitive means putting a word in between *to* and the verb – **to hungrily eat, to quickly read, to thoroughly learn**.

This issue also comes from Latin where splitting the infinitive is impossible because infinitives in Latin are just a single word. That type of infinitive is still found in other Romance languages whose root is Latin such as French and Spanish.

But English is different. Our infinitives are two words, so "splitting" them is possible. And sometimes the emphasis changes when we split an infinitive; if that's true in one of your sentences, relax. If it sounds better, do it.

Do you recognize this one? **To boldly go where no one has gone before.** Sure you do. But how much energy would be lost by following the old split-infinitive rule?

To go boldly where no one has gone before.

Boldly to go where no one has gone before. Nope. They just don't work! The rhythm changes, and it's not as strong a statement.

3. And don't begin sentences with a conjunction.

Conjunctions are joining words, usually connecting words, phrases, and clauses. However, they can connect separate sentences. While strict grammarians might not agree, sometimes a long sentence that uses a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet) to connect the independent clauses sounds better when separated into two shorter sentences. Shorter sentences are usually easier to read and understand.

Beginning some sentences with conjunctions is acceptable to most modern writers.

So, these are three old rules that you can toss in the trashcan most of the time.



Six Steps to Protect Against Taxpayer ID Theft

by CPA Site Solutions (cpasitesolutions.com)

Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses a taxpayer's stolen personal information, such as a Social Security number, to file a tax return claiming a false refund. Thieves are actively working to steal taxpayer information and identities, and everyone should do everything they can to prevent identity theft. Here are six ways to help taxpayers protect themselves against identity theft:

- 1. Always use security software.** This software should have firewall and anti-virus protections.
- 2. Use strong, unique passwords.** They should also consider using a password manager.
- 3. Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls, and texts from thieves.** These scammers pose as legitimate organizations such as banks, credit card companies, and even the IRS.
- 4. Don't click on links in unsolicited emails or messages from unknown senders.** People shouldn't click on links or download attachments from emails that seem suspicious, even if they appear to be from senders they know.
- 5. Protect personal information and that of any dependents.** For example, people shouldn't routinely carry around their Social Security cards. They should also make sure tax records are secure.
- 6. Get an Identity Protection PIN.** The Identity Protection PIN is a six-digit code known only to the taxpayer and the IRS that helps prevent identity thieves from filing fraudulent tax returns using a taxpayer's personally identifiable information.

An official website of the United States Government

IRS

Help | News | English | Charities & Nonprofits | Tax Pros

File | Pay | Refunds | Credits & Deductions | Forms & Instructions | Search

Home / File / Individuals / Get An Identity Protection PIN

Get An Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN)

English | Español | 中文(简体) | 中文(繁體) | 한국어 | Русский | Tiếng Việt | Kreyòl Ayisyen

Individuals

- How to File
- When to File
- Where to File
- Your Information
- Students
- Employees
- Parents
- Military
- Seniors & Retirees

Businesses and Self-Employed

Charities and Nonprofits

International Taxpayers

Governmental Liaisons

Federal State Local

An Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) is a six-digit number that prevents someone else from filing a tax return using your Social Security number. The IP PIN is known only to you and the IRS and helps us verify your identity when you file your electronic or paper tax return.

Eligibility

If you are a confirmed victim of identity theft and we have resolved your tax account issues, we'll mail you a [CP01A Notice](#) with your IP PIN each year.

Starting in 2021, you may voluntarily opt into the IP PIN program as a proactive way to protect yourself from tax-related identity theft.

If you want to opt in, please note:

- You must pass a rigorous identity verification process.
- Spouses and dependents are eligible for an IP PIN if they can pass the identity proofing process.

How to get an IP PIN

If you're a confirmed identity theft victim, we will mail you an IP PIN on a CP01A Notice if your case is resolved prior to the start of the next filing season.

If you're volunteering for the IP PIN Opt-In Program you should use the online Get an IP PIN tool. If you don't already have an account on IRS.gov, you must register to validate your identity. Before you register, read about the [secure access](#) identity authentication process. Note:

- An IP PIN is valid for one calendar year.
- You must obtain a new IP PIN each year.
- The IP PIN tool is generally unavailable mid-November through mid-January each year.

[Get an IP PIN](#)

If you have any questions about taxpayer ID theft, please contact Glivinski & Associates Inc, email: books@capecodcfo.com or call 508-398-9300

4 Ways Happy Employees Impact Public Perception of Your Brand

by Bernie Heine, www.TheProfessionalBusinessCoaches.com|781-319-9820



The Importance of Public Perception

A [recent study](#) found that about 64% of global consumers have avoided a brand because of a bad experience they had within the past year. Almost half say they have avoided a company because of its reputation or negative social reviews. We've seen this happen many times, even with big corporations. For example, after the Volkswagen [chaos of 2015](#), when the company chose to "cheat" emission testings, the public willingness to buy the brand fell by 28%.

Reviews and public perception are the bread-and-butter of consumer behavior. One study suggests that 97% of participants consider the customer reviews a factor in their buying decisions, and 92% of consumers hesitate to buy products or services when there are no customer reviews.

Benefits of Employee Happiness

Now, customer reviews and employee happiness might not be a clear connection at first. But, when employees are unhappy and not fully engaged, they're much more likely to leave, which leads to higher turnover rates. In addition, training new employees to treat customers to the standards you have takes time and money. Not to mention, unhappy employees are much more likely to pass down their frustration to your customers. Thus, potentially damaging the company's public perception.

On the contrary, when employees are happy and engaged at work, they're more likely to stay, stay committed to bettering the customer experience and work towards the brand's benefits.

1. Greater Productivity

Happy employees tend to have a better work-life balance and tend to be healthier and more productive. In addition, happiness in their job post means they'll be more effective as they don't struggle with the stress and anxiety of someone unhappy at work.

2. Better Work Environment

When people feel happier at work, they're also less stressed. A more joyful work environment fosters a more productive, creative, and respectful workplace that can be perceived by the public with positive reviews.

3. Increased Creativity

There's some [evidence](#) that proves the link between happiness and creativity. When people don't struggle with the stress of working unhappily, they have greater mental flexibility. In addition, working in a more balanced environment promotes collaboration,

which can boost creativity.

4. Better Customer Service

At last, happy employees means happy customers. They're more likely to go above and beyond for customers to offer them the possible experience. Satisfied customers are a brand's best advertisement, as they'll share their pleasant experience with others and translate into a great business.

Tips to Improve Your Brand's Public Perception & Employee Satisfaction

The connection between employee satisfaction and engagement and the public's perception of your company is undeniable. Therefore, it's essential to look for ways to promote employee engagement and foster a work environment where employees want to be. Here are some tips to encourage employee engagement:

- Communicate with your employees often and make it a point to meet them at a personal level. Using a tool like Everything DiSC can be a tremendous help in understanding the best way to treat each employee.
- Offer rewards and recognition to employees for their achievements (i.e. bonus checks).
- Provide opportunities to grow and continue expanding their professional careers.
- Allow them to work autonomously, choosing projects or teams or the work environment that best suits their style or needs. In his book *DRIVE*, Daniel Pink suggests Autonomy as one of the three most important ways of increasing motivation.

Remember to recognize any current issues you see at your organization to address employee engagement. If you notice employees are unhappy or your brand's public perception doesn't align with your employee's happiness, see what's missing. Create an actionable plan to build a stronger foundation and continue monitoring your progress to help your employee's engagement rates and your customer's perception of your brand high.

Please feel free to share with us a story of how you keep your teams motivated. And, give us a call if you want to discuss ways to make your organization more agile or help you personally navigate this difficult time; we're only too glad to help.

Call PBC for a free consultation on your business issues.

Winning Websites Go *Fast!*

By Kevin McNally, www.InteractivePalette.com | 781-930-3199



As technology advances and the demand for better performance of everything from mobile to apps, business owners constantly need to adapt for digital optimization. Website speed is one such challenge often overlooked until it's too late.

With that, there are ways in which you can optimize your website to increase its speed while also improving user experience across the board.

We'll cover some of the different approaches to making your site go faster.

Image Compression

Image compression is one of the most straightforward ways to optimize your website without making significant upgrades or changes. In addition, image compression is beneficial for reducing the load time on mobile devices, as images are often the most critical factor in slowing down a website.

WebP Image Format

The WebP image format, developed by Google, allows website owners to compress image sizes without negatively affecting picture quality. For example, if you're currently using JPG, you can convert your images to WebP and see an average reduction of 35% in file size.

AMP Blog

Use AMP for the blog on your website to load faster and more consistently across different platforms, improving the client journey across the board. AMP is an acronym for Accelerated Mobile Pages. It takes the core principles of Google's Accelerated Mobile Pages Project. Then, it puts them into a framework that is easy to implement and can be modified for each blog or website configuration.

Accessibility Controls

It's logical to conclude that the more people who can use your site, the better. Adding ADA compliance functionality always makes your website accessible to those with disabilities and helps users take advantage of your content. Accessibility controls provide visitors with granular control over the content they can see or experience on your website. You want to make sure that people can make adjustments that help them navigate and view the site in a way that's best for them.

An audit is the best way to check for compliance. During the audit, all site aspects, from pictures to text, get analyzed to ensure everything is readable by everyone regardless of their abilities.

Other ADA adjustments include:

- Seizure Safe Mode
- Vision Impaired Mode
- Cognitive Disability
- ADHD Friendly

- Blind Users – Screen Reader Support
- Keyboard Navigation
- Content Display Controls

The most excellent news is that adding ADA compliance to your site doesn't affect your site speed at all. More importantly, having this user control capability available at your site can help lift you in search results. In addition, ADA compliance is compatible with voice search, which means you get perceived as a more progressive website.

Plugin And WordPress Management

Websites that use the WordPress publishing platform rely on various Plugins to support website functionality. As a website owner, you need to make sure that you stay on top of updates to maintain a high user experience and security levels.

Generally, the more Plugins your site has installed, the more resources are required resulting in a slow site. In addition, WordPress Plugins can come from many different publishers and developers, so you must have a solid understanding of your current configuration to ensure they're all optimized and up-to-date.

Reduce Server Requests

Your page speed is directly proportional to how many server requests are made by a website. Unfortunately, with each new request, more script parsing generates, and the demands can significantly slow down your site's speed.

Implementing a CDN or Content Delivery Network is one of the most effective ways to speed up your site. The network sends each page request from the visitor directly to the nearest server, which reduces load time and demands by routing it before sending the visitor to your site.

Site Speed Matters!

You must take a proactive approach when it comes to optimizing and maintaining your website's speed. With the number of people who use smartphones and voice search growing every day, it's becoming increasingly important that websites can process requests and display content quickly on mobile devices.

Website speed is an essential element of website performance, regardless if it's a personal WordPress blog or a production-level eCommerce site. Website speed directly impacts traffic and engagement with your content and search result optimization for your published articles.

To avoid getting left behind as technology demands push forward is why it's critical to keep an observant eye on trends in the technology industry. To stay competitive, you must be ready to adapt to changing environments online. If you're interested in a free, no-obligation site speed assessment of your website, we're here to help! Don't hesitate to get in touch with an expert from Interactive Palette today!

In This Issue

- ◆ A Password Manager Prevents Serious Trouble
- ◆ Working out when working from home
- ◆ 4 Ways Happy Employees Impact Public Perception of Your Brand
- ◆ Kick These Old Grammar Rules Away, Part 1
- ◆ Winning Websites Go Fast!

Sign up to get our newsletter
mailed to you
ACTSmartIT.com/newsletter

Pegasus Spyware Attacks Cell Phones

From David's Tech Talk Radio Spot on 95.9 WATD Every Tuesday Morning at 8:10am

WHAT IS PEGASUS, AND WHO OR WHAT IS NSO GROUP?

Pegasus is spyware developed by a private contractor for use by government agencies. The program infects a target's phone and sends back data, including photos, messages, and audio / video recordings. Pegasus' developer, an Israeli company called NSO Group, says that the software can't be traced back to the government using it — a crucial feature for clandestine operations.

In short, NSO Group makes products that let governments spy on citizens. The company describes the role of its products on its website as helping "government intelligence and law-enforcement agencies use technology to meet the challenges of encryption" during terrorism and criminal investigations.

WHO WAS BEING SPIED ON?

No one knows for sure. However, much of the reporting centers around a list containing 50,000 phone numbers, the purpose of which is unclear. The Pegasus Project analyzed the numbers on the list and linked over 1,000 of them to their owners. When it did so, it found people who should've been off-limits to governmental spying (based on the standards NSO says it holds its clients to): hundreds of politicians and government workers — including three presidents, 10 prime ministers, and a king — plus 189 journalists,

and 85 human rights activists.

WHO ELSE IS ON THE LIST?

A Washington Post report details some of the highest-ranking officials with numbers on the list. According to an analysis done by the Post and other Pegasus Project members, the current presidents of France, Iraq, and South Africa were included, along with the current prime ministers of Pakistan, Egypt, and Morocco, seven former prime ministers, and the king of Morocco.

WHAT DOES PEGASUS DO?

According to The Washington Post, the spyware can steal private data from a phone, sending a target's messages, passwords, contacts, photos, and more to whoever initiated the surveillance. It can reportedly even turn on the phone's cameras or microphones to create covert recordings.

HOW CAN I CHECK IF MY PHONE WAS COMPROMISED?

Amnesty International has actually released a tool that can be used for analysis, and you can read our guide on how to use it here.

Read the full article and get the link at ACTSmartIT.com/pegasus