



You show up at the workstation and there is a pickle on the cubicle wall — and you know exactly who was there before you.

How did these crumbs get in the keyboard?

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

“I believe in stopping work and eating lunch.”

—L’Wren Scott

A group of us were having a discussion the other day, and by discussion, I mean some friends and I were exchanging texts. We only see each other about three times a year at meetings, but we have an active text life (Ha!).

Before you get carried away and think none of us have jobs, several of us were actually having a quick lunch break. I’m going to bet that you are pretty much like us, in that lunch does NOT mean what it used to mean.

Allow me to elaborate.

When I took my current job, lunchtime was carved in stone and respected. We walked AWAY from the hospital or imaging center, and went to a real place with tables, chairs, and servers and food and iced tea. And, we sat and ate. It was pretty civilized. When I was at UVA (as a resident and occasionally as an attending, too), on nice days we would sit in the sun on the Lawn and eat lunch that we picked up from nearby. We ate and watched the students and got some sun. It was almost idyllic.

However, all good things must come to an end. It began slowly, with a few pages from the reading room that needed your attention, if not your physical presence. Now, things are definitely not as they used to be. L’Wren Scott knew design, but she would NOT know lunch in the year of our Lord 2017.

I’m now used to eating at a workstation. The tables can be reasonably favorable for small containers. Push the keyboard away just a little. Salads are best, in my opinion. They don’t require much of your attention; you can put the container close to your head like a feedbag, and shovel. Swallow and dictate. Sandwiches are okay, but there is the crumb problem. You don’t want complicated food. It can be messier, for sure, and can also distract you from work.

A new problem with this issue is following a particularly messy colleague. You show up at the workstation and there is a pickle on the cubicle wall — and you know exactly who was there before you.

Welcome to the new world. Isn’t this what you signed on for?

Keep doing that good work. And, please, please don’t spill your drink in the keyboard. Mahalo.

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