

Safety, Health and Environment Newsletter

For a better workplace - Chemistry Department



Ergonomics Tips



- Boost your brain with work breaks:
Regular 5-min breaks can improve many things such as your physical & mental health, creativity, motivation, productivity & memory.

psychologytoday.com

- Add some walking during your breaks and get more benefits:



- Change your environment and refresh your mind
- Relax and reduce stress
- Engage better at work
- Boost your vitamin D

bbc.com/why-walking-makes-you-a-better-worker

- Need help to manage your time & schedule breaks?

[Marinara Pomodoro Assistant](#)



Wellness services & emergency numbers at UCT:

- **Wellness center for staff: 0801 113 945**
confidential service for trauma, stress, legal advice, substance abuse, work, etc.

- **Wellness center for students:**

Health service: **021 650 1020**

Counselling service: **021 650 1017**

- **Emergency numbers:**

▪ sexual assault: **072 393 7824**

▪ CPS: **021 650 2222/3**



The Green Corner



- Cigarette butts are a major contributor to worldwide plastic pollution
- One cigarette butt contaminates 500L of water
[Cigarette-butts-pollution](#)
- Don't leave your cigarette butts behind you.
- UCT smoking policy:
[UCT Smoking Policy 0.1.pdf](#)

Lab safety:

- Prescription safety glasses Uvex RX 5502 – Contact:
rudi.sassman@specstores.co.za
- Removal of Pd waste will be organized in November. Please contact Monique.



- How to set and work up reactions with cyanides?



Cyanide prevents body cells from using oxygen and hence the cells suffocate and die!



- As a general rule, avoid reactions involving cyanides
- Make sure you know what to do before you start
- Inform your lab mates
- Wear PPE, double glove with nitrile gloves and work in ventilated fume hood
- Weigh the reagents (NaCN, ZnCN etc.) in closed vials and in ventilated fume hood
- Work-up should involve basic (pH>10) solutions to form CNO⁻. Lower pH solutions may lead to the formation of highly toxic HCN
- Avoid contact with acids or acid solutions
- Cyanide waste must be stored separately, labeled and disposed of in an appropriate manner
- For more info:
<https://drs.illinois.edu/Page/SafetyLibrary/Cyanides>