



# TAKE A BREAK

## Give yourself some 'me time'.

A "break" is a brief cessation of work, physical exertion, or activity. You decide to give it a rest with the intention of getting back to your task within a reasonable amount of time. A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. It could be a five-minute pause from cleaning your kitchen, a half-hour lunch break at work, or a weekend exploring somewhere new. A few minutes can be enough for you to de-stress.

Taking a break may mean being very active. It may mean not doing very much at all. Take a deep breath... and relax. Try yoga or meditation, or just putting your feet up. Listen to your body. If you're really tired, give yourself time to sleep. Sometimes the world can wait.

## 5 Benefits of Taking a Break

### **"Movement breaks" are essential for your physical and emotional health.**

The benefits of taking brief movement breaks have been well-researched. Constant sitting puts you at higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity. Getting up from your chair to walk, stretch, do yoga, or whatever activity you prefer can reduce the negative health effects from too much sitting. Just a 5-minute walk every hour can improve your health and well-being.

### **Breaks can prevent "decision fatigue."**

The need to make frequent decisions throughout your day can wear down your willpower and reasoning ability. Decision fatigue can lead to simplistic decision-making and procrastination.

### **"Waking rest" helps consolidate memories and improve learning.**

Scientists have known for some time that one purpose of sleep is to consolidate memories. However, there is also evidence that resting while awake likewise improves memory formation. During a rest period, it appears that the brain reviews and ingrains what it previously learned.

### **Breaks restore motivation, especially for long-term goals.**

According to author Nir Eyal, "When we work, our prefrontal cortex makes every effort to help us execute our goals. But for a challenging task that requires our sustained attention, research shows briefly taking our minds off the goal can renew and strengthen motivation later on." Brief mental breaks will actually help you stay focused on your task!

### **Breaks increase productivity and creativity.**

Working for long stretches without breaks leads to stress and exhaustion. Taking breaks refreshes the mind, replenishes your mental resources, and helps you become more creative. "Aha moments" came more often to those who took breaks, according to research. Other evidence suggests also that taking regular breaks raises workers' level of engagement which, in turn, is highly correlated with productivity.

## Good Breaks

A good break will give your prefrontal cortex a rest by switching brain activity to another area. Doing activities that don't rely heavily on prefrontal cortex function but rely on different brain regions instead is the best way to renew focus throughout the work day. The activities below have a special power to refresh and recharge your mind and body.

1. Walk or exercise
2. Change your environment
3. Have lunch or a health snack
4. Take a "power nap"
5. Take a few slow, deep breaths
6. Meditate
7. Daydream
8. Get creative
9. Drink coffee or tea

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/changepower/201704/how-do-work-breaks-help-your-brain-5-surprising-answers>