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Monthly Newsletter

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Find a Little "Me" Time During the Workday

It's 2 o'clock on a Monday afternoon, and you realize you still have 8 hours of work to complete. Does this sound familiar? Some days, it can seem like you spend all your time putting out fires, fielding team questions, attending meetings, and trying to remember what in the world you are working on. Taking time for yourself in the middle of the busy workday might seem impossible at first, but when you consider the benefits[4] that are tied to taking good care of yourself, you might just change your mind.

Whether you call it "me" time or simply taking micro breaks, the evidence is clear that taking periodic breaks helps you think more clearly and solve problems more quickly—not to mention you will probably be more enjoyable to be around.

There are many ways to schedule in some "me" time during the workday. If taking an extended trip to the bathroom does not sound appealing, consider these 10-minute micro-break ideas:

Take a walk.
Go for a walk outside before or after lunch. Walking not only increases endorphins—the "feel good" chemicals that help elevate your mood[5]—but it can also stir up creative energy. Do not be surprised if a solution to a nagging problem comes to you suddenly during your walk.

Meditate.
Pop in your ear buds, close your eyes, and relax into a quick guided meditation to relieve stress and reconnect with your priorities.

Tidy up.
Clean up your workspace[6] to get a clearer picture of your workflow. Clearing clutter also clears your mind.

Take your blood pressure.
Stress can take a serious toll on our physical health. Periodically monitoring certain health parameters, like blood pressure, can give you clues about where to invest more time and energy in your health.

Breathe deeply.
Practice some deep breathing exercises, especially when you feel overwhelmed or irritated.

Try aromatherapy.
Essential oils can influence your mood[7] and help you relax, especially when you are feeling stressed. If it does not offend your officemates, rub a drop of scented oil onto your neck or temples and take a few deep breaths.

Use a neck wrap.
If you are feeling tense, try melting stress away with a heated neck wrap. Warm neck pillows can relax tight muscles, and they can be especially helpful if you sit behind a keyboard a lot.

Grab an herbal tea.
Need an afternoon pick-me-up? Herbal teas contain less caffeine than coffee and black tea, but it can still give you a nice pick up.

4. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/changepower/201704/how-do-work-breaks-help-your-brain-5-surprising-answers
5. https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/more-evidence-that-exercise-can-boost-mood
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