

The Power of Microbreaks

The new year is in full swing now and you have likely reached a deciding point in your New Year's Resolutions. Perhaps you have committed to moving your body regularly, or getting rid of all those extra shoes you never wear, or maybe your resolution is just to be kinder to yourself and others around you. Either way, the New Year is a great time to consider making changes in your life- but hold on! You don't need a brand-new year to commit to something that will make your life easier. In fact, science says you need as little as 5 seconds.

When things seem to be overwhelming you, or you simply need a quick change of pace- consider a microbreak! This is a simple and restorative technique to incorporate into your day to help you regain focus, retain information better, and help you begin to incorporate wellness into your everyday life.



What is a Microbreak?

A microbreak is a short, informal, spontaneous moment of downtime during your workday. It can be anywhere from 5 seconds to 10 minutes.

There are plenty of apps, journals, podcasts, and videos that can help you take a mindful break. To be honest, though, you don't need any of those to start. All you need to begin making small changes to your mental health is a few moments that you can use intentionally. Start slow, taking 5 to 30 second microbreaks. You can begin to build your microbreaks into your day every 45-90 minutes. The ideal microbreak is about 10 minutes for every 90 minutes worked. Remember, though- it may be helpful every 90 minutes, but pay attention to your body and your needs. There are no hard and fast rules for microbreaks, so don't feel committed to a timetable. Take a break when you need one!

Microbreaks are proven to help improve your focus and productivity; along with these benefits, microbreaks help reduce the risk of workplace related injury! Some studies have even shown that employees who take frequent microbreaks have higher engagement with their jobs and less fatigue at the end of the day. Less fatigue means you are less likely to burn out and more likely to preserve your energy for your family and after-work activities.

These short breaks from work can help reduce strain on your eyes if you work at a computer. Microbreaks can also help to improve overall health and physical wellness, for example, by improving posture and stress on the body.

Your brain works better with breaks. Powering through is not a superpower!

Examples of microbreaks include:

- 30 seconds of breathing exercises.
- Changing your scenery: walk into a different room or even go outside.
- Phone or text a friend for a quick catch-up.
- Water your plants.
- Doodle at your desk.
- Read a few pages of a book.
- Do a quick yoga sequence.
- Throw in a load of laundry.
- Eat a snack.
- Refill your water mug.
- Chat with a co-worker.
- Take a walk away from your workspace.

When Microbreaks Aren't Working

Are you finding yourself feeling a little burned out, extra tired, or feeling chronically sick? Microbreaks, in this case, are not the answer. If you are taking consistent breaks and still find yourself frequently frustrated, losing patience or just plain tired of the grind, you may need more than a microbreak. It might be time to use that PTO you've been saving, take a vacation, or even seek counseling. Microbreaks should be easy- if you are dreading returning to your work or are taking more breaks than normal just to deal with the stress of work, it's time to seek out bigger solutions.

Ulliance can help you figure out what you need, whether it's through counseling, coaching, or helping you find the services you need.

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for you & your family.**

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