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I want to take this opportunity to thank our amazing editor, Alice Kanaka, our graphic designer, Austin Russell, our IT specialist, Gio Irizarry, and our audio and video producer, Jeff Gerstl for all their amazing contributions. Without their talents, effort, and hard work this magazine would not be possible.

With gratitude,

Fawzya Khosti
Editor-in-Chief

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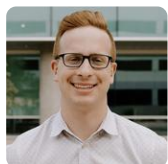
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Josiah Grimes is an Arizona-based entrepreneur and investor. He is the CEO of MovableType.Ai, a software company focused on freeing the author in everyone. He is the co-founder and Chairman of KeyGlee, one of the world's largest real estate wholesalers with over 100 locations in the United States. Josiah is Co-Founder and Chairman of New Reach Education, an online education platform that publishes well-known brands such as Subto, AstroFlipping, and Credit Stacking. Josiah serves as the Director for Purpose Founder, a 501c3 focused on Christian Evangelism through digital media. Josiah is an investor in other industries including Ai, data, title, education, and e-commerce.



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Tara Furiani, with over two decades in leadership and 13 years as a Chief People Officer, is redefining HR and corporate culture with her unparalleled blend of insight and innovation. Featured in The Wall Street Journal and The New York Post, and an advocate on NASA's DEI board, she champions diversity and inclusion at all levels. The force behind "Not the HR Lady" and author of "F*ck Your Office Snacks," Tara also leads transformative initiatives like SAIL Leadership and Workcations. Her work, marked by a commitment to creating dynamic, inclusive workplaces, positions her as a pivotal figure in shaping the future of workplace culture.



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Joshua Hart is a distinguished speaker and consultant specializing in conflict management and effective communication styles. With extensive experience in guiding organizations towards more harmonious and productive interactions, Joshua leverages his expertise to foster environments where open dialogue and mutual understanding thrive. He is dedicated to helping individuals and teams navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, enhancing both personal and professional relationships.



AUTONOMOUS SENSORY MERIDIAN RESPONSE
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Dr. Craig Harris Richard is co-author of the first brain scan study of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR), coordinator of the largest database about ASMR, founder of ASMRUniversity.com, author of the book 'Brain Tingles', presenter of the TED Talk, 'Whispered Revolution of Relaxation', host of the podcast 'Sleep Whispers', and consultant to the first ASMR Super Bowl commercial. His research and interest in ASMR have been featured by ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CNN, NPR, Al Jazeera, Associated Press, NY Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Scientific American, Women's Health, Rolling Stone, The Today Show, and others. Dr. Richard is currently a professor at the Bernard J Dunn School of Pharmacy, Shenandoah University, Virginia, USA.



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Dr. Diane Rosen is a workplace expert, career coach and President of Dr2 Consulting

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Angilie Kapoor, a highly acclaimed leader with over 20 years of experience in healthcare, is dedicated to helping managers unlock their full potential and become impactful leaders. Through her extensive background in management and leadership, she offers invaluable knowledge and insights gained from her own journey. Angilie is the founder of Oversight Global, an organization dedicated to addressing the consciousness crisis in the world one leader at a time. Her mission is to educate and empower aspiring leaders, enabling them to make a significant impact on the world.



ORGANIZING PACKING AND TIPS FOR SUMMER TRIPS
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After years spent voluntarily helping friends, neighbors and relatives organize their homes and offices, Betsy determined that the growing demand for organizing services, combined with her background in human resources, sales, and management, made her an ideal candidate to start a professional organizing business. Betsy researched the industry and learned the optimal way to present her services to the public. She began to attract a steady stream of clients, and enlisted the help of other professional organizers to help handle the workload.

Since that time, Clutterbusters!! has grown quickly, and has become the largest organizing company in the region. Betsy believes strongly in education and professional development, and is active in several organizations, including the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and the International Association of Professional Organizers (IAPO). She's become a well known expert on professional organizing, appearing on several radio and television programs, and authoring many articles.

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**Josiah Grimes,
CEO of Movable
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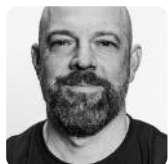
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Noah Lydiard, a luminary in the creative landscape, leads Conductor, renowned for groundbreaking work in broadcast and digital domains. With roles spanning CEO, Executive Creative Director, Producer, and Director, Lydiard fuels Conductor's reputation for excellence.

At Conductor's core is Lydiard's vision, propelling the company beyond conventional boundaries in end-to-end campaign services. This expertise has earned acclaim from industry giants like Fanatics and HBO, showcasing Lydiard's ability to curate world-class teams. Beyond Conductor, as a screenwriter and Director at Rumble Riot Films, Lydiard continues to push creative boundaries globally, solidifying his status as a trailblazer in visual media's evolution.



THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A BREAK: A PATHWAY TO PRODUCTIVITY AND WELL-BEING BY ALLISON JACKSON PAGE 45

Allison Jackson is the founder of Allison Jackson Fitness, where she helps high-performing professionals prioritize their health through nutrition, movement and mindfulness. She is a certified nutrition coach, personal trainer, yoga instructor, and pro masters figure competitor. Most recently, she obtained her sound healing certification.

As a fractional Chief Wellbeing Office, her passion lies in helping others learn how to embrace wellness as a speaker for women's retreats, trade organizations, and corporate groups. She is also the host of the Fit to Lead podcast and author of the book *Flab to Fab in 8 Weeks*. Connect with her on LinkedIn at [Bio](#), follow her on social media @allisonjacksonfitness and learn more at www.allisonjacksonfitness.com.

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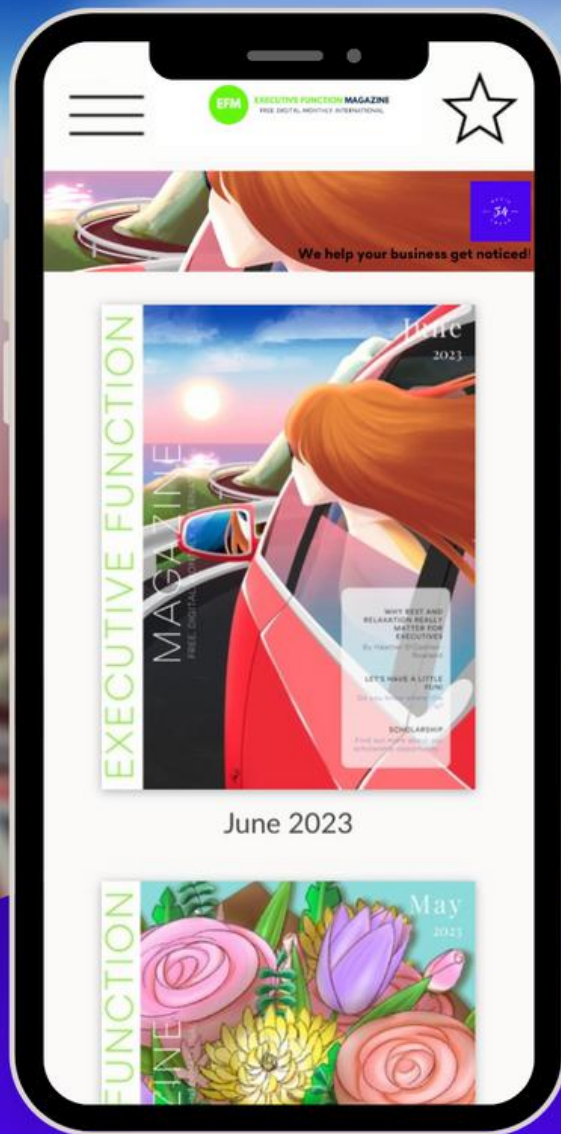
Author, Speaker, and Founder. Hanna was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. Hanna is the co-founder of She Rises Studios and the founder of the Brave & Beautiful Blood Cancer Foundation. Her journey started in 2017 when she was first diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, an incurable blood cancer. Now more than ever her focus is to empower other women to become leaders because The Future is Female.

Website: <https://www.sherisesstudios.com/>



THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A BREAK BY AARON MARCUM PAGE 53

Aaron Marcum's entrepreneurial journey began in 2002 with his first home care agency. In 2008, he founded Home Care Pulse, where he established the Best of Home Care® awards and the Home Care Benchmarking Study®, revolutionizing quality standards in the industry. After leading Home Care Pulse for 12 years, Aaron sold his stake and became an investor and executive coach, focusing on home care. His education includes a Master's in Applied Positive Psychology from UPenn, where he studied under Dr. Martin Seligman. Aaron authored the #1 Amazon Best-Selling book, "EntreThrive – The Entrepreneur's Eight Laws to Accelerate Financial Freedom While Creating The Good Life." He and his wife, Heather, live with their six children in Idaho.



Executive Function Magazine



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Behind the Scenes



Fawzya Khosti, Editor-in-Chief

Fawzya Khosti is the owner of *Fawzya Khosti, Executive Function Coach, LLC*, owner of 54 Media Group, publisher of *Executive Function Magazine*, and the host of *Focus on Success with Fawzya Khosti*, a monthly podcast.

Fawzya enjoys helping others succeed and reach their highest potential. *Executive Function Magazine* provides an opportunity for experts and professionals to share their valuable knowledge and expertise with the intention of helping others live their most successful lives.

When Fawzya is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and spending time at the beach.

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Behind the Scenes

Alice Kanaka, Associate Editor

Alice Kanaka is the Associate Editor of Fawzya Khosti, Executive Function Coach, LLC, Executive Function Magazine, and Focus on Success with Fawzya Khosti, a talk radio show that airs live every Wednesday morning at 9:00 am Pacific.

Mother of two, cat mom, and prolific reader, Alice Kanaka is the author of seven traditional mysteries, numerous short stories, and a twelve-episode collaboration with Black Knight, author of the Starshatter space opera series.

Alice holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources. She spent twelve years working at a state psychiatric hospital, speaks three languages, and has lived in seven countries.

A life-long fan of the mystery genre, Alice's books combine traditional tropes with contemporary characters to create whodunits that are simultaneously familiar and unique. Her aspiration is to write books that she would enjoy reading; stories that are both entertaining and uplifting, perfect with a cup of Earl Grey and a roaring fire on a gloomy day.



FEATURE ARTICLE

The Importance of Taking a Break:
Not the HR Lady's SAIL Approach

By Tara Furiani



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In the relentless pursuit of success, executives often find themselves trapped in a cycle of endless work, believing that constant engagement equates to productivity. This mindset, however, can be detrimental to both personal well-being and organizational health. As someone deeply immersed in the corporate world, I've seen firsthand the transformative power of taking a break.

Here's why it's essential and how you can effectively integrate breaks into your leadership style using the SAIL methodology.

The Hidden Costs of Non-Stop Work

Working long hours might seem like the path to success, but the reality is far bleaker. The World Health Organization reports that working 55 hours or more per week significantly increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Beyond the physical toll, the mental health implications are profound. Chronic stress and the absence of downtime can lead to severe anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline.

For businesses, the impact is just as severe. Burnout results in plummeting productivity, higher absenteeism, and increased turnover. Gallup's research indicates that burned-out employees are significantly more likely to seek new employment and take sick days. When executives are affected, their impaired judgment and creativity can stifle innovation and derail organizational progress.

“

Breaks are not merely about rest

The Transformative Power of Taking a Break

Breaks are not merely about rest; they are crucial for rejuvenation and gaining fresh perspectives. Here's why executives should prioritize taking breaks:

1. Boosting Creativity and Problem-Solving

Stepping away from work allows your brain to wander and process information in new ways. Research from the University of California, Santa Barbara, shows that mind-wandering can significantly enhance creative problem-solving and insight. Breaks provide the mental space needed to develop innovative solutions and ideas.

2. Enhancing Decision-Making

Cognitive fatigue can lead to poor decisions. A study published in *Sleep* found that sleep-deprived individuals are prone to risky decision-making due to reduced cognitive control. Regular breaks, including adequate sleep, help maintain cognitive functions, ensuring sound, strategic decisions.

3. Improving Physical and Mental Health

Short breaks throughout the day can significantly reduce stress and prevent burnout.

Regular vacations and time off contribute to better overall health and longevity. The *Framingham Heart Study* found that men who took vacations were significantly less likely to die from heart-related conditions.

Integrating the SAIL Methodology

At *Not the HR Lady*, we've developed the SAIL (Self-Care, Accountability, Introspection, Learning) methodology, emphasizing a holistic approach to leadership that includes the essential practice of taking breaks. Here's how you can incorporate the SAIL methodology into your leadership style:

1. Self-Care

Self-care is the cornerstone of effective leadership. It involves prioritizing your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This means engaging in regular exercise, eating healthily, ensuring sufficient sleep, and pursuing activities that bring joy and relaxation. Self-care also requires setting boundaries to protect your time and energy.



Action Step: Schedule regular self-care activities like exercise, hobbies, and relaxation. Treat these appointments as non-negotiable and essential for your well-being.

2. Accountability

Hold yourself accountable for taking breaks and prioritizing your well-being. Share your plans with a trusted colleague, mentor, or coach who can support you and hold you accountable. By committing to regular breaks, you set a positive example for your team and encourage them to do the same.

Action Step: Partner with a colleague or coach to set wellness goals and check in regularly on your progress. Promote a culture of accountability within your organization by supporting wellness initiatives and tracking their impact.

3. Introspection

Introspection involves regularly reflecting on your mental and emotional state. Understanding your stressors, triggers, and needs allows you to make informed decisions about when and how to take breaks. Introspection also helps you recognize early signs of burnout, enabling proactive measures.

Action Step: Incorporate regular introspection into your routine through journaling, meditation, or talking with a therapist. Use these insights to adjust your self-care practices and work-life balance.

4. Learning

Learning is a continuous process that enriches both personal and professional growth. Taking breaks provides opportunities to learn new skills, explore new interests, and gain fresh perspectives. This not only rejuvenates you but also enhances your leadership abilities.

Action Step: Dedicate time during your breaks to learning and personal development.



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This could be through reading, attending workshops, or exploring new hobbies. Encourage your team to do the same and create a culture of continuous learning.

Practical Steps for Executives

Implementing the SAIL methodology involves practical steps that can be seamlessly integrated into your routine. Here are some actionable tips to get started:

1. Schedule Regular Breaks

Use your calendar to schedule regular breaks throughout the day. Even a 5-10 minute break every hour can make a significant difference. Consider using the Pomodoro Technique, which involves working for 25 minutes followed by a 5-minute break.

2. Take Lunch Breaks Away from Your Desk

Make it a habit to take your lunch break away from your desk. This not only gives you a physical break but also a mental one. Use this time to recharge, whether by eating a healthy meal, taking a walk, or practicing mindfulness.

3. Plan Vacations in Advance

Plan your vacations well in advance and ensure they are spread throughout the year. This gives you something to look forward to and ensures you take time off regularly. During vacations, fully disconnect from work to reap the full benefits.

4. Encourage a Culture of Wellness

As a leader, promote a culture that values wellness. Encourage your team to take breaks and vacations. Implement policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and remote work options.



Model the behavior you want to see in your team.

5. Lead by Example

Model the behavior you want to see in your team. Take your breaks and vacations seriously and share the benefits you experience with your team. This can inspire them to do the same and foster a healthier, more productive work environment.

The ROI of Taking a Break

Investing in breaks and wellness for yourself and your team yields significant returns. Here are some ways taking breaks can positively impact your organization:

1. Increased Productivity

Contrary to the belief that more hours mean more productivity, taking breaks actually boosts productivity. A study by *DeskTime* found that the most productive employees work for 52 minutes and then take a 17-minute break. Regular breaks help maintain high levels of focus and energy.

2. Enhanced Employee Engagement

When employees see their leaders taking breaks and prioritizing wellness, they feel more supported and engaged. *Gallup's* research shows that engaged employees are more productive, have lower absenteeism, and are less likely to leave the organization.

3. Reduced Burnout and Turnover

Organizations that prioritize wellness have lower burnout and turnover rates.

The American Psychological Association found that workplace wellness programs lead to a reduction in employee stress and an increase in retention. Investing in your team's well-being pays off in the long run through reduced hiring and training costs.

4. Innovation and Creativity

Breaks can lead to bursts of creativity and innovation. Google, known for its innovative culture, encourages employees to take breaks and even provides nap pods and relaxation areas. Time away from work allows the brain to form new connections and ideas.

Embrace the Power of Breaks

Taking breaks is not a luxury but a necessity for executives who want to lead effectively and sustainably. By integrating the SAIL methodology, you can create a balanced approach to leadership that prioritizes mental health and wellness. This not only benefits you as a leader but also sets a positive example for your team, fostering a culture of well-being and productivity.



As you plan your breaks, remember that it's about finding what works best for you and being intentional in your approach. Whether it's through travel, personal development, or simply taking time to relax, breaks are a powerful tool for enhancing creativity, improving decision-making, and maintaining overall health.

Investing in your well-being is the best decision you can make for yourself and your organization. So, schedule that vacation, take that walk, and embrace the power of taking a break. Your mind, body, friends, family, and team will thank you.



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THE POWER OF PAUSE; HOW TAKING A BREAK ENHANCES EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

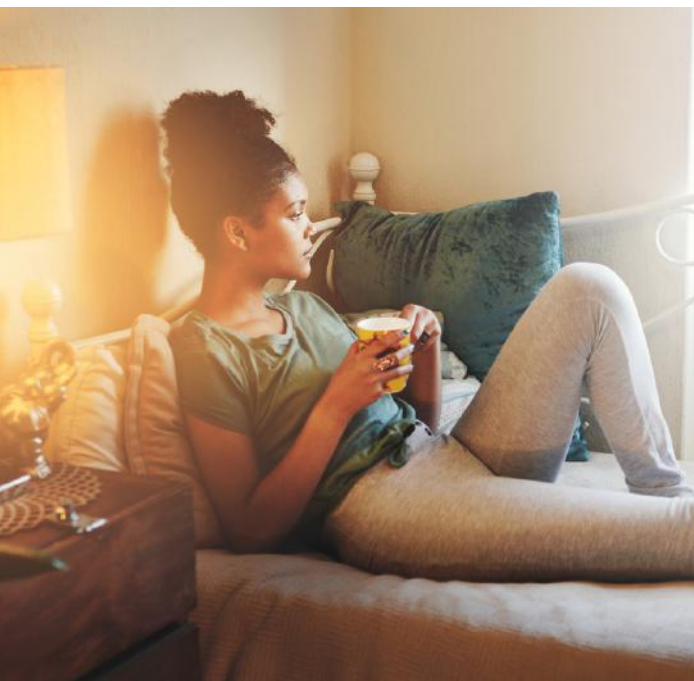
By Josh Hart

Work seems never to stop, emails ping at all hours, and the to-do list never shortens; the concept of taking a break often feels counterintuitive. Yet, stepping away from the relentless hustle isn't just beneficial—it's essential. Breaks are a vital component of maintaining and enhancing executive function, the set of cognitive processes that allow us to plan, focus, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. This article delves into the profound impact of breaks on executive functioning and offers practical insights into how to integrate these essential pauses into our daily lives.

The Science Behind Taking Breaks

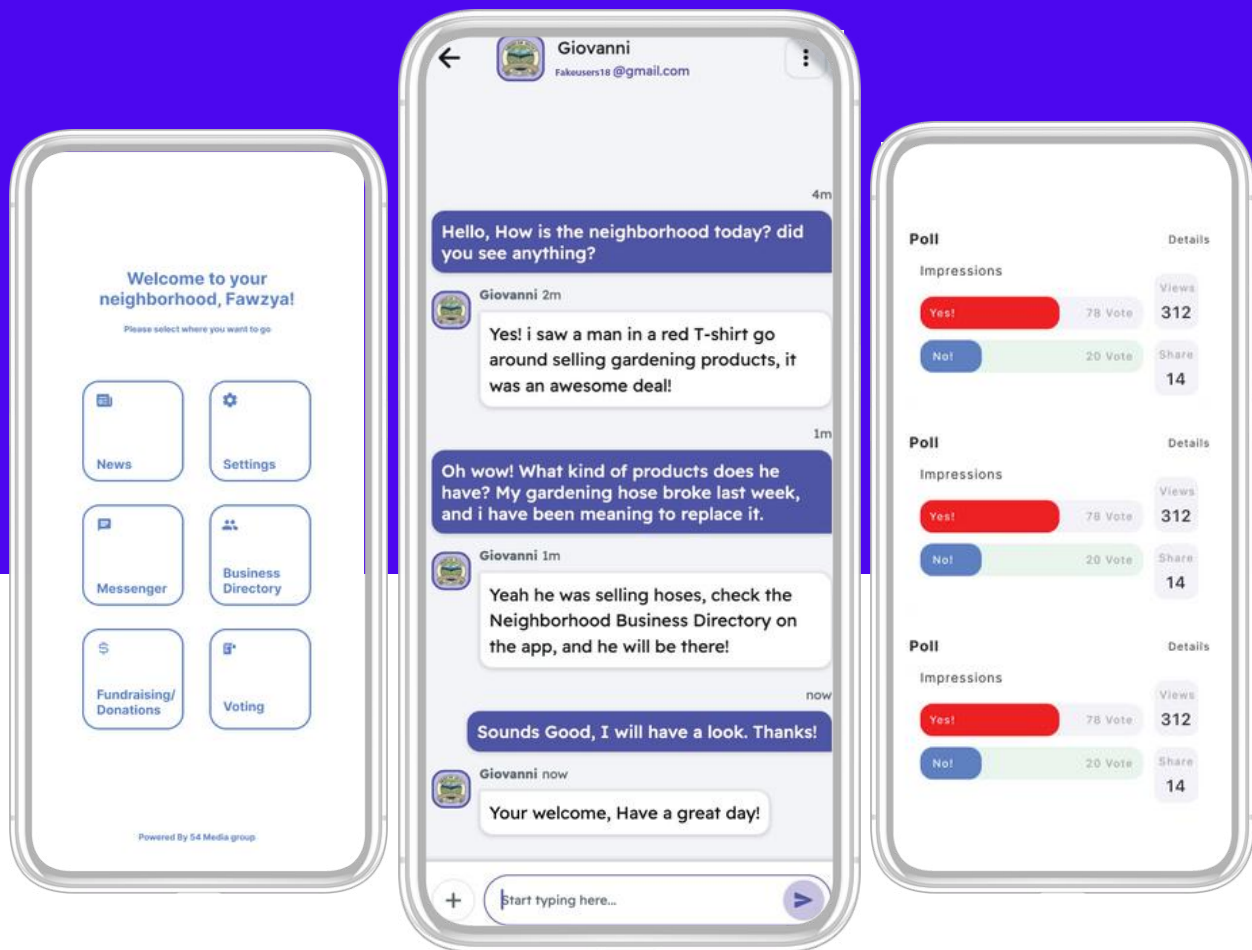
Understanding the importance of breaks requires a look at the brain's inner workings. Executive function relies heavily on the prefrontal cortex, a brain region responsible for complex cognitive behavior, decision-making, and moderating social behavior. Continuous work without breaks can exhaust this area, leading to cognitive overload and diminished performance.

Neuroscientific research has shown that regular breaks help reset the brain, improving productivity and creativity. A study published in the journal *Cognition* found that taking short breaks during long tasks helps maintain a consistent level of performance while working without breaks leads to a steady decline in performance.



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Additionally, breaks activate the brain's default mode network (DMN), which is involved in subconscious thought processes like daydreaming and consolidating memories. When we engage in activities unrelated to our primary task, like taking a walk or meditating, the DMN helps us process information and solve problems creatively.

Types of Effective Breaks

Not all breaks are created equal. The type, duration, and timing of breaks significantly influence their effectiveness. Here are some types of breaks and how they can be optimized:

Short Breaks

Short breaks, typically lasting 5 to 15 minutes, are perfect for giving the brain a quick rest. Activities like stretching, deep breathing, or simply looking away from the computer screen can help recharge mental energy. These breaks are especially effective when taken regularly, such as following the Pomodoro Technique, which alternates 25 minutes of focused work with 5-minute breaks.

Power Naps

Power naps, ranging from 10 to 20 minutes, can significantly boost cognitive function without leading to the grogginess associated with longer naps. Studies have shown that these brief periods of sleep enhance alertness and performance, making them an ideal option for combating afternoon slumps.

Longer Respite

Taking longer breaks, such as a few hours or even a day off, provides a deeper mental reset.



Not all breaks are created equal.

Activities during these breaks can include leisurely walks, engaging hobbies, or spending time with loved ones. These extended breaks are crucial for maintaining long-term productivity and preventing burnout.

Real-World Applications

Organizations and individuals have successfully implemented break strategies to improve productivity and well-being. Here are a few examples:

Case Study 1: Google

Google is well-known for its innovative workplace culture, which includes promoting regular breaks. The company offers nap pods and meditation rooms and encourages employees to take time off for personal well-being. This approach has been linked to increased creativity and productivity among Google employees.

Case Study 2: The Pomodoro Technique
Developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s, the Pomodoro Technique has become a popular method for managing time and enhancing focus. By structuring work into 25-minute intervals followed by short breaks, individuals can maintain high levels of concentration and avoid mental fatigue.

Case Study 3: Japan's "Inemuri"

In Japan, the practice of "Inemuri," or napping in public places, is culturally accepted and even encouraged in some work environments.

This practice allows individuals to recharge during the day, leading to sustained energy and focus throughout long working hours.

Practical Tips for Incorporating Breaks

Integrating effective breaks into a busy schedule, especially for executives and high-functioning professionals, requires deliberate planning. Here are some practical tips:

Schedule Breaks: Plan short breaks throughout the day, setting reminders to step away from your desk. Tools like the Pomodoro timer can help structure these intervals.

Prioritize Activities: Choose break activities that rejuvenate you mentally and physically. This could be anything from a quick walk, a few minutes of meditation, or engaging in a hobby you enjoy.

Create a Break-Friendly Environment: Make your workspace conducive to taking breaks. This could mean having a comfortable chair for relaxing, access to a quiet room, or simply a space where you can stand and stretch.

Encourage a Culture of Breaks: If you manage a team, promote a culture where taking breaks is normalized and encouraged. Lead by example and show that stepping away is a critical part of maintaining high performance.





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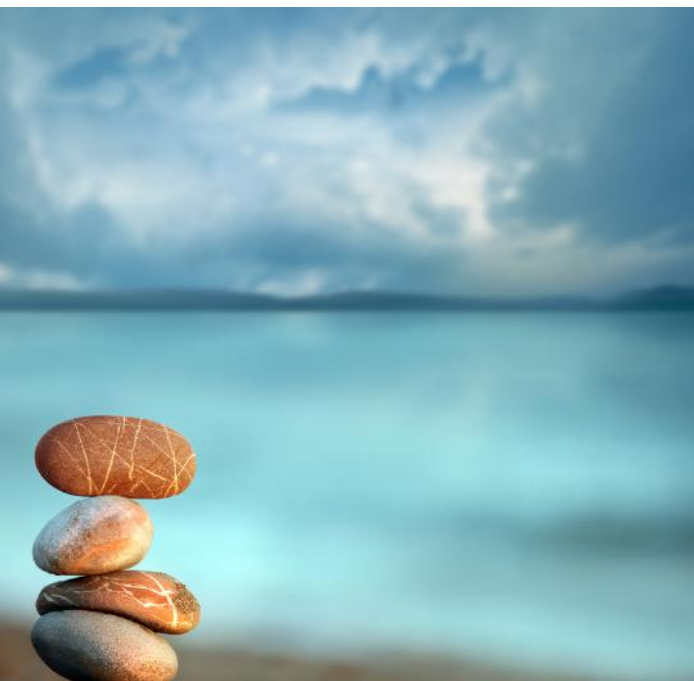
By Dr. Craig Harris Richard

The Relaxing Phenomenon of ASMR

For the past decade, millions of people across the world have been seeking out a new type of relaxation referred to as “Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response”, or ASMR. It is one of the most popular search terms on YouTube, celebrities have been chatting about it, musicians have written songs about it, TV shows are making references to it, and there was even a U.S. Super Bowl commercial created around it. What is this buzz all about? Is this something that may help you to decrease your stress or fall asleep more easily? Let’s learn more.

What is ASMR?

ASMR is a type of deep calmness that is often described as relaxing, soothing, comforting, and even euphoric for some. The sense of relaxation can be so profound that many people also feel sleepy when they experience ASMR. In addition to a calm mood, there is also a physical sensation referred to as “the tingles.” These tingles are enjoyable, light, sparkly sensations which usually begin in the head or scalp and then travel down the spine to the limbs. These sparkles may occur as a brief and steady sensation, or as a wave that sweeps down your body.



What stimulates ASMR?

One of the most popular reported situations for experiencing ASMR is while watching the TV show, “The Joy of Painting.” This show began airing in the 1980s and was hosted by the personable Bob Ross.

Now imagine the gentle voice of Bob Ross, kindly explaining to you how to paint a landscape, while his paintbrushes make light tapping noises on the canvas – that is the type of moment that stimulates ASMR.

Throughout the world, people frequently report experiencing ASMR when they are receiving positive, personal attention from a kind, caring, or helpful person. In addition, the kind person tends to have a gentle voice and may also be making gentle sounds. The combination of a gentle voice from a caring person who is giving you special attention seems to be typical of moments that stimulate ASMR.

Is ASMR stimulated by real-world interactions?

Yes. Most people who experience ASMR remember moments in childhood that stimulated their ASMR. These moments often involved a friend whispering in their ear, a sibling gently braiding their hair, a teacher helping them to solve a math problem, or a parent quietly reading them a story. As adults, ASMR is frequently experienced when receiving positive, personal attention from a kind hairdresser, health professional, spa technician, or while sitting with a partner on the couch while they gently touch your hair.

“

*positive,
personal
attention*

What is the most popular way to stimulate ASMR today?

In the past decade, there have been a growing number of videos on YouTube that are called “ASMR videos.” As of today, there are about 500,000 individuals on YouTube who have created over 25 million ASMR videos. Some of the creators of these videos have millions of subscribers to their YouTube channel. In these ASMR videos, a kind person speaks gently to the camera while giving the viewer positive, personal attention. The content creator may also be demonstrating an activity while making gentle sounds, for example, painting a landscape, writing in calligraphy, or folding Origami paper.

How new is ASMR?

The sensation of ASMR has probably existed for as long as humans have existed. But the awareness of ASMR started from an online discussion in 2007 and the term “ASMR” was created in 2010. The reason ASMR exists is probably to help humans to soothe each other. Many behaviors we see today as “ASMR triggers” in YouTube videos (personal attention, whispering, soft talking, light touches, caring gazes, gentle sounds, etc.) are used all over the world to soothe and comfort infants, children, friends, partners, family members, and colleagues.

What are the biological effects of ASMR?

Our published brain scan study showed that specific areas of the brain are active when someone is experiencing ASMR and the tingles (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6209833/>). Some of these brain regions include the medial prefrontal cortex, the insular cortex, and the nucleus accumbens. The activation of these brain regions supports the likely involvement of endorphins, dopamine, and oxytocin.

The brain chemical that may be the most central to ASMR is oxytocin, also known as the love hormone. The behaviors and moments that are known to trigger the release of oxytocin (eg, caring, grooming, and soothing behaviors) are similar to the behaviors and moments that trigger ASMR. Additionally, oxytocin is known to stimulate feelings of relaxation and comfort, which are similar to the feelings described when people experience ASMR.



Additional published research studies have reported other biological effects. Experiencing ASMR when watching ASMR videos results in a reduction of heart rate, a reduction of blood pressure, and an increase in specific brain waves associated with relaxation. These biological tests support the reported ability of ASMR videos to stimulate physiological relaxation.

Is ASMR helpful for stress and sleep issues?

To investigate what makes people want to watch ASMR videos, our research team has collected data from over 20,000 individuals who experience ASMR. Our preliminary findings show that the majority of people seek out ASMR triggers because it helps them to feel less stressed, more relaxed, and sleepier. In addition to our data, there are many other published studies that consistently report watching ASMR videos, or experiencing ASMR by other methods, is helpful for relaxation, stress reduction, and falling asleep more easily.

ASMR may also be beneficial for those with the most severe stress and sleep issues; these are the clinical conditions of anxiety and insomnia. These issues are so severe that they usually interfere with a patient's health, work, school, or relationships - and often require treatment by a medical professional. One of the questions in our study asked our participants, who reported being diagnosed with anxiety or insomnia, if ASMR was helpful to them. Of those participants with anxiety, about 50% indicated that ASMR helps them with their insomnia. Similarly, of those participants with insomnia, about 50% also reported that ASMR helps them with their insomnia.



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Published studies by other research teams have also reported that ASMR videos can be helpful for individuals who struggle with the medical conditions of anxiety or insomnia.

What are the dangers of ASMR videos?

There have not been any published reports of harmful side effects from watching ASMR videos or experiencing ASMR. However, it is important to understand that experiencing ASMR to reduce stress or sleeplessness will not undo or cure the underlying cause of your stress or sleeplessness. The underlying cause could be a thyroid disorder, mental health disorder, or another cause that would be best treated by a medical professional. If your stress or sleep issue is disruptive to your life in any significant way, then you should consult a medical professional. A trained health professional may be able to diagnose and undo the underlying cause of your stress or sleep issues, therefore ending your symptoms.

What is the most relaxing way to use ASMR at bedtime?

A common challenge to falling asleep is an overactive mind. Your thoughts may be racing from the day's stress or your mind is overexcited about an upcoming opportunity. Either way, falling asleep while you are focused on these overactive thoughts is difficult. People who experience ASMR share that utilizing ASMR-stimulating content is a great way to slow down their minds at bedtime.

Many individuals choose to watch ASMR videos at bedtime, although there are some downsides to doing this.

“

*imagine the
gentle voice of
Bob Ross*

The light from a video can inhibit melatonin production, making it harder to fall asleep. Additionally, watching a video may force you to be sitting up or to be holding a mobile device. Instead, ASMR podcasts at bedtime may be a better choice. Relaxing with ASMR content with your eyes closed is more likely to help you to fall asleep. You can find ASMR podcasts by searching for “ASMR” in Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or any podcast player. You can also sample podcasts until you find one with a host who has a gentle and calm voice that may stimulate your ASMR.

What if ASMR content doesn't work for you?

It is true that some people try ASMR videos and ASMR podcasts, but never feel the sensation of ASMR. Be careful though not to give up too soon. Assuming you don't experience ASMR after watching three random ASMR videos, would be like assuming you don't like music after listening to three random songs. It is important to treat ASMR videos like a food buffet – sample widely and expect to find some dislikes as well as some favorites.

There are also situations that can temporarily inhibit someone's ability to experience ASMR, so do make sure to consider the following possibilities. If your surroundings are too loud, bright, chaotic, or distracting, then you may have difficulty experiencing ASMR.

If you are too stressed, excited, scared, or hyper alert, then that may prevent you from transitioning into a relaxed state of ASMR. Additionally, if you had a negative experience with a specific type of ASMR trigger, then that may inhibit you from experiencing ASMR to that type of stimulus. Lastly, the ability to experience ASMR could end up being a genetic trait, so being able to experience ASMR may be determined at birth.

In conclusion

There are many types of relaxation methods, techniques, and strategies. Perhaps you have tried meditation, but it didn't work for you. Yoga classes may be your favorite way to relax, but classes may not be offered every day. Maybe long walks on that nearby nature trail clear your day's stress away, but today it is raining.

Going to the spa or getting a massage is a great treat for almost anyone, but your budget may be too tight to do it every day.

Think of ASMR-stimulation as another tool in your toolbox of relaxation techniques. You can enjoy ASMR videos and ASMR podcasts at any time, you can enjoy them at home, and best of all, they are almost always free.

Where to get started? Jump on YouTube today and start sampling random ASMR videos until you find some videos that bring you the tingles. Also, feel free to search Spotify or Apple Podcasts for some ASMR podcasts that I've produced, they are called "Sleep Whispers" and "Calm History." If you haven't already, perhaps today is the day you explore the curious and blissful world of ASMR content. The biggest thing you risk losing, is your stress.



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BREAKS MATTER



By Dr. Diane Rosen

Breaks matter! While many have abandoned the traditional one-hour lunch, leaving your workstation, phone, tablet, or other screen is not only good for your health, but actually supports creativity and innovation and reduces stress.

Recent research has shown that even short breaks of only a few minutes can reduce fatigue and stimulate resilience. When we allow ourselves to let our minds wander, we activate the so-called default mode network in our brains which is where spontaneous pre-conscious ideas form.

So, if you can't take a long lunch, some tips for taking short, unstructured breaks are:

- Daydream
- Chat with a friend or colleague about non-work related things
- Get outdoors if possible, or at least leave your desk
- Have a snack
- Limit multitasking and leave your screen
- Move yourself
- Take a power nap

While short breaks can help you reset and rest your mind, too many breaks can make it hard to get back to work. Beware of break activities that send you down a rabbit hole like playing a game, doing a puzzle, or researching something that is not work related. But the bottom line: breaks matter. For your health and mental wellbeing.





BEYOND THE SURFACE: UNDERSTANDING THE DEPTHS OF OUR BEING

By Angilie Kapoor

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to focus solely on our physical well-being. We obsess over diets, exercise routines, and sleep schedules. But what if there's more to us than just our physical form? Wellness enthusiasts and holistic health followers are beginning to realize the importance of acknowledging that we are more than just physical beings. This post explores the concept of "more than physical" and its significance in holistic wellness.

Introduction to Holistic Wellness

The concept of "more than physical" in holistic wellness emphasizes the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit. It recognizes that our physical health is deeply influenced by our mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual states. Understanding this interconnectedness helps us achieve a balanced and fulfilling life. In this article, we will explore how recognizing ourselves as multifaceted beings contributes to our overall well-being.

The Mind-Body Connection

The mind-body connection is a crucial aspect of holistic wellness. Our thoughts, emotions, and mental state can have a profound impact on our physical health.



For instance, stress and anxiety can lead to physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension, and digestive issues. On the other hand, positive emotions and a healthy mindset can promote physical well-being.

Research has shown that practices like mindfulness and meditation can improve both mental and physical health. By quieting the mind and focusing on the present moment, we can reduce stress and enhance our body's natural healing processes. Incorporating these practices into our daily lives can help us achieve a state of balance and harmony.

Nourishing the Soul

Nourishing the soul is an essential part of holistic wellness. This involves practices that go beyond the physical, such as meditation, gratitude, and connecting with nature. These practices help us tap into our inner selves and cultivate a sense of peace and contentment.

Meditation is a powerful tool for nourishing the soul. It allows us to quiet the mind, connect with our inner selves, and gain insight into our thoughts and emotions. Regular meditation practice can help reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance emotional well-being.

Gratitude is another important practice for nourishing the soul. By focusing on the positive aspects of our lives and expressing appreciation for them, we can cultivate a sense of joy and contentment. Keeping a gratitude journal or simply taking a few moments each day to reflect on what we're grateful for can have a profound impact on our overall well-being.

“

Nourishing the soul

Connecting with nature is also vital for nourishing the soul. Spending time outdoors, whether it's hiking in the mountains, walking on the beach, or simply sitting in a park, can help us feel more grounded and connected to the world around us. Nature has a calming effect on the mind and body, and it can help us gain perspective on life's challenges.

The Role of Community and Support

Social wellness and support networks play a significant role in our overall health. Humans are social creatures, and our connections with others can have a profound impact on our well-being. Having a strong support system can provide emotional comfort, reduce stress, and improve mental health.

Building a sense of community is essential for holistic wellness. Whether it's through family, friends, or like-minded individuals, having a network of supportive people can help us feel understood and valued. Participating in group activities, such as yoga classes, support groups, or community events, can help us build these connections and enhance our sense of belonging.

It's also important to seek support when needed. Whether it's through therapy, counseling, or simply talking to a trusted friend, reaching out for help can make a significant difference in our mental and emotional well-being.

Release Date 7/14/24

PIOUS ASSASSIN

The wages of sin...



ALICE KANAKA

Dr. Julius Gemutlich, a profiler specializing in theological psychology, is drawn into a complex investigation involving serial murders in Sarterville, Georgia.

Four lives have been lost. The clock is ticking. Pressure mounts as Julius navigates through layers of deceit, personal demons, and complex relationships to uncover the truth behind the murders.

When betrayal thrusts him into the spotlight, Julius discovers he may just be next on the killer's list.

Author Alice Kanaka weaves themes of forgiveness and light through the darkness of trauma and death, to create a thought-provoking mystery that is a thrilling, yet ultimately uplifting read.

<https://AliceKanaka.com>

No one should have to face life's challenges alone, and having a support system can provide the strength and resilience needed to overcome difficulties.

Practical Tips for Embracing Holistic Wellness

Incorporating the "more than physical" approach into our daily lives can help us achieve holistic wellness. Here are some practical tips to get started:

Practice mindfulness and meditation:

- Set aside a few minutes each day for meditation or mindfulness exercises.
- Focus on your breath, observe your thoughts without judgment, and cultivate a sense of inner calm.

Express gratitude:

- Keep a gratitude journal and write down three things you're grateful for each day.
- Take a moment each day to reflect on the positive aspects of your life.



Connect with nature:

- Spend time outdoors regularly, whether it's a walk in the park or a hike in the mountains.
- Practice grounding exercises, such as walking barefoot on grass or sand.

Build a support network:

- Surround yourself with positive, supportive people who uplift and inspire you.
- Participate in group activities or join clubs and organizations that align with your interests.

Seek professional support when needed:

- Don't hesitate to reach out to therapists, counselors, or other professionals for guidance and support.
- Remember that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Conclusion

Understanding that we are more than just physical beings is a powerful realization that can enhance our overall well-being. By recognizing the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit, we can cultivate a balanced and fulfilling life. Holistic wellness involves nourishing the soul, building strong support networks, and incorporating practices that promote mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

By following the practical tips provided in this article, you can begin to embrace the "more than physical" approach and experience the benefits of holistic health. Remember, the journey to holistic wellness is ongoing, and it's important to be patient and compassionate with yourself along the way.



ORGANIZING PACKING AND TIPS FOR SUMMER TRIPS

By Betsy Fein

Organizing packing for summer trips can be a breeze with a few strategic tips. Here's how to make your packing process smooth and efficient:

Make a Checklist: Start with a detailed list of everything you need. Break it down into categories like clothing, toiletries, electronics, and documents. This helps ensure you don't forget anything essential.

Pack Light: Summer clothes are generally lighter, so take advantage of this by packing versatile pieces. Choose items that can be mixed and matched. Think about the activities you'll be doing and pack accordingly. Limit the number of shoes, as they can take up significant space.

Roll, Don't Fold: Rolling clothes instead of folding them can save space and reduce wrinkles. Use packing cubes to keep things organized and compartmentalized within your suitcase.

Travel-Sized Toiletries: Instead of bringing full-sized bottles, transfer your toiletries into smaller, travel-sized containers. Many stores sell ready-made travel-sized products, which can save you time.





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Use a Personal Item Wisely:

Airlines often allow a carry-on and a personal item. Use a backpack or tote bag to carry essential items like your wallet, passport, phone, chargers, snacks, and a change of clothes.

Prepare for the Weather: Check the weather forecast for your destination and pack accordingly. Lightweight layers, a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen are summer essentials.

Keep Valuables Safe: Pack important documents, money, and any valuables in a secure, easily accessible place. Consider using a money belt or a neck pouch.

Leave Some Space: Chances are, you'll pick up souvenirs or do some shopping. Leaving a little extra space in your suitcase can save you from the hassle of trying to cram everything in at the last minute.

By following these tips, you'll be well-prepared and can focus on enjoying your summer adventure. Happy travels!





BREAK TO MAKE: HOW PAUSING POWERS UP PRODUCTIVITY

By Noah Lydiard

Let's set the record straight: a coffee break isn't just for brewing ideas on what to drink next. For those of us steering the ship, it's about steeping the mind in a fresh perspective and filtering out the daily grind.

Introduction

Today, I am not talking about business matters. Instead, I want to discuss something that might sound unusual for a CEO—taking breaks. Yeah, you heard me right. Breaks. They're not only for students; they're a hidden advantage for everyone, particularly if you are trying to manage a team or operate a business. Let me explain why I firmly believe in taking breaks from the desk regularly.

Charging Up the Brain Battery

Ever noticed how your phone becomes very slow when the battery is almost dead? Well, our brains are kind of similar. If we work them too much and don't take breaks, they start to slow down. I have days full of meetings one after another, and at the day's end, even choosing lunch is hard for me. Making business decisions becomes even more difficult. Taking breaks is like giving yourself a small recharge. It helps you stay active and work well.



Where Good Ideas Come From

Do you ever get your best ideas when you're just relaxing, maybe taking a shower or going for a walk? That happens to me very often. When we relax, our brains still work but in a calm and gentle way like jazz music. Some of the biggest ideas at our company didn't come from looking at screens; they came when we took breaks and let our minds drift freely.

Keeping Cool Under Pressure

Running a company is much like those cooking shows where everyone moves around fast and in chaos. It's very simple to become stressed, which is not good for making wise choices. Taking regular breaks helps me control my emotions and stay calm, so I don't end up feeling too stressed when situations get intense.

Stay Moving, Stay Healthy

Sitting at your desk all day? Not great. I found out the difficult way when my back began to complain. Now, I always remember to stand up and move around. Sometimes it is just a small stretch or a walk around the office. It helps to keep the blood moving and prevents those aches and pains from sitting too long in one place.

The More Breaks, The More Work? Yep!

This might sound strange, but taking pauses during work actually lets me accomplish more. When I keep working without a break, my mind starts to feel heavy and slow like

molasses by the time it is mid-afternoon. But if I take small rests, I can keep my speed steady all day. It is like running a long race with short fast runs instead of trying to run quickly for the whole distance.

Making the Smart Choices

When feeling tired, everything looks blurrier. I see that if working too long without resting, even easy choices become hard. Taking a break gives me time to clear my mind, making it easier to see all the choices and pick the best one—not just the simplest or most noticeable.

Happy Team, Happy Life

Finally, taking breaks not only benefits me but also influences everyone at *Conductor*. When my colleagues see me leaving my desk for a break, it encourages them to feel comfortable doing the same. This makes a workplace happier and healthier. When people come back after breaks, they feel fresh and ready to face problems again. For me, this is a big advantage!

Wrapping It Up

So, you see—breaks are really important, especially when the goal is to keep a company successful. Whether it's stepping out for some coffee, taking a few minutes to relax and clear your mind, or just sharing a laugh over something funny, these small breaks during the day can make a huge difference. They help me, and my team, stay sharp, think creatively, and be prepared for anything. Don't overlook how powerful taking a break can be—it might just turn into your hidden superpower!



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THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A BREAK: A PATHWAY TO PRODUCTIVITY AND WELL-BEING

By Allison Jackson

In today's fast-paced world, the pressure to constantly perform and meet expectations can be overwhelming. Whether you're a student, a professional, or managing a household, the demands of daily life can often leave little room for rest. However, taking breaks is essential for maintaining both physical and mental health, enhancing productivity, and fostering overall well-being.

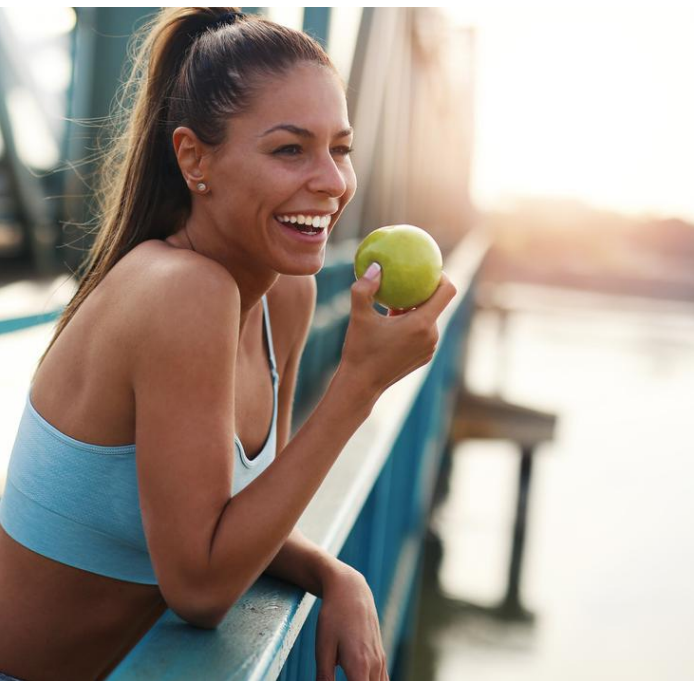
This article delves into the importance of taking breaks, how to recognize when you need one, what to do during a break, and the key benefits that come with incorporating breaks into your routine.

Recognizing the Need for a Break

You would never let your phone's battery go to zero; the same goes for you and your energy. Here's how you know when your energy levels are lagging:

Physical and Mental Fatigue

One of the most apparent signs that you need a break is the onset of physical and mental fatigue. Physical symptoms include headaches, eye strain, and general tiredness, while mental fatigue may manifest as difficulty concentrating, decreased motivation, and an inability to make decisions. Ignoring these signs can lead to burnout, a state of chronic stress that can significantly impair your ability to function effectively.



Decline in Productivity

Another indicator that it's time for a break is a noticeable decline in productivity. If tasks that usually take you a short time to complete start dragging on, or if you find yourself making frequent mistakes, it might be a sign that your brain needs a rest. Pushing through this slump without a break can often lead to more errors and reduced efficiency.

Emotional Changes

Mood swings, irritability, and a general sense of dissatisfaction can also signal the need for a break. When you're continuously stressed and overworked, it's easy to become emotionally overwhelmed. Taking a step back to relax can help reset your emotional state, making it easier to handle challenges with a clear mind.

What to Do During a Break

To ensure you don't completely run on empty, here are some ways to recharge yourself:

Physical Activities

Engaging in physical activities is one of the most effective ways to rejuvenate during a break. Activities like walking, stretching, or even a quick workout can help increase blood flow, reduce muscle tension, and boost your energy levels. Exercise also releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters, helping you feel more positive and refreshed.

“

*reset your
emotional state*

Mindfulness and Meditation

Practicing mindfulness and meditation during breaks can significantly reduce stress and improve mental clarity. Mindfulness involves focusing on the present moment, which can help break the cycle of continuous worrying. Meditation techniques such as deep breathing, guided imagery, or progressive muscle relaxation can also provide a much-needed mental reset.

Creative Pursuits

Engaging in creative activities such as drawing, painting, writing, or playing a musical instrument can be incredibly therapeutic. These activities not only provide a mental break from routine tasks but also stimulate different parts of the brain, promoting relaxation and enhancing overall creativity.

Social Interaction

Spending time with friends, family, or colleagues can also be a great way to take a break. Social interactions provide emotional support and can help alleviate feelings of isolation. Whether it's a quick chat over coffee or a lunch break with a colleague, these moments can recharge your mental batteries and improve your mood.

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Key Benefits of Taking a Break

When you take the time to recharge, you'll realize a variety of benefits, including:

Improved Productivity

Contrary to the belief that working longer hours leads to greater productivity, taking regular breaks can actually enhance your efficiency. Breaks allow your mind and body to rest and recover, preventing burnout and maintaining a high level of performance. When you return to work after a break, you're likely to be more focused, creative, and capable of tackling tasks with renewed vigor.

Improved Mental Health

Regular breaks are crucial for maintaining mental health. They help reduce stress, anxiety, and the risk of depression by providing opportunities to relax and decompress. Activities such as mindfulness and meditation can further support mental health by promoting a sense of calm and reducing the effects of chronic stress.

Better Physical Health

Taking breaks also has significant benefits for your physical health. Sitting for long periods, which is common in many jobs, can lead to various health issues such as back pain, poor posture, and increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Regular breaks that involve physical activity can help mitigate these risks by promoting movement and reducing the strain on your body.

Increased Creativity

Stepping away from work to engage in different activities can stimulate creativity. Breaks provide your brain with a chance to process information subconsciously, leading to new insights and ideas when you return to your tasks. Creative activities during breaks can further enhance this effect by encouraging divergent thinking and problem-solving skills.

Enhanced Work-Life Balance

Taking breaks is essential for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. It allows you to disconnect from work and focus on other important aspects of your life, such as family, hobbies, and personal interests. This balance is crucial for overall well-being and can prevent work-related stress from spilling over into your personal life.

Incorporating regular breaks into your daily routine is not just a luxury, but a necessity for maintaining optimal performance and well-being. Recognizing the signs that you need a break, such as physical and mental fatigue, a decline in productivity, and emotional changes, is the first step towards a healthier lifestyle. Utilizing breaks effectively through physical activities, mindfulness, creative pursuits, and social interactions can lead to numerous benefits, including improved productivity, enhanced mental and physical health, increased creativity, and better work-life balance. By prioritizing breaks, you can ensure that you stay energized, focused, and ready to meet the challenges of everyday life with a positive mindset.



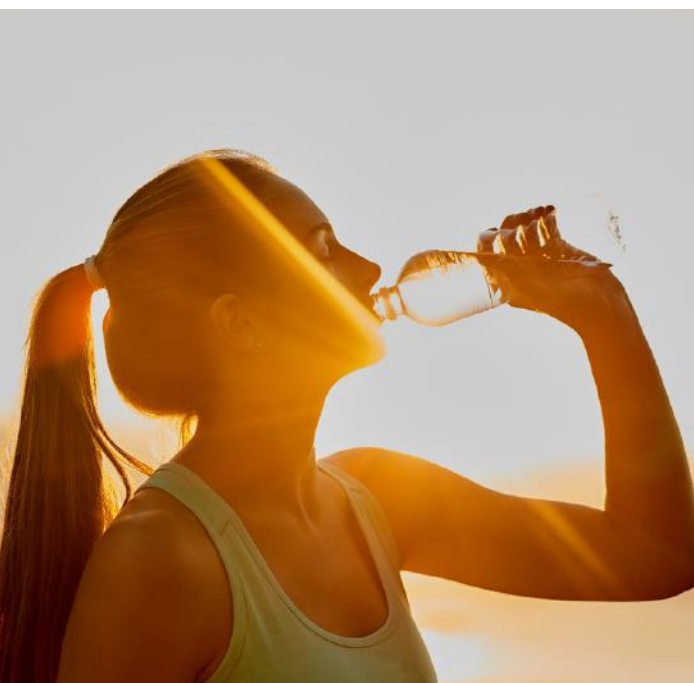
THE POWER OF PAUSE

By Hanna Olivas

In today's fast-paced world, where constant connectivity and relentless hustle are often celebrated, the idea of taking a break can sometimes seem counterproductive. However, as someone who has faced the profound challenges of living with Multiple Myeloma, an incurable blood cancer, I have learned that the power of pausing is not just beneficial but essential for our well-being and leadership effectiveness.

In 2017, my life took an unexpected turn when I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. At that moment, I was thrust into a battle that demanded not just physical strength but immense mental and emotional resilience. Amid treatments, hospital visits, and the daily management of my condition, I discovered a profound truth: taking a break is not a sign of weakness but a necessary component of strength and survival.

The diagnosis was a stark reminder of the fragility of life and the importance of prioritizing health. It became clear that to fight this battle, I needed to adopt a holistic approach to wellness, one that included not just medical treatment but also mental and emotional care. This journey has profoundly shaped my perspective on the necessity of taking breaks and the impact they can have on every aspect of our lives.



Research consistently shows that breaks are critical for maintaining peak performance. Short, regular breaks can improve focus, boost creativity, and enhance decision-making. Our brains are not designed to operate at full throttle without rest. Continuous work leads to cognitive fatigue, reducing our ability to think clearly and solve problems effectively. By stepping away, even briefly, we allow our minds to reset and recharge, returning with renewed vigor and perspective.

A study conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found that brief diversions from a task can dramatically improve one's ability to focus on that task for prolonged periods. This phenomenon, known as "vigilance decrement," occurs when performance declines over time due to continuous attention on a single task. Taking short breaks helps to reset this decrement, allowing for sustained concentration and better performance.

Moreover, breaks have been shown to boost creativity. A study by Stanford University found that walking, whether indoors or outdoors, can increase creative output by an average of 60 percent. This is particularly relevant for leaders and innovators who rely on creative thinking to solve complex problems and drive their organizations forward.

Through my work with *She Rises Studios* and the *Brave & Beautiful Blood Cancer Foundation*, I have had the privilege of interacting with numerous women leaders who have shared their stories of struggle and success. One common thread is the realization that taking time to pause has been pivotal in their journeys.

“

*breaks are
critical for
maintaining
peak
performance*

Whether it's a short walk, a quiet moment of meditation, or a day off to focus on personal well-being, these breaks have enabled them to lead with greater clarity and compassion.

For example, Sarah, a CEO of a growing tech startup, found herself on the brink of burnout after years of relentless work. She decided to implement regular breaks into her daily routine, including short walks and mindful breathing exercises. The result was a noticeable improvement in her ability to make strategic decisions and lead her team with a calm, focused mind.

Similarly, Maria, a non-profit leader, discovered that taking a day off each month to disconnect from work and engage in activities she loves, such as painting and hiking, not only rejuvenated her but also reignited her passion for her mission. These pauses allowed her to return to work with a renewed sense of purpose and energy, which positively impacted her organization.

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As a passionate advocate for female empowerment, I believe that fostering a culture where breaks are valued is crucial for the development of strong, resilient leaders. Women, in particular, often juggle multiple roles and responsibilities, making it even more vital to prioritize self-care. By embracing the power of pause, we can break free from the cycle of burnout and step into our roles with renewed energy and purpose.

The notion that "The Future is Female" is more than just a slogan; it's a call to action for women to take charge of their well-being and leadership potential. As women, we have the unique ability to lead with empathy, intuition, and strength. However, to sustain this, we must recognize the importance of self-care and the role that breaks play in our overall health.

In the corporate world, more organizations are beginning to understand the value of employee well-being and are implementing policies that support breaks and self-care. From flexible working hours to wellness programs, these initiatives are essential in creating environments where employees can thrive.



As leaders, we have the responsibility to model these behaviors and encourage our teams to take breaks without guilt. By doing so, we create a culture of balance and well-being that ultimately leads to higher productivity and job satisfaction.

Reflecting on my journey, I have come to understand that taking breaks is not just about pausing from work but also about reconnecting with oneself. It's about finding moments of joy, peace, and inspiration that fuel our passions and drive. For me, these moments have been essential in managing my health and maintaining my leadership roles.

Empowerment comes from recognizing our limits and honoring our needs. It's about giving ourselves permission to rest and recharge, knowing that by doing so, we are better equipped to face challenges and seize opportunities. This mindset shift is crucial for women who often feel the pressure to do it all without taking a moment for themselves.

In conclusion, taking a break is not an indulgence but a strategic investment in our health and leadership potential. Let us champion the idea that true strength lies in knowing when to step back, reflect, and recharge. In doing so, we pave the way for a future where leaders are not just effective but also balanced and fulfilled.

By embracing the power of pause, we can lead with greater clarity, creativity, and compassion. We can inspire others to do the same, creating a ripple effect of well-being and empowerment. The future is indeed female, and it is a future built on the foundation of self-care and intentional breaks.



THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A BREAK

By Aaron Marcum



Staying productive and taking a break almost seems counterintuitive — even more so when you completely step away from work for weeks. With our smartphones constantly buzzing from notifications and our inboxes perpetually filling up, unplugging and disconnecting can be overwhelming and almost feels like a luxury no one can afford. However, taking a sabbatical could be the missing piece to your personal fulfillment and professional success puzzle.

I took a seven-week sabbatical in 2018 during my tenure as Home Care Pulse's CEO. It wasn't just to take a vacation; it was a deliberate pause to step back and reassess every aspect of my life. The decision obviously didn't come lightly. As the head of a growing company, the thought of leaving the reins even for a short period was daunting. Yet, that leap of faith was one of my life's most profound experiences.

During my seven-week sabbatical, I discovered something remarkable—my team could manage and thrive without my constant oversight. This realization was liberating. It shattered the myth that my constant presence was needed and gave me a newfound confidence in both my team's leadership and capabilities. The sabbatical was such a hit, a month later





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I decided to officially step out of my role as CEO and pass the opportunity on to my COO, while I continued to serve as Chairman and Visionary. This freedom allowed me to approach my role with more clarity.

Discovering New Passions

One of the significant transformative aspects of my sabbatical was the time I finally chose to invest in my passions and hobbies. Cycling has always been an essential part of my life—my “breakaway.” I even joined a group of endurance cyclists in 2016. I have never felt more accomplished than when I completed the LoToJa Classic, a grueling 200-mile one-day bike race — something I’ve completed four times. It reminded me of how dedication can make a difference. During my sabbatical, I had the time to fully immerse myself in cycling, pushing my limits and rediscovering my love for the sport.

Fly fishing was another pursuit that brought me immense joy and peace during my corporate hiatus. Standing in the calm waters, focused solely on the rhythm of casting and reeling, provided a meditative escape from the bustling business world. These activities didn’t just serve as pastimes but avenues for personal growth and mental rejuvenation.

Positive Outcomes of Taking a Break

The benefits of my sabbatical extended far beyond what the professional world could bring. It had an immense positive impact on my mental and overall physical well-being. The stress and pressure accumulated over years of sleepless nights and tireless days began to dissipate.

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an opportunity to reset, explore new passions, and gain fresh perspectives

By taking that time to myself, my relationships with family and friends flourished. With the constant demands of work temporarily set aside, I finally felt how great it was to be fully present in the moments that mattered. I became a better husband and father — more engaged and attentive.

Stepping back through the company doors with a clearer mind, a healthier body, and a renewed spirit felt like another homecoming. I saw familiar faces and did the almost-forgotten routine again. My seven-week sabbatical allowed me to reconnect with everyone on a deeper level, strengthening the bonds that were too often strained by the pressures of our demanding work.

Advice for Professionals

If you're a professional reading this, especially someone in a demanding role, I encourage you not to be afraid to take a step back and take a break whenever you need to — it makes all the difference. A sabbatical isn't just an escape but an opportunity to reset, explore new passions, and gain fresh perspectives. It's a chance to invest in ways that will pay dividends in your personal and professional life.



You can make the most of your sabbatical by following these pieces of advice:

- *Plan Ahead:* Communicate your intentions with your team and ensure systems are in place to handle your absence. For example, develop a comprehensive plan outlining expectations for your absence, contingencies for emergencies, and communication protocols.
- *Set Clear Goals:* Decide what you want to achieve during your sabbatical, whether personal growth, relaxation, or exploring new interests. Taking a break doesn't mean wasting time and being unproductive. For example, I ventured into fly fishing and cycling, where I completed Lotoja, a 200-mile one-day bike race, four times.
- *Unplug Completely:* Disconnect from work-related communications and trust your team to manage in your absence. Allow one key team member, perhaps your assistant, to reach you in case of an emergency but you must be clear on what an emergency is.

- *Reflect and Reassess:* Use the time to reflect on your career and personal life. Assess what changes you can make to improve your overall well-being.

Why Take a Break?

Leaders are often expected to project an image of constant strength and composure. However, vulnerability can also be a powerful leadership tool. You can openly discuss challenges, acknowledge the need for self-care, and normalize these experiences for your team. This will further strengthen relationships within the organization and open a more welcoming conversation on topics related to well-being.

Taking a break seems easier said than done, especially for those in the most demanding roles.

Although it wasn't an overnight decision, I firmly believed that it would enhance my mental and physical health, strengthen personal relationships, and renew professional vigor, which pushed me to take the leap. It all comes back to your "why."

My seven-week sabbatical paid off in ways I couldn't have imagined. It confirmed that taking time to establish new passions and hobbies serves you in your relationships with yourself and others.

So, if you've been contemplating a break, consider this your sign to take the plunge. Empower your team so you can trust them enough during your absence. Invest in your passions and watch as both your personal and professional life flourish. After all, sometimes, the best way to move forward is to take a step back.

Sunset Cliffs, San Diego, California



Photos taken by
Emily Hortareas - 2024

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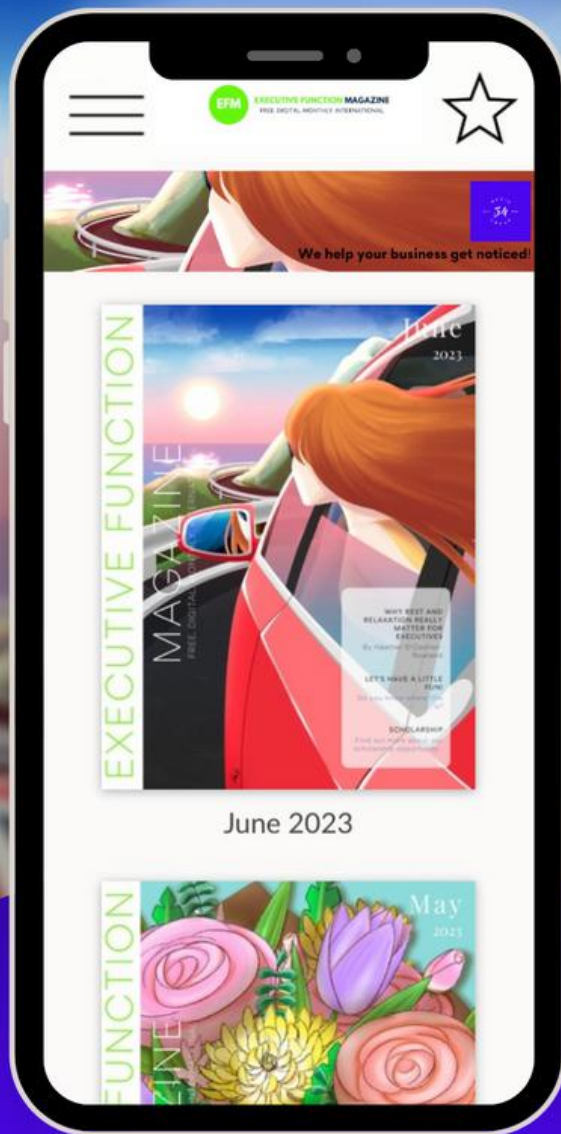
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