

## THINK SMALL WITH A MICROBREAK

*Contributed by Mandy Enright, MS, RDN, RYT*

Have you ever been in a situation where you have felt so overwhelmed that your productivity takes a toll? Maybe you're putting in extra hours to meet a big deadline. Or things have been so nonstop that your to-do list continues to grow before you have a chance to check things off. Taking a break may feel completely out of the question.

But this is where science will tell you that you should absolutely squeeze in those breaks! Short 5 to 10-minute breaks throughout the workday are known as microbreaks. These breaks have been shown to improve productivity and make you feel better both mentally and physically.

### Benefits of a Microbreak

Microbreaks are proven to be beneficial for your well-being, job performance, and are designed to help you recover faster and feel more energized. These breaks can help reset shorter attention spans and keep your brainpower fueled. You may start to feel less stressed and worried throughout the day when you take more mini breaks.

### How to Take a Microbreak

Microbreaks are typically around 5-10 minutes, but can vary in length. Factors including your workstyle and daily schedule will help determine the appropriate length of your breaks. Some people set timers that remind them to take a break, while others will plug time into their calendars. Others simply know when it's time to step away for a few moments to reset.

### Pomodoro Technique

This popular time management method uses the concept of microbreaks. It recommends taking a 5-minute break for every 25 minutes of work, or a 15 to 30-minute break for every 90 minutes of work. Try either approach, or a combination of the two. In addition to using a timer, there are also apps you can install on your computer or smartphone for the Pomodoro Technique to help you get started with this approach.

### How to Spend Your Microbreaks

How you spend your break is equally as important as taking one. Find something that makes you feel good, whether that's walking outside in the sunshine, grabbing coffee with a coworker, or reading a book. Avoid using the time to scroll through social media – that can make your break counterproductive. Making the most of the break is how we feel energized.

You can also use the time to practice mindfulness, such as feeling the carpet against your toes, or noticing how your body feels when you stand and stretch. This type of awareness during your breaks can also be useful to reconnect with yourself. Anything goes for your break. Just be mindful of the time and how long you intend to take your break.





Here are some ideas for ways to spend your microbreaks:

- **Take a walk.** Go for a walk outside, by yourself, with a friend/coworker, or your dog.
- **Two Doorways.** Walk through two different doorways to get out of the office or your home. One of the doorways can be a door to go outside. The “doorway effect” can help to reset short-term memory.
- **Mindful snacking.** Find a nutritious snack like fruit or raw veggies to munch on and eat the snack slowly. Being present while eating helps bring your attention to new flavors, textures, and smells.
- **Breathing.** Close your eyes and focus on your breath for a few moments to feel more grounded and reset your focus.
- **Meditation.** Practice meditation by bringing your attention to the things around you. Or follow along to a short, guided meditation for a mid-day meditation vacation.
- **Stretch or do yoga.** Doing quick stretches or short yoga sequences can help release tension from the body while also engaging your breathing and silencing the mind.
- **Reading.** Grab a book or magazine and mentally escape for your break.
- **Color or doodle.** Grab a blank piece of paper or an adult coloring book and color away for a few minutes.
- **Water your plants.** Having plants in your workspace has been shown to lower anxiety and increase productivity. Take time out to water them, and you'll both get TLC!
- **Watch videos.** Find a video that makes you laugh. Laughter is a great stress relief!

### Doing Small Things for Ourselves Adds Up

Doing a few nice small things for ourselves can have BIG effects on our overall well-being. Even the smallest of actions can evoke well-needed positive reactions. Establishing a routine that promotes your own productivity and supports your needs will help you establish more job satisfaction, less stress, and a better work-life balance.

#### ***Need More Microbreak Inspiration?***

***Check out the new Mental Health Microlearning Video Bundle for a selection of short videos that can help reset your focus for the day. Contact Wellness Concepts at [info.well-concepts.com/contact-us](https://info.well-concepts.com/contact-us) for more info on these microvideos for your microbreaks.***



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