



Want to increase your productivity in 2022? Take a break!

No individual or team can run hot all the time. Carefully managing your energy will help you to retain your creativity, productivity and motivation. Here's why you need to incorporate breaks into your daily routine

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Have you ever found yourself staring at your [transaction](#) files and realized your mind is somewhere else? Do you find yourself reading the same document repeatedly and still not comprehending it?

Sadly, many agents fail to take any type of break from their business. The result is fatigue, exhaustion, reduced performance and often illness. If you're ready to increase your effectiveness, make more money and have increased energy in 2022, taking well-timed breaks is the perfect solution.

The power of taking well-timed breaks

Research on what is known as [reminiscence](#) illustrates how powerful taking a periodic break can be:

When subjects performing trial after trial without rest (massed practice) are given a short break, perhaps midway through training, scores on the very next trial will show a significant improvement when compared with those of a massed group given no break. Reminiscence effects are most prominent in tasks demanding continuous attention and response.

Peak attention is characterized by the *percentage* of time you spend focused on a task as opposed to the *amount* of time you spend. You can increase this percentage by taking well-timed breaks that allow you to keep this percentage as high as possible.

10 ways to take breaks and keep your concentration and productivity high

The goal when taking a break is to find an activity that will relax and yet energize you so you can be fresh, alert and focused. If you would like to take more refreshing and rewarding breaks while also boosting your effectiveness, try out some of the 10 strategies below.

1. Change both the activity and the physical location

One of the best ways to take a break is to change your physical location in conjunction with a major change in the type of activity. For example, if you've been sitting at the computer, get out of the office and [take a walk](#).

If you've been knocking on doors on a hot day, reward yourself by going inside and enjoying a cold drink. The goal is to change both the nature as well as the location of your break activity.

2. Move your body

Going from your computer to sitting in front of the TV is not a break — it's simply a change of location. When you sit for any length of time, blood begins to settle in parts of our body. [Exercise](#) promotes the flow of blood in your body and brings oxygen to your brain. This in turn increases your ability to think clearly.

Take a walk or stretch for 10 minutes, and then go back to your desk. Stepping outside to feel the sun or rain on your face is a great way to relax your mind and clear your thoughts.

3. Avoid confusing diversions with breaks

For example, if you're working on the computer and you take a break by playing computer games, you've only created a diversion, not a true break.

Remember, a break requires both a change of location and activity. This dual shift helps you to maximize your [productivity](#) and focus.

4. Keep them brief

Breaks are brief. For example, if you take five to 10 minutes to stretch, that qualifies as a break. In contrast, if you spend 20 minutes or more exercising, it's no longer a break, but a primary activity.

5. Remember that breaks energize you, diversions deplete your energy

One of the most important ways you can tell that you have had an effective break is to monitor how you feel when you return to your work.

If you feel more energized and/or your ability to concentrate has improved, you've had an effective break. If your concentration is the same or worse from the break, chances are the activity you selected was a diversion — not a break.

6. Don't 'break' to check messages and social media

You use text messages, email and [social media](#) to communicate with your clients. Even if you're looking at a post from a family member, your brain has these activities linked to your work.

The same is true if you chat with the people around you whether you're at the office or at home. In each case, your brain treats these as if you are still working rather than taking a break.

7. Create a supportive environment to increase your break effectiveness

Many agents take their files home to work on in front of the television or even in their bedroom. By bringing your work into your break areas, you blur the line between relaxation and work. This can cause increased anxiety as well as insomnia.

To minimize your stress and anxiety, designate a specific area where you work. Avoid doing any other type of activity in this area. By the same token, if you want to maintain peak performance, keep your

break areas separate from your work area. Also, *never* pay bills or do any other type of work in your bedroom.

8. Schedule your breaks throughout the day

Enter your breaks on your daily calendar and treat them as you would any important appointment. While it can be tempting to ignore break time to work with clients, handle problems in a transaction or deal with other important issues, avoid falling into this trap.

Planning your breaks in advance helps you create a rhythm and balance to your schedule. Taking a break also allows you to be more effective when you return to work to handle these issues.

9. Eliminate caffeine from your diet

The goal of taking a break is to relax. In contrast, caffeine is a stimulant — the antithesis of taking a break. In larger doses, caffeine can result in the jitters, lessened ability to concentrate, increased anxiety and insomnia.

Caffeine also behaves like many other addictive drugs; the more you take, the higher your tolerance becomes. You can tell if you're addicted to caffeine by going without it for 24 hours. If you get a headache, that means your body has become addicted and has built up a tolerance.

To wean yourself off coffee or tea, begin by replacing your full cup of caffeine with ¼ cup of decaffeinated, then ½ cup, then ¾ cup and then completely off. Chances are you'll feel less stressed, and you'll sleep better at night as well.

10. Take a break before you need one

Waiting too long to take a break often results in getting a second wind. At this point, you may continue to push until you completely run out of energy. When this happens, it takes you much longer to recuperate.

No individual or team can run hot all the time. Carefully managing your energy will help you to retain your creativity, productivity and motivation.

Your goal in taking a break is to walk away feeling energized and ready to take on the next task. In fact, would you benefit from a break right now? If so, take it!

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