

Taking a Mindful Break When You Can't Get Away

With every new advice column, social media post, as well as newsletters, we get advice on self-care. We have all been through a monumental and historic time of stress, not that other times have presented any fewer challenges to our well-being. However, many of us have not lived through such a tumultuous and changing time on a world-wide platform. We are dealing with stress on many different levels depending upon individual circumstances. We are also faced with complications and frustrations that we might not have had to address before.



In this newsletter, we are going to look at the importance of being mindful and purposeful when it comes to taking a break – especially when we can't get away. Then, we will address different kinds of self-care breaks that might be fun!

Intention and Purpose

Hard work is fueled by intention and purpose. Having an intention and a purpose can also offer emotional and psychological benefits. Not only are self-care activities and moments we take for ourselves, necessary to balance our lives due to the onslaught of stressful situations swirling around us, they are best driven by mindfulness and intention. These are keys that can unlock the true benefits of self-care activities and having purpose - a reason for doing them - can develop your resiliency to stress.

Imagination

It might be nice to go away on vacation, away from our usual schedule, and to spend time doing fun things other than school or work, but there is an important truth to remember: your mind is always with you, and you can learn to use your mind to enhance your self-care activity. Albert Einstein talks about imagination as being creative. You can learn to use your mind in creative and powerful ways to bring you better health and a sense of 'vacation' – especially when you can't get away! For example, spend just fifteen minutes a day imagining what 'vacation' feels like, looks like, and explore all the nuances of that special time. Your body will experience the effects of your consistent, repetitive, and emotive imagining. That's the mind-body connection!



Mindful Breaks

- **The energy snack** – Schedule time throughout the day for a healthy snack. Try appreciating the flavor and texture as you eat it. Pay attention to the taste and imagine the energy boost you will receive.
- **The activity break** – If you have been sitting – stand up and breathe deeply - jump up and down – get your blood moving! If you have been furrowing your brow – open your eyes wide and stretch the muscles in your face!
- **The imagination break** – This one can be a game-changer! Learn to use your mind, and to use it in a very special way. Our mind works with images; they can be symbols or real pictures we imagine. If your purpose and intention is to relax – imagine yourself in your most relaxing place. What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? Depending upon your natural abilities to use your imagination, there are countless images that can provide you the three R's: rest, relaxation, and recovery!
- **The vacation break** – What kind of vacation do you enjoy? Does it involve the thrill of white-water rafting – or sitting on a warm beach with your toes in the sand, under a palm tree? Whatever your pleasure, the creativity of your mind can create the scene for you. Learn the tools of mental imagery to enhance your break-times from work or study!

Tips for Effective Mental Imagery



Decide on the purpose of the mental imagery break and write it down.



Set a timer.



Relax your body – away from your workstation or where you study.



Use multi-sensory imagery – seeing, hearing, sensing, smelling, tasting to imagine a place, a scene, or a goal. Remember, you can use symbols and colors too! You can even silently describe the setting to yourself as well as how you are feeling.



Breathe deeply.



When time is up – open your eyes, stretch, and smile! This has been your time – your accomplishment!

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information,
call your Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**