

20.01.2021

Brain Breaks and Downtime

Recently, it is common to hear people ask: 'what are you going to do with all this extra time we have in lockdown?' For some of us, we may find ourselves with a lot more time, with less things to occupy us and a reduced social calendar. This may be daunting or, if nothing us, unmotivating. Others may find that, actually, they have less time. There may be different challenges at work, young ones may need more entertaining at home and with schools closed, life may feel more chaotic. Whichever situation you find yourself in, it is important for our wellbeing that we take a step back and engage in activities that we enjoy, whether this is to occupy our minds, or make space in our calendar for some me-time. You cannot pour from an empty cup; be sure you take time to re-fuel.

The importance of breaks for our young people and ourselves

"Think of life like a long-distance race. If you sprint in the beginning, you are going to get burnt out, you may even hurt yourself from pushing too hard. But, if you pace yourself and take it slow sometimes intentionally, and push hard other times, you are sure to be way more successful"

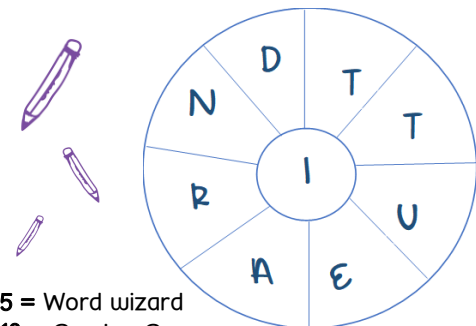


[Why you should take a break: Prioritizing mental health in schools | Hailey Hardcastle | TEDxSalem - YouTube](#)



Wheels in Motion

Using the letters in the word wheel no more than once, make as many words as possible of three or more letters, always including the letter in the center of the wheel. Want an extra challenge – set yourself a time limit of 3 minutes!



5 = Word wizard
10 = Gaming Guru
15+ = Shakespearean superstar!

The 5-minute rule

The 5-minute rule is a cognitive behavioural therapy technique for procrastination or motivation struggles. Low motivation is common, particularly when we are not feeling 100%, even when we know the task will be good for us.

How does it work?

Set yourself a goal (e.g. reading a book), but agree with yourself that you only need to do it for 5 minutes. If after 5 minutes you would like to stop, you are free to do so. You can be proud that you have accomplished your goal. However, we often find that after 5 minutes, it's easier to carry on or continue until the task is complete. Setting the intention and starting is usually the hardest part. By only committing to 5 minutes of a task, it can feel less overwhelming and a lot more doable.

Our Virtual World



Stretch

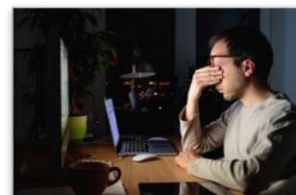
Working/learning from home, laptop screens, videocalls, TV, social media – modern technology has been fantastic for keeping the world going and allowing us to connect with others from afar. However, sitting at a desk or staring at screen too long can cause eye strain, posture issues and may not promote positive wellbeing – remind yourself and your children to take regular breaks away from screens.

Cuddle a pet

Make a cup of tea



Gaze out of the window



Weekly Wellbeing Newsletter



Make an appointment with yourself

It can be all too easy to cancel or not prioritize our breaks/downtime/self-care activities. Make an appointment with yourself – just as you would at work or with other events in your schedule e.g. meeting with HR at 2pm Tuesday or take the kids to swimming lessons at 5pm. Pencil in your own breaks and time just for you. Protect this time and set boundaries to make sure it can happen.



Alice's favourite ways to take a break

5-10 minutes – sudoku puzzle with a cup of tea

20-30 minutes – take the dog for a walk

1 hour+ – a long, hot bath

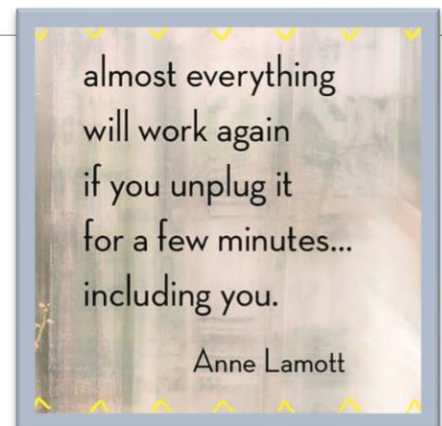
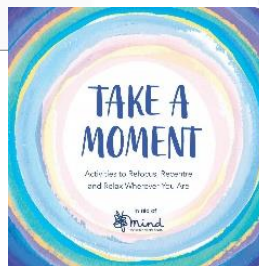
→ What are yours?

Breathe Bubble



[Calm Breathe Bubble | Breathing Exercise - YouTube](#)

“Whenever you feel like you need to catch your breath, do this 30 second breathing exercise with Calm Breathe for instant relaxation.”



Anne Lamott



We provide support when life becomes more complicated. Family breakdown, aggression in the home, bullying, teenage risky behaviour and mental health concerns of both parents and their children.

If you need support or advice, you can call us on our helpline on **0800 800 2222**, email us at askus@familylives.org.uk, [chat to us online](#) or alternatively visit our [forums](#) or [online advice](#).

We would love to hear your feedback on our resources; please follow this link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=m2PRzSLrNkWUuWHRbLXGI7yvfHBe1x5Bovajvxxv7VzJUODIXRUIIEVRSKZTTkZNMDBQWjFKQ0JNNC4u>

