15 Simple Ways to Pause

When life is busy we tend to live on autopilot, running from one commitment to the next. Taking a few moments to pause is a powerful way to give yourself a little break to breathe, reset your focus, or gain access to your inner wisdom. Pauses let us take control of our choices in the moment instead of simply reacting to whatever is happening around us. Here are some simple ways to take a pause in your day:

Take a Breath

Pause and take 3 conscious breaths bringing your attention to the natural cycle of your breathing. Just breathe in the way that is normal for you noticing each inhale and exhale. Done consistently, taking a moment to pause and breathe can have a significantly positive effect on your life. Take a breath at the start of any of the following pauses.

Natural Stop

Take advantage of the natural pause that occurs with a red light or stop sign to bring yourself back to the present moment. What do you notice when you look around?

Enter Here

Pause before crossing the threshold of a doorway. Notice your energy and thoughts. Ask yourself if this is a helpful way to enter the new space. If no, make a conscious shift.

Cup of Mindfulness

Whether it's your morning cup of coffee or a tea at break time, pause for a moment and pay attention to the sensory experience of those first few sips.

Power Down

Your brain actually needs time to power down every once in a while, so take advantage of a do nothing pause. Sit quietly and allow yourself the luxury of not having to plan, solve or fix anything for a few moments.

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Do a Body Check
Your body is always trying to tell you what it needs. Pause and pay attention to what it is saying. It will give you clues about what you physically or emotionally need in the moment.

Mindful Mouthful
Pause before eating to give thanks for the meal you are about to eat and for the people who made it possible and for those with whom you are sharing it.

Focus on the Positive
We tend to focus on what's not working which increases our sense of negativity. Pause and ask yourself what IS working right now. Make a quick list of the positive things happening in the moment.

Before You Send
Pause before you hit send on any email, text, tweet or social media comment. Re-read what you wrote. Ask if this contributes in a positive way to the conversation. If no, hit delete instead.

5 Minute Vacation
Have a mini vacation at your desk. Keep a picture of your favourite vacation spot handy and imagine yourself in the photo. What appeals to you about this place? What sounds do you hear? What sights do you see or smells do you notice?

Repeat a Mantra
A mantra is simply something we repeat over and over. We all say negative things to ourselves which helps to reinforce that particular belief in our minds. Catch yourself in the act, pause for a moment and consciously replace it with a more positive or empowering phrase.

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✓ ### Take a Drink
Your brain is mostly made of water. It takes only 2% dehydration to begin to affect your attention, memory and other cognitive skills. Keep a water bottle handy and pause to rehydrate your brain and body.

✓ ### Take a Walk
Go outside and reconnect with the world. A short walk lets you breathe fresh air, appreciate nature and refresh your mind and body.

Embrace the Mundane
There are lots of routine tasks we need to complete each day. Use one of them to pause and give your full attention to the activity. Instead of thinking about something else, notice the sensory experience of doing the dishes, or brushing your teeth or taking the garbage out. ✓

Refocus Yourself
There are lots of distractions to pull our attention away from what we are doing. Pause every so often and ask yourself, "Given my current priorities, is this the best use of my time and energy?" If yes, carry on. If no, then refocus on what really needs your attention. ✓

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