Give Yourself A Break

The Importance of Taking Time for Yourself
INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to “take a break”? Many of us are so busy these days that we don’t even know the true meaning of the concept. But, when referred to by most people, the answer involves making an escape from everyday life, taking the time to stand back from our hurried existence and getting a look at the “big picture.”

The truth is, most of us don’t know how to relax. When we are not engaged in any activities, our lives come to a screeching halt. Nervousness sets in because we are not texting on our cellular phone, tweeting to our business partners, driving the kids to a rehearsal or sports practice or scheduling car repairs or carpet cleanings. Life has kept us in high gear for so long that slowing down is a foreign concept.

If all this sounds familiar, read on. It's time to give yourself a break.

Discover what it means to de-stress, disassociate and drop everything. It doesn’t have to be for long but it does need to happen - for many reasons. Some you might already know but we’ll highlight them again as you continue to read. Everyone can benefit from taking time out from their daily routine and we are going to show you how.

In this report you will learn how to shed your anxiety, strip away the unnecessary things in your life and start a simple regimen of regular relaxation that will rejuvenate you physically, mentally, emotionally and more. Are you ready?
THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF

Your boss in the workplace is required by law to give you two 15-minute breaks and at least a 30-minute lunch each eight-hour shift. So, why won’t we give ourselves at least that much on a regular basis? If you are an entrepreneur, you know that it takes a significant time investment to get your business off the ground and turning a profit.

But, when your body reaches its limit, you are no good to yourself, your family or your customers.

The term is “burnout.” We have all felt it at least once or twice, some more intensely than others. It’s that uncontrollable state that occurs when we can no longer keep the brain synapses firing, the body physically moving forward, the morale on a high note or the world making sense. No matter how hard we try, things just don’t seem to work.

This is an extreme and no one wants to hit that point. Being on overload or in overdrive for long periods of time can turn the good stress of a challenge into the bad stress that leads to chronic unhealthiness. If you aren’t aware, stress can develop into some bad habits; these in turn can set about a chain of events that can lead to all sorts of problems:

- Overeating
- Smoking
- Drug use
- Lack of sleep, insomnia
- Irritability
- Headaches
- Lack of concentration
It is easier than you think to fall in line with poor habits when stress has taken over your life. You begin to grasp at whatever will keep you going and functioning on some level close to normal. Before you know it, everything is spinning out of control and you have no idea how to reel it all in.

While this may sound ominous, it does happen. We just don’t think that deeply into what is happening to us at the time, so the connection isn’t made right away.

Have you ever heard of the “fight or flight” syndrome? It’s that heightened state of awareness in the body that occurs when we are in danger. Adrenaline increases, muscles become taut and the mind sharpens as it decides how to react. When you undergo significant amounts of stress, it’s as if you are in that heightened state all the time. And, it wasn’t meant to be that way.

Here’s an example. Too much stress can lead to wakefulness. Lack of sleep deprives the body of restorative rest that is needed to repair the body on a cellular level. A build-up of certain neurotransmitters and a lack of sufficient levels of others can put the brain out of balance. Since the brain controls many functions of the body, it too is out of balance.

**Do I have a Right to Take Time for Me?**

Everyone needs a break to regroup. Just because you are a parent, a child, an entrepreneur, a leader or a caregiver doesn’t mean that you are expected to run continuously without stopping. Society praises those who seem to have boundless energy, but you might want to ask yourself how they are achieving it without investing in downtime.

Because of the physical dangers of high stress levels, you shouldn’t feel guilty about taking time out for yourself. Everyone needs it. You can learn to work out your downtime together as a family so that the benefits are felt by the entire group and all are rejuvenated to keep going for yet another day.
Here’s another thought. When you are at your best then you can do your best for others. If you are the type of person who is dedicated to their work, their families and their community, all of these entities will reap the rewards of a well-spent break.

**How Can I Make Time for Me?**

No matter how much time you have, you can put it to good use. Think about your schedule. Maybe you try to use every available moment to fit in all the activities you have to get done. What if even a fraction of that time was spent in the act of renewing your mind, body and spirit?

What about the time we spend waiting? We wait for appointments, children, clients, and traffic lights. How are you waiting during these times? It could be an opportunity to do something even more important for yourself.

Just like with exercise, relaxation time is cumulative. Five minutes here or ten minutes there can add up to big benefits for you. Don’t ever think that have to attend a class or set aside loads of time to “get it right.” There is no right or wrong way to take a break. The point is to get away and take it.

So, along that line, we want to introduce you to several ways that you can implement rest each and every day of your life. Yes, you deserve a break today as the McDonald’s commercials used to say.

Relaxation isn’t just for the times when you have reached burnout or the point of no return. You want to try and find a happy medium in your life so that you never have to hit such extremes. Regular breaks keep your fuel tank full so you never operate on fumes.
WAYS TO NURTURE YOURSELF

Physically

We are more than the sum of our parts but by tending to each part, you have a stronger whole person. So, let’s begin with the obvious - the physical body. We often notice that something is wrong with us only when our bodies start to fail. By then, many changes have occurred inside of us, in our minds and in our interactions with others.

Here are some of the many ways that you can physically give your body a break.

Exercise – Yes, exercise has many uses. One of the most important is to keep your physical body in shape. When you are strong, you can handle many more challenges than when your body is feeling tired and weak. Also, blood flow and oxygen production increase so that you can think more clearly and focus on solving problems or sparking your creativity. And, you don’t have to engage in high impact aerobics. Walking is one of the best overall exercises and it can be done in any weather and without a gym membership.

Take in a spa treatment – How about a steam or dry sauna treatment? Even a massage can remove the tension in your muscles and help eliminate the build-up of toxins in the body. Make a regular monthly or weekly appointment for a treatment that can aid the removal of stress from your body.

Take a hot bath – Most of us love showers because they are quick and we can get going faster. But, there are many benefits sitting in a hot bath. Add some aromatherapy oils and your favorite bubble bath. Light a few candles and play soft music. Drift away to any place in the world that you want to be at that moment. Even twenty minutes alone can soak away the troubles of each day enough to help you cope.
Get to bed on time – Regular sleep is important. Most of us shorten our sleep time in favor of getting more work done. That’s always a no-no. Why? You can never catch up on all the sleep you miss pulling all-nighters. It may take a bit of doing, but you can create a routine that will help you achieve eight hours or more of rest each night. Even with your busy schedule you can fit it in.

Detoxify – The body can become so filled with toxins from the environment, stress and the food we eat that we experience physical ailments like stomach upset, gallbladder attacks, respiratory problems and bowel trouble. Consider changing your diet. Eliminate fast food, alcohol, soft drinks, and any other processed foods containing chemicals the body wasn’t made to utilize efficiently. Get back to a natural diet of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean meats and water.

Take a yoga class – Yoga seems like a flimsy excuse for exercise but it has many physical benefits. You learn to stretch your muscles so that they become stronger and more pliable, preventing injury. The body is pulled in many different ways that you are not used to so that you can gain better control over it.

Sit and have a cup of tea – Do you have five or ten minutes? Find a comfy place on the couch and sip your favorite herbal tea. Drink it slow so that you gain all the soothing effects and can sit on the couch a little longer.

Play like a child – This activity has the distinction of being both physically and mentally freeing. Go with a friend or with your children. Ride the swing, take a turn on the slide or climb the jungle gym. Have a laugh and play as if you don’t have any concerns at the moment.

**Mentally**

It is often hard to know how to relax mentally. We think that if we are okay physically then the mind will follow. In fact, it is the other way around. Often our thoughts dictate our actions. If we can’t get on board mentally, nothing
else will get done. The unconscious thoughts are the most harmful. We silently sabotage ourselves without even knowing it.

But, getting in touch with your thoughts takes time and focus. Taking regular breaks can help out with that.

Meditate – You don’t have to sit and hum a mantra. It could be time spent listening to the sounds of nature on your front porch. Practice your breathing so slow down your heart rate and blood pressure. Make sure you are comfortable.

Read a book – When you are reading, you are transported to another place and time far away from your current surroundings. Let your mind take a back seat as you let the words take you away.

Listen to music – Music has the power to conjure up long-forgotten happy times, like when you first heard the song. Revel in your memories and sing yourself into a good mood.

Engage in your favorite hobby – Hobbies have a place in our lives. They make us well-rounded and offer a release from the daily grind. Letting the creative side of your brain loose creates new synapses and enhances your life on the whole. So find something that interests you and pursue it passionately.

Spend time alone – People can expect too much from us at times. If you are a person who can’t resist helping someone when they ask, get away by yourself and just sit. Let your mind wonder wherever it chooses as long as it’s not towards work or your next scheduled event.

Keep a journal – What are your thoughts? What goes through your mind? Write it down. Give voice to your fears, hopes, dreams, sorrows and joys. Here, you can say what you need to in order to free your mind from the clutter.

Concentrate on one thing at a time – Women are often guilty of multitasking everything in their lives. The brain has no time to slow down. Learn to focus on one project only for a day or part of a day.
Leave the house as is for a day – Sure, clothes need to be picked up or the dishes need to be washed, but they can wait one day. Give yourself permission to be a person of leisure for once. But, don’t enjoy it too much!

Play a game – Family game night is one way to get the gang all together for a well-deserved mental respite. Have fun, laugh and engage in healthy competition.

Practice positive thinking – Recognize those negative thoughts and replace them with positive affirmations. Stop sabotaging your life.

**Emotionally**

Emotions are what make us human, but they can also unduly influence our decisions in life. When we are tired and overworked, they can get the better of us. Negative emotions can keep us from realizing our potential and can be fueled by stress.

Count your blessings – This can put your life into perspective when you need it most. Mentally, count them one by one to gauge the state of your life.

Explore your dreams – What do you want to do with your life? If there was no limit, what dream would you pursue?

Let it all out – What are you holding inside of you? It’s okay to show your emotions. If you are exhausted, then cry or shout or wail if you need to. Bottling up emotions can lead to physical ailments in the body.

Smile at yourself in the mirror – You are a beautiful person and you need to recognize that. Take a moment to get to know your face and who you are behind the eyes.

Go shopping – It always makes us feel good. Buy something just for yourself because you are special. Don’t consider anyone else’s needs but what you want at that moment. The guilty pleasure of one shopping trip won’t break the bank (hopefully).
Spend time with your pets – Pets are good for us mentally. They provide unconditional love and affection whenever we need it. It can lift the emotions and help us to realize that we are not alone.

Eat your favorite meal – Good food releases the same endorphins as exercise and sex. Making a meal of those guilty foods you don’t dare eat all the time can make you smile on a bad day.

Change the color scheme in your home – Certain colors can improve mood. By changing your space you can affect how you feel when you are there. Your house is your sanctuary.

Explore your religious side – Are you religious? Concentrating on your higher power can renew your faith and bring peace of mind.

**Take a Break from the Digital World**

Yes, we even need to take a break from technology. It seems to rule our lives. And, we have often replaced physical interactions with people with text messages, emails and forums.

Meet up with an old friend – Take the time to actually reconnect with someone in your life. Have an actual conversation over lunch or dinner.

Attend a concert – Listening to music on an iPod can simulate a live performance but there is no substitute for the real thing.

Write a letter – Instead of emailing, sit down and put pen to paper. Express your feelings for someone. People still love to get personal mail delivered to their home.

Turn off your phone – It doesn’t have to be forever. Try it for an hour or two. Maybe you can get up to half a day. Unplug yourself from the world at large and gain your bearings.

Turn off the television – Have a real conversation with your family without distraction. Discuss your day, your problems and any concerns that they may have.
Close down the office for a day – If you work on the computer from home or are an internet entrepreneur, take one day once a month or so to let the business run itself. Give yourself permission to be free for a time.

**CONCLUSION**

Do you have a few more ideas about what it truly means to “take a break”? Before you burn out and split apart, consider the various parts of you. Each needs attention in order to keep you together and sane in your life.

Relaxing can take many forms. It is not enough to be okay physically if you are a mess mentally and emotionally. You may still suffer from stress.

It’s okay to take time out to recharge your batteries. Regular breaks for everyone in your family can maintain an even keel in your life and the family dynamic. Do it for your health. Do it for your quality of life.