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Work-Life Integration

It's okay to take a break

Your job requires a lot from you. You're doing all you can to manage the heavy workload and complete your projects on time while balancing your home life. Days, weeks, even months of endless to-do lists can make you feel overwhelmed and stressed. Breathe. Don't forget, it's acceptable to take a break.

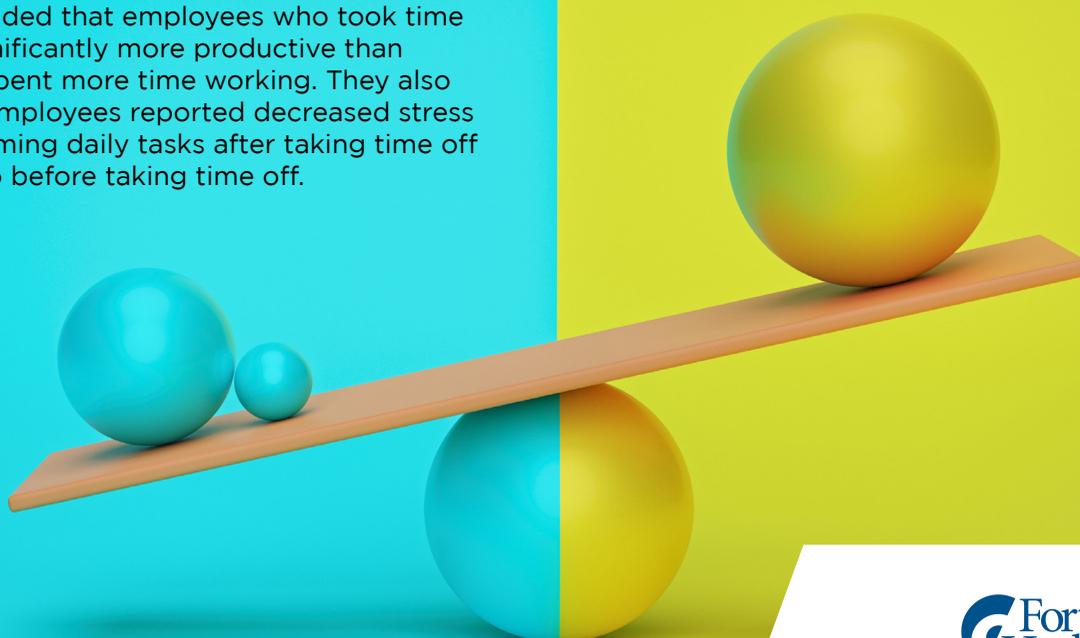
Taking intentional breaks from work can improve your physical and mental health. Here are five benefits you get when you plan work breaks better:

- 1. Improved physical health** – Taking reasonable breaks can decrease your stress, which can improve your heart health. A consistent and ongoing increase in heart rate, and the elevated levels of stress hormones and blood pressure, can take a toll on the body. If you take care of your stress, your physical health may improve.
- 2. Improved mental health/mood** – Ongoing stress can impact your brain, too. Your brain needs time and space away from stressful environments so it can renew itself and heal. One way you can do this is by setting time outside of work to rest and unwind. You may also do this by ensuring you are taking attainable breaks throughout the day to assess your stress levels.
- 3. Increased motivation/productivity** – Your passion and focus for work may increase after taking some time off or taking a short break. A recent study concluded that employees who took time off were significantly more productive than those who spent more time working. They also noted that employees reported decreased stress while performing daily tasks after taking time off compared to before taking time off.

- 4. Improved relationships** – Enjoy quality time with friends and family. Spending time with loved ones deepens the bond you have with them. Even taking time to spend by yourself doing things you enjoy can increase your self-confidence.
- 5. Improved sleep** – Sleep helps your brain process the mental and emotional information you take in each day. Taking time to focus on your sleep patterns gives your mind and body the rest and relaxation it desperately needs. Getting enough rest helps you think more clearly and improves your memory skills, making it easier to focus when you transition to and from work.

Making time to intentionally rest and focus on self-care may improve your physical and mental health. Whether you plan a vacation or plan more intentional breaks, it may increase your work motivation and benefit the relationships around you.

Source: SleepFoundation.org, WHO.int, Heart.org



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Need to take a break more urgently, but don't have time to take a full vacation? Take a few minutes today to color the image below. Coloring is a healthy way to reduce stress. It also promotes mindfulness and relaxation. What used to be known as a simple, fun activity for kids now is a tool for practicing good mental health.



Source: MayoClinic.org

Feeling burned out? Try this 15-minute [mindfulness practice](#).
Wake up your mind and body with this 10-minute [morning yoga routine](#).
Read this [article](#) to learn more about signs of burnout.

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