

# 50 WAYS TO TAKE TIMEOUT

## Activities for your health and wellbeing

By Dr. Ron Cacioppe and Jill Dare, Integral

### Timeout for Your Physical, Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

When we ask people how they are feeling, the common words we hear people say are: *exhausted, tired, busy, frustrated, tired, stressed* and they need a 'break' from their crazy, hectic world.

When you are busy at home or work, it's important to take a few breaks throughout the day. And if we are honest, watching most TV programs or spending time scrolling through Facebook isn't really a *break*?



Adam Fraser in his book, *The Third Space*, describes how we go on autopilot from one activity to another during our day – answering emails, making phone calls, responding to texts, going from one meeting to another. He suggests we need to make time to reflect, rest and reset. This involves doing things that revitalise us and provide enjoyment and wellbeing.

During sporting matches, coaches call timeout to review what is happening, to stop frenzied, chaotic play, and to reenergise and refocus their players so they play their best game. This same approach should apply to our life.

Looking after yourself is not selfish. It helps you to recharge and be your best so that you can help others when they need it. This means taking time to do things that refresh and rejuvenate you without feeling guilty. We often feel guilty spending time doing what we enjoy because we think we should be spending time with others who need us more. However, after we exercise, read a good book, or get involved in a favourite hobby, we feel like we have had a holiday and are more positive, attentive and caring for others. We know the time was well spent since we become a better person at home and work. It is a bit like putting an oxygen mask on yourself before your children on a plane!

The following is a list of positive and healthy ways to take time out at home and work. Whether you want to recharge your batteries, do something productive, or just check out for a few minutes, try these for a break well-spent.

As you look through this list, tick the ones you would like to do and ones you are doing already and want to continue doing.

### WAYS TO TAKE TIMEOUT AT HOME

- Have regular, moderate exercise – Plan and make time to go for a run, bike ride, swim, or brisk walk every day
- Eat healthy, fresh, unprocessed food - Reduce sugary and takeaway foods
- Spend time on a hobby (e.g. cooking, do puzzles, painting,
- Garden, plant flowers and/or vegetables
- Connect with family and friends
- Go for a coffee, and just sit
- Go for a walk or sit in nature
- Take a nap during the day
- Spend time with children and pets
- Take five minutes every night before sleep to be grateful for 3 things that day

- Read a good book
- Go for a drive to somewhere nice and interesting
- Put together a playlist of your favourite songs on your phone and computer
- Do yoga a few times a week, 10 – 15 minutes stretching and flexibility exercises
- Practice meditation and mindfulness techniques every day- Download and listen to guided meditation
- Have work free time: Reduce, turnoff work access on your computer or phone at home
- Prioritise you and be aware of your thinking that makes excuses not to do this
- Write in a journal
- Walk, talk and eat more slowly
- Eat a meal in silence, tasting and enjoying the taste of the food
- Listen fully, rather than talk or try to convince others
- Buy flowers for someone
- Clean and de clutter your favourite room and use it as a quiet place to just sit
- Play a musical instrument, listen to your favourite music
- Watch good movies (e.g., David Attenborough documentaries on nature)
- Have a regular bedtime and a good night's sleep
- Turn off the next bingeable episode on Netflix and get to bed earlier
- Make a surprise call to a friend you haven't spoken to for a while
- Don't look at mobile phone, tablets or computer screens an hour before bedtime
- Go to a play, art gallery, cultural event

### **TAKING TIMEOUT AT WORK**

- Stretch at your desk
- Go for a coffee, work-free break
- Take three deep breaths between activities or when stressed
- Walk upstairs instead of taking the elevator
- Eat healthy lunches, rather than fast, flavoured takeaway food
- Take a mental wellness day when you feel fatigued or highly stressed
- Build networks of positive, supportive people
- Take breaks during the day to go for a walk
- Don't work through lunch or eat at your desk
- Say 'no', don't rescue people at the expense of your own wellbeing
- Take a holiday a few times a year
- Define your boundaries, don't accept unacceptable behaviour from your boss, colleagues or clients
- Have a walk meeting with a person you work with or manage
- Praise someone who has done a good job
- Do nothing for 2 minutes – sit somewhere and just be and listen
- Put art on your desk or office walls
- Meditate for 10 minutes in the car if you arrive early for a meeting
- Outsource a job that is better for someone else to do
- Bring healthy snacks for everyone
- Leave work at a reasonable time everyday
- Watch Ted Talks on topics of interest for you
- Find simple, enjoyable tasks to do in between challenging difficult work
- Send a co-worker a funny e-card
- Participate in interesting personal/professional development activities
- Really focus on feeling your feet on the floor when walking between meetings
- Take a Friday or Monday off – create your own long weekend
- Write out a long-term vision (5 – 10) years and tangible goals

## Habits and Barriers that stop me from taking TimeOut

What are the things that will stop me from taking timeout? What are some of the habits or barriers that will stop me from taking timeout?

These can be family or work commitments or feeling selfish for taking time away from home or work obligations. They can be external things like pressure at work or things you have agreed to, or can be internal things like feeling tired, lack of creativity, stuck in habits like watching television, eating fast foods, or looking at social media too much.



## Commitment to Take TimeOut

Decide which of the activities you will commit to doing at work and home (boxes you ticked from the previous pages). List the activity you will do and when you will start it and how often (e.g., Start this Friday, 2 x/week).

