

MENTAL HEALTH

GIMME A BREAK

In a society that romanticizes exhaustion and overexertion, it's easy to fall into the trap of being too busy which can increase stress-related health problems. It's time to take a break! But how do you know you need one?

- Are you finding it difficult to escape the daily stresses of life?
- Are you feeling like you are in a rut and just going through the motions?
- Do you ever long for a new, more restful existence?

We can never really create a life without stressors as they are a normal part of life. Building better coping strategies and taking breaks can be a viable solution to our stressful experiences. Taking regular breaks, both short and long, can actually build our physical strength, resilience, even resistance to neurological diseases like epilepsy and dementia. The answer doesn't lie in removing the stress from our lives, but having a regular reprieve from it strengthens our ability to better manage it over time.

Taking a mental break doesn't have to mean an expensive 3 week vacation in the tropics. In fact, it is more valuable to simply recognize a stressful situation and temporarily distract ourselves with something we enjoy in the midst of dealing with it. Practicing the art of distraction (much like exercise, a change in diet, or any lifestyle change) will be most effective when we find something we like and create a new habit.



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Here are some ideas to get you thinking about what you might like to try!

10-30 minute activities	Long term activities
Read a chapter in a good book	Plan a date night or girls/guys night out
Listen to relaxing or inspirational music	Book a weekend staycation at a local hotel by yourself
Meditate	Consider a job change
Read a devotion	Arrange a spa day
Go for a massage	Try something new (ie music lessons, dance class, drum circle)
Get away from your desk for a short walk	Discover your spirituality
Get outside	Work on improving a meaningful relationship
Exercise	Join a book club or movie club
Try an adult colouring page	Go camping and connect with nature
Watch a couple of funny YouTube videos	Explore volunteering or charity work
Have a luxurious bath	Build a vision or goal board

Prioritize your breaks by scheduling them into your life. Be consistent in your efforts. Managing your stress levels nurtures your mental health and wellness, pulls you away from your problem, and builds your inner strength.

Sources:

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