Wellness

Wednesday



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10 Genius Ways To Switch Your Brain Into 'Leisure Mode'

If your mind is absorbed in your to-do list and email inbox after work hours, try one of these quick, expert-backed activities.

Burnout is a very real issue that's only getting more and more common. The days of walking out of the office and leaving work behind are harder to come by.

The American Psychological Association surveyed adult U.S. workers and found that 79% felt work-related stress, 36% said their job caused cognitive weariness, 32% were emotionally exhausted and 44% were physically fatigued.

To combat this, people need time off — and time spent not thinking about work. But how do you hit the off switch? We asked some experts for their advice on how to shift your brain to leisure mode if it's hung up on your to-do list:

Say "goodbye" to the workday.

In order to fully transition from work to leisure mode, you need to leave your job tasks behind. Keegan LaMar, a performance and leadership coach and certified performance mindset coach for athletes, calls this "shaking hands with the workday."

"The act of turning off your work computer or logging off of your work application is like a handshake to say 'good doing business with you today,'" he said.

Close your laptop, power down your PC, shut off your work tablet — anything you can do to say goodbye to your employer, employees and clients for the day. Challenge yourself to keep these devices powered down until your work begins again the following morning.

Find your wind-down song.

"In the same way athletes use a pump-up song to walk onto the court or field to get themselves in the headspace of the game, use music as a signal of what energy you want to enter into," said Lia Garvey, an organizational consultant, author of "Unstuck" and TEDx Speaker.

She suggested finding a song that helps clear your head or brings you out of your work mindset and playing it in the car on your commute home, or at home before you log off the computer for the day.

"Make it into a ritual where once you hear the song, you're done with work — no hopping back on to check your email one last time, or you defeat the purpose," she explained, noting that her wind-down tune of choice is "Blinding Lights" by The Weeknd.

Don't want to listen to the same song every day? Hop on Spotify or Pandora and put on a playlist of a genre that makes you feel good.

File it away.

Imagine a file cabinet in your mind. "Think of all of the things you need to do at work tomorrow and place them mentally in the cabinet," said Karen Tom, a certified health and life coach.



Think of any issues at work and also place them in your mental cabinet. "Imagine closing the drawer of the cabinet, recognizing that you will open it back up on your next day at work," she explained.

Change your clothes.

Do you have to wear a suit to the office? Or maybe a fancy skirt and heels? As soon as you walk in the door, pop off your shoes, slip into some comfy house shoes and put on your "relaxing" clothes.

"Even if your work-from-home uniform is yoga pants, changing out of your 'work clothes' can signal to your mind that you've wrapped up for the day," Garvey explained.

Depending on what you have going on after work, change into something you wouldn't wear to work, even if that just means you put on your fuzzy slippers while you prep dinner.

Curb the work talk.

"When you're done working, don't talk about work," LaMar said.

Oftentimes, we are done working but chat about work-related things for hours afterward, whether that's on the phone with a friend, at the dinner table with your family, or before drifting off to sleep with your significant other. LaMar reminds us that our words will direct our attention, so when we call it a day, it's important to place our attention elsewhere.

Plan something fun.

"Having an activity or plan in place for when you finish work can help get you into leisure mode," said Dr. Flora Sadri-Azarbayejani, a doctor with Psyclarity Health in Boston.

When she gets off work, she looks forward to activities like playing a game, participating in a hobby, or going outside. You can also set up a happy hour with a pal or schedule a movie and popcorn night with your family. "This can be a great way to switch off of work and into leisure activities more quickly and easily," she added.

Create a fake commute.

Work from home? Pretend you don't. This is what Cynthia Davies, a business owner in Sarasota, Florida, does to signify the end of her workday.

Davies likes taking a quick five-minute walk around the block. This gives you the sense of leaving your workspace and returning to your home space. "If the weather isn't conducive, I'll go to a different room in my house and listen to a podcast or audiobook for the same five minutes, just like I used to do on my commute," she explained. "Once that time is up, I know it's time to switch to leisure mode."

Call or text a friend.

When the clock strikes quitting hour, pick up the phone and get social. "A short chat with a friend reminds us just how connected we are to the world around us, especially other people," says Lt. Col. Paul Fritts, a spiritual expert with the U.S. Army's Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) Team.

Even just a five-minute conversation with a supportive friend can release you from working hours and help you relax into the rest of your day. It can also remind you that there are more people to interact with in the world than co-workers and customers.

Take some deep breaths.

Your workday can be filled with adrenaline and stress. Your breath can help you shift out of that state and into a better mood and relaxation mode. Harel Papikian, a licensed clinical psychologist in West Hollywood, California, suggested ending your workday with a few relaxed belly breaths.

"Take 10 deep and relaxed inhalations, imagining that the center of the breath is in your navel. Inhale gently, allowing the belly to get filled with the breath. Continue inhaling to fill the mid and upper chest all the way to the throat with fresh air. Allow the exhalation to be just as effortless. Notice the shift in your body," he said.

Create a leisure environment.

"Make sure that when you come home from work, you're entering an environment where you can relax," said Joni Ogle, a licensed clinical social worker practicing in Los Angeles and Houston.

This could be a living room with cozy furniture, a peaceful garden, or a designated space just for your-self. You definitely won't be able to ditch the work vibes if you remain in your home office space or enter a room cluttered with paperwork and bills.



CHICKEN DIVAN, LIGHTENED UP



387 Calories | PREP TIME: 30 mins | COOK TIME: 30 mins | TOTAL TIME: 1 hr

YIELD: 6 servings | Course: Dinner | Cuisine: American

INGREDIENTS

1-1/2 lbs broccoli florets, (3 large heads), chopped

4 cloves garlic, crushed

olive oil spray

2 tablespoons light mayo

3 boneless skinless chicken breasts, 8 ounces each

kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

1 tablespoon butter

2 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil, divided

1/4 cup shallots or onion, minced

1/4 cup all purpose

1 cup chicken broth

1 cup fat free milk

2 ounces dry sherry, white wine will work

6 ounces reduced-fat Swiss cheese, shredded or chopped fine

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup seasoned whole wheat breadcrumbs , or gluten-free crumbs

Chicken Divan is a classic American casserole that typically features chicken, broccoli, and a creamy sauce. It is believed to have originated in the 1930s at the Divan Parisien restaurant in New York City. The dish is named after the restaurant and the word "divan," which means a long, low sofa without a back.

If you're looking for a healthier version of this classic casserole dish, look no further! This lighter version is lower in fat and calories, but still full of flavor and made from scratch with no canned soups.

Nutrition Information

1 2/3 cup, Calories: 387 kcal, Carbohydrates: 22 g, Protein: 42 g, Fat: 14.5 g, Saturated Fat: 5.5 g, Cholesterol: 112 mg, Sodium: 606.5 mg, Fiber: 3.5 g, Sugar: 5.5 g

Source: Skinnytaste.com



- 1. Preheat oven to 350F. Spray a 9 x13 inch baking dish with olive oil spray.
- 2. In a large skillet, over medium heat, add 1 teaspoon olive oil and garlic and cook 30 seconds. Add the broccoli, 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, 1 tablespoon of water and cover.
- 3. Let the broccoli cook until tender crisp, 3 minutes. Transfer to the baking dish.
- 4. Pound the thicker end of the chicken breast to make it even on both sides. Brush mayo on the chicken and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt and black pepper, to taste.
- 5. Heat the skillet over medium heat. When hot, spray with oil and cook the chicken until just about cooked through, about 5 minutes on each side.
- 6. Remove from heat and transfer chicken to a cutting board. When cooled, slice chicken into bite sized pieces.
- 7. Reduce the heat of the skillet to medium heat. Add the butter and remaining oil until melted and then add the shallots and cook until tender, 2 to 3 minutes.
- 8. Sprinkle the flour and cook, stirring about 1 minute. Whisk in broth, milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt and sherry and bring to a simmer about 1 1/2 minutes on low. Remove from heat and stir in half of the Swiss cheese.
- 9. Pour half of the sauce over the broccoli and mix to coat. Arrange the chicken on top and cover with remaining sauce. Sprinkle the remaining Swiss cheese, grated Parmesan and top with breadcrumbs. Spritz a little oil on top. Bake 30 minutes, until hot and golden.

FEATURED EXERCISE

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Featured Exercise ► Adductor Rock Back



» **Do it:** Perform three sets of 10 rock backs on each side. Kneel on a pillow, folded blanket, or yoga mat if needed.

- Start in a tall kneeling position on the floor.
- Extend one leg straight out to the side, keeping the foot flat on the floor.
- Place both your hands on the ground, about 1 to 2 feet in front of the bent knee, and rotate the foot of the extended leg, so it faces inward.
- Keeping your spine long, push your hips back toward your heel.
- Then, return to starting position.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.





