

Use mindfulness at work

With mindfulness—being focused and fully present in the here and now—you can replace multitasking habits with more directed practices to reduce stress and increase productivity,” said Dr. Romie Mushtaq, a neurologist with expertise in mind-body medicine. The result? You’ll be sharper, more efficient, and more creative.



To clear away distractions and live in the moment, Dr. Mushtaq offers these tips for practicing mindfulness in a multitasking business:

Focus on a single task for an allotted amount of time.

You might say, “For 15 minutes, I’m going to read through my emails, and then for one hour, I’m going to make my phone calls.” If your job comes with constant interruptions that demand your attention, take several deep breaths and then prioritize them. Resist the urge to answer the phone every time it rings—unless it’s your boss. If someone asks you to drop what you’re doing to help with a problem, it’s okay to say, “I’ll be finished with what I’m doing in 10 minutes, then I’m all yours.”

When you get “stuck” in a task, change your physical environment to stimulate your senses.

Sometimes we bounce from one task to another because we just don’t have the words to begin writing that strategic plan, or we’re staring at a problem and have no ideas for solutions. That’s the time to get up, take a walk outside and look at the flowers and the birds or turn on relaxing music. Offering your senses pleasant and different stimulation rewires your brain for relaxation and reduces the effects of stress hormones, which helps to unfreeze your creativity center.

Delegate!

We often have little control over the external stresses in our life, particularly on the job. Have compassion for yourself, and reach out for help. If you can assign a task to somebody else who’s capable of handling it, do so. If you need to ask a colleague to help you out, ask.