



Hi graduate friends,

It's easy to feel like you always need to be going-going-going, whether it's completing your coursework, hitting academic milestones, or staying active and social. But this kind of never-ending movement takes some serious energy to sustain and can leave you feeling depleted, stressed, and less motivated in the long term (Chong et al., 2020).

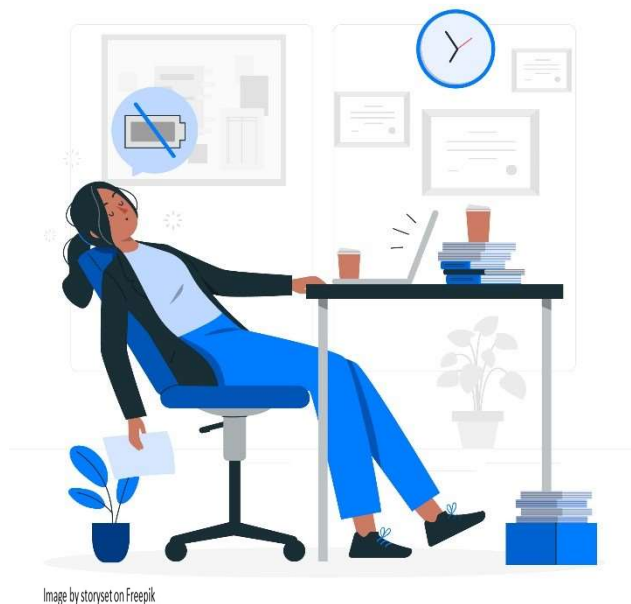


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One way to keep up your energy and get through your long list of tasks and commitments in a healthy and sustainable way is to take breaks. There are many different breaks you can take to recharge your batteries; taking time off can happen throughout your day, in scheduling regular time off on weekends, and in going on vacations (Fritz et al., 2013). However, letting yourself rest is easier said than done, as there are many different reasons why someone might avoid letting themselves

rest. These include feelings of having too much work to do to warrant a break, not wanting to “lose momentum,” or to reduce the amount of work that would need to be done in the future (Phan & Beck, 2023).

Not every break needs to be a week-long stint poolside; taking normal breaks throughout your day is both effective and necessary for your overall well-being, and I'll be focusing on these kinds of breaks moving forward in this GRADUpdATE!

So, how might you be able to incorporate breaks into your day? One of the simplest ways to start building breaks into your day is to intentionally schedule yourself a daily lunch break, which typically ranges anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes. Instead of taking your lunch or snack back to your desk to munch and type at the same time, try eating somewhere else. You can try turning this into a game to discover new places on campus (or wherever you live if you typically work from home). Feel

free to ask one of your friends or colleagues to join you on this lunch break adventure as an accountability buddy. This can also be a great way to build and maintain social connections with your peers; positive social interactions are not only energizing, but they also improve feelings of relatedness and belonging to community (Bosch et al., 2017; Quinn et al., 2012).

Another option is to build in “microbreaks” throughout your day, typically lasting no more than 15 minutes at a time. This time away might be spent going on a short walk, finding a quick guided meditation either on YouTube or in an app like Calm or Balance, or chatting with a friend. Don’t feel guilty about taking time for yourself—research shows that these kinds of breaks improve performance and productivity in the long run (Fritz et al., 2013; Dababneh et al., 2010)!

So, even though it might be hard to do, make sure to schedule breaks throughout your day. Like building any habit, start small and adjust this advice so that it can work best for you.

See you in the next GRADUpdATE!

Maddie Hertz (she/her/hers), PhD Student, from your [Learning Development & Success](#) team!

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