

12 Ways to Renew Yourself

By Kathleen Barton, MBA

Want to boost your productivity? Just as batteries need recharging, our minds and bodies need recharging as well. If you don't take the time to recharge, you'll likely experience burnout. It's important to find ways to rejuvenate and refresh ourselves. By taking renewal breaks, you'll be more productive, effective and satisfied with your job.

What are some ways to renew yourself? Through vacations, daily personal time, and real-time renewal and relaxation breaks.

Retreats/Vacation

Some workaholics boast about not taking a vacation for years. Others take vacation, but stay in contact with work on a daily basis by checking voicemail and e-mail. This is not a real vacation! We need time to unwind and totally relax. You'll come back feeling refreshed and with more energy to tackle your work. Give yourself the gift of time off work. The organization will survive without you for a week or two.

Daily Personal Time

Take some time each day just for yourself, even if it's just 15-20 minutes. Take time to pray, meditate or say affirmations. Spend time doing something you really enjoy, like reading or walking in nature. Do something that relaxes you, like soaking in a hot bath or enjoying a neck massage. Just 20 minutes will energize you and help you maintain a better frame of mind.

Real-time Renewal Breaks

When you're feeling overloaded with work, it's tempting to skip breaks and work through lunch. However, research shows that those who take frequent breaks are actually more productive in the long run. If you work too long on tasks, the time you need to solve problems increases five-fold. When you start to feel fatigued, take a quick renewal or relaxation break. Here are a few ideas. These will only take a few minutes and will increase your productivity throughout the day.

- **Repeat positive affirmations.** Keep affirmations on your desk. Repeat them regularly. This will help you stay positive.
- **Express gratitude.** Remind yourself of all the things you're thankful for – your family, friends, your home, and even your work. Remember to say “thank you” to those who help you at work.
- **Look for larger meaning and purpose in work activities.** Keep the big picture in mind. Remember why you're performing your work and who you benefit.
- **Perform small acts of kindness.** What can you do to show kindness? Maybe you can buy your co-worker a cup of coffee, bring someone flowers from your garden, or simply hold a door open for someone. Performing acts of kindness will help you feel better about yourself too.
- **Be playful at work.** Tell a joke or tell a co-worker about a funny experience. Laughter can be great medicine.
- **Take a short walk.** Get outside to get some fresh air or just walk the halls to stretch your legs. The exercise, however short, will do you good.

Relaxation Techniques

You can also apply relaxation techniques right at your desk. Here are a few to try.

- **Deep breathing** – After an especially stressful situation, take a few minutes to breathe deeply. Inhale and count to five and then exhale slowly. As you exhale imagine all your tension leaving your body.
- **Stretching** – It helps to stretch tight muscles. If you feel self-conscious stretching in your cubicle, then go to the restroom and do your stretching there.
- **Muscle tension and relaxation** – Most people carry their tension in their neck and shoulders. Tense up those muscles, and then relax them. Repeat this a few times.
- **Visualization** – By using visualization you can take a little vacation in your mind for a few minutes. Imagine yourself on a warm, sandy beach soaking up the sun as you hear the waves crashing.

The next time you're feeling fatigued, try out one of these ideas. And don't forget to plan your next vacation too. Not only will you feel better, but you'll boost your productivity as well.

*Kathleen Barton is a keynote speaker, workshop presenter, and life coach specializing in life purpose, career success, and work-life balance. She is the author of **The Balancing Act: Managing Work & Life** audio/workbook. Kathleen can be reached at www.YourLifeBalanceCoach.com.*