Micro-breaks

Two-minute breaks to take several times a day.

You do not need a holiday to recover from stress. Short breaks, taken often, stop pressure from building. Two minutes every hour or so does more than one long break at the end of an exhausting day.

Breathe
Six slow breaths, with the out-breath longer than the in-breath.

Move
Stand, stretch, roll your shoulders. Walk to the window or up the stairs.

Look far
Rest your eyes on something in the distance for a minute. The sky, a tree, the end of the street.

Step outside
Daylight and fresh air for two minutes, even in the rain.

Drink water
Slowly, away from your screen.

Unclench
Drop your shoulders. Loosen your jaw. Open your hands.

Do one thing slowly
Make a cup of tea and do nothing else while you drink it.

Connect
A short chat with someone about anything that is not work.

Making them happen

- Attach a break to something that already happens: after a call, before opening email, when the kettle boils.
- Set a quiet reminder for the first week.
- Take a proper lunch break, away from your desk, most days.
- Do not use breaks to check your phone. That is more input, not rest.

When in my day	The break I will take

After a week of this, what do I notice by the evening?

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The two-minute reset

A quick way to bring your stress level down a notch, anywhere.

Use this between tasks, before a meeting, or whenever you notice you are wound up.

1. **Stop.** Put down what you are doing. Sit back or stand up.
2. **Feet.** Feel both feet flat on the floor.
3. **Shoulders.** Lift them up to your ears, hold for three seconds, and let them drop.
4. **Jaw and hands.** Unclench your teeth. Open your hands.
5. **Breathe.** In gently through the nose for 4. Out slowly for 6. Five times.
6. **Look.** Find three things in the room you had not noticed.
7. **Ask.** "What is the one thing that needs me next?"
8. **Go.** Do that one thing.

When to use it

- [ ] Before I open my email
- [ ] After a difficult call or conversation
- [ ] Before I walk in the door at home
- [ ] When I notice my shoulders are up
- [ ] Before a meeting or presentation
- [ ] When I am about to snap

Try it for a week

When I used it	Stress before (0 to 10)	Stress after (0 to 10)	What I noticed

The cue I will use to remind myself (for example: each time the kettle boils)

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