

EVIDENCE-BASED RECOVERY IN 2-20 MINUTES A DAY

The Micro-Recovery Program

Name / Team / Date



Breath



Walk



Nap



Leaf

The Problem: Stress Accumulates



Chronic low-grade strain

Builds steadily across the workday.



Delayed recovery is insufficient

Waiting for evenings or vacations leaves deficits.



Compounding fatigue

Focus, mood, and overall health decline.



THE METAPHOR

Debt

Strain is like an accruing debt.

**Short strategic deposits prevent
burnout.**

What Is Micro-Recovery?

Brief (2–20 min), deliberate practices that offset stress accumulation during the day



01

Detachment

Mentally switch off from work demands.



02

Relaxation

Lower physiological arousal levels.



03

Mastery

Small acts of learning and control.



04

Control

Choose your own recovery pathway.

The Evidence at a Glance

RESEARCH-BACKED MICRO-INTERVENTIONS



Micro-breaks (≤ 10 min)

↓ fatigue, ↑ vigor

Meta-analysis, 2022



Cyclic sighing (5 min/day)

Beat mindfulness for mood improvement

Stanford, 2023



2-min walks each hour

↓ post-meal glucose **24%**

Dunstan, 2012



10–20 min naps

↑ performance ~**34%**, alertness ~**54%**

NASA



20–30 min in nature

↓ salivary cortisol levels

Hunter, 2019

Program Overview: 4 Weeks

STRUCTURED ROADMAP FOR HABIT BUILDING



WEEK 1

Anchor

Breathing + basic breaks established daily.



WEEK 2

Build

Movement integration + nature exposure.



WEEK 3

Deepen

Naps, NSDR, and relaxation protocols.



WEEK 4

Personalize

Build your custom recovery menu.

Week 1: Anchor

FOUNDATIONAL BREATHING & DAILY ROUTINES

BREATHING MECHANICS

Inhale

Deep nasal intake



Top-up inhale

Second short sip



Long exhale

Slow, relaxed release



MORNING

5 min/day

Cyclic sighing practice every morning.



CADENCE

Every ~90 min

2-min break: stand, gaze far, move.



TRACKING

Adherence Tracking

Track daily checkmarks (✓/x).

Week 2: Build

MOVEMENT INTEGRATION & LIGHT EXPOSURE



CADENCE

Movement Snack

2–3× / day

2–5 min of squats, stairs, or brisk walking.



OUTDOORS

Midday Outdoors

10–15 min

10–15 min outside or beside a bright window.



VISION

20-20-20 Rule

Every 20 min

Every 20 min, look 20 ft away for 20 seconds.

Week 3: Deepen

DEEP RECOVERY & EVENING TRANSITIONS



AFTERNOON

1–3 pm Energy Dip

10–20 min practices

- 10–20 min NSDR / yoga nidra (guided audio)
- 10–20 min power nap (*under 25 min, before 3 pm*)



EVENING

High-Stress Evenings

3 min protocol

3-min progressive muscle relaxation protocol to transition out of work mode.

Week 4: Personalize

SELF-TRACKING & SUSTAINABLE HABITS



TRACKING

A/B Testing

Rate 1–10

Rate energy & tension 1–10 before and after practices.



TOOLKIT

Recovery Menu

Custom Options

Build a custom menu of what works reliably for you.



ROUTINE

Shutdown Ritual

4-Step Sequence

Top 3 tasks → close tabs → closing phrase → phone away.

The Daily Template

Structured Recovery & Routine Flow



5 MIN

Morning

Cyclic sighing or daylight walk



2 MIN

Every ~90 min

Micro-break



3 MIN

Mid-morning

Movement snack



20 MIN

Lunch

Screen-free meal + outside time



10-20 MIN

1-3 pm

NSDR or power nap



5 MIN

End of workday

Shutdown ritual

Quick Protocols (Cheat Sheet)

EVIDENCE-BASED MICRO-RECOVERY INTERVENTIONS



Cyclic sighing

Inhale + top-up inhale → long exhale × 5–10

INSTANT CALM



3-min PMR

Tense muscle groups 5 s → release 10 s

TENSION RELEASE



Movement snack

20 squats / 2 flights stairs / 3-min walk

ENERGY BOOST



NSDR / Nap

Guided yoga nidra audio or brief rest, 10–20 min

DEEP RECOVERY



Shutdown ritual

Top tasks → close tabs → closing phrase → phone away

WORKDAY CLOSE

Measuring Success

SYSTEMATIC TRACKING & DESIRED OUTCOMES



BASELINE & TRACKING

Baseline & Weekly Track

3–7 day baseline. Track weekly ratings (energy, tension, detachment) + adherence percentage.

CORE METRICS MONITORED

Energy

Weekly capacity rating

Tension

Stress & strain level

Detachment

Work disconnect ability

Adherence %

Routine completion



TARGET OUTCOMES

Target Outcome

≥75% adherence + ≥1-point energy gain by Week 4.
Validated tools like WHO-5 optional.

≥75%

Adherence Goal

Consistent practice
benchmark

+1 Pt

Energy Gain

Targeted by Week 4



Validated Tools Support

Optional WHO-5 well-being index integration for formal assessment.

Important Caveats

BOUNDARIES, LIMITATIONS & BEST PRACTICES



Systemic Boundaries

Micro-recovery manages strain — it does **not fix chronic workload overload** or systemic autonomy problems.

CRITICAL LIMIT



Professional Support

Persistent exhaustion or burnout signs require professional support and organizational solutions.

MEDICAL & ORG



Timing & Flexibility

Naps must remain before 3 pm and under 25 min; "every 90 min" is a heuristic, not a rigid law.

PRACTICE GUIDE

Start Today

3 SIMPLE STEPS TO BUILD YOUR ROUTINE



STEP 01

Pick One Practice

5 min of cyclic sighing



STEP 02

Tomorrow Morning

Do it tomorrow morning



STEP 03

First Checkmark

Mark your first checkmark ✓



"Small deposits, made often, beat rare withdrawals."

Questions? Full reference list available upon request.