

5 tips for switching off at the end of the day



WPA

It can be tough to switch off after a long day. Your mind is still racing with thoughts of everything you need to do, and it can be hard to relax. Here are five tips for how to calm your mind and unplug from work at the end of the day. Especially important as more of us move to remote and hybrid working.

1 | Keep your evenings phone free

We know how tempting it is, but try to resist checking your phone before bed. It will only make you more alert and stressed out. Your body needs time to wind down before bedtime. Research has found that people who switch off their phones before 9pm sleep better than those who don't, because they're less distracted throughout the night.

Constantly looking at brightly lit screens like phones and TVs also inhibits the production of melatonin, the sleep hormone, which lets our bodies know when it's time for bed. Dimming the lights in the evening (even with things like dimmers or using candles) can help boost how sleepy we feel, and how well we sleep.

2 | Create a relaxing end-of-day routine

A shutdown ritual is a predetermined set of tasks you do in the evening before bed. It helps tell your mind it's time to wind down, so you can relax before bedtime. There is no single perfect shutdown ritual for everyone but here are some ideas that might help get your creative juices flowing.

Have an evening routine in which you gradually lower the energy levels in your body. For example, turn off the lights one by one in your home, do some deep breathing exercises or have a warm bath. When you are ready to wind down how about turning on your bedside lamp and reading a book for 20 minutes?

Fill your mind with positive thoughts before you switch off for the night – how was your day? How can you improve tomorrow? What are you grateful for? Create your own shutdown ritual and reap the physical, mental and emotional benefits.

3 | Set specific intentions for tomorrow

Another way to switch off is to set an intention for how you want your day to go. This involves reflecting on how the current and previous days went and how you can make tomorrow better.

It might sound like a lofty goal, but it really does work. Setting an intention gets you thinking proactively about how you want to feel at the end of the day instead of obsessing over how much there is left to do. Plus, research says that writing down intentions improves focus and elevates energy levels.

You can create or choose from a list of daily intentions or simply pick one area where you'd like more success tomorrow, such as "I will have a productive morning" or "I will be kind to myself and acknowledge how far I've come." Taking a few minutes before you go to bed to set an intention can help put your mind at ease.

4 | Don't let work invade your personal life

Work life can be stressful, but how about coming home from a hard day at the office and still having to deal with the stress of work?

You're probably thinking that you can just ignore your mobile phone or computer. Unfortunately, it isn't that simple. However, it is possible to reduce how much work chat interferes with your private life so you can relax during your downtime without worrying about deadlines and figures. Try turning off work notifications and checking them only during work hours, rather than constantly struggling to maintain healthy boundaries between your personal and professional lives.

If you're not ready to put your work out of sight, then at least minimise how often you check your electronic devices by leaving them in another room. This way if there are any urgent messages, you'll still hear your phone ring and you can excuse yourself from evening plans if necessary.

5 | Practice mindfulness before bed

Have you ever tried meditating before bed? Practising mindfulness helps release tension by making you pay attention to how your body feels through a relaxing routine of stretches and breathing exercises. That way you can reach a clearheaded state that will make sleeping easier.

The easiest way to practise mindfulness? Sit still for a few minutes with your eyes closed while focusing on breathing techniques. New to meditation? There are plenty of free online resources for beginners. Practising mindfulness in the evening is proven to help you sleep better at night. It puts your body in a state of self-awareness and helps you quieten your body and mind.

Why not try it tonight?

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