

Time to Yourself

Everyone needs some time each day to be alone. It is good to have some time when you can just relax, take slow deep breaths and separate yourself from the stress of the day. A little break from reality can help you to recharge and take control of the day. “Not having enough time to focus on yourself can contribute to mental distress,” said a spokeswoman for the Mental Health Foundation.

Michael McKee, Ph.D., a psychologist and stress-management specialist at the Cleveland Clinic believes that “if you take just fifteen minutes each day to relax, your body will thank you in many ways. You'll lower your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen consumption. Your brain will drift into a quiet zone, allowing you to mentally recharge. You develop tools so that the time alone not only recharges your battery so you have more energy, but it also teaches you a skill which enables you to be less stressed. So when someone comes along and pushes your buttons during the day, you can take a slow, deep breath and say, 'I can leave my body out of this and maybe even smile a little and get over it.'” By constantly keeping busy and never allowing yourself a moment of rest during the day, you are not only cheating yourself but everyone else around you. We all need a quiet, peaceful time to reflect and gather our thoughts.

Having trouble breaking away from everyday life for a recharging session? Try these suggestions:

- Make sure the members of your household know you are taking a break and should not be disturbed.
- Find a quiet, out of the way space you can use consistently as your retreat area.
- Light a few candles or burn incense. Smell is a very strong sense and can help you forget where you are in the present.
- Have calming objects around such as mementos from a stress free vacation.
- Listen to a relaxation CD/music.
- Turn down harsh, artificial lighting.