

Positive Study Break Activities:

When deciding what to do during your study breaks, always keep in mind that different methods work for different people. It's a good idea to vary different break activities to find which is the most effective in refreshing you.

If an activity makes it difficult to transition back into your studies, it's likely not the right break activity for you.

Remember, a good study break should never be another way to procrastinate!

Additionally, you should **set a timer** so that you can space out your study breaks and so that you never take a break for longer than necessary. When the timer sounds, you know it's time to get back to work.

Take a Walk –

No, we don't mean around the library. Get outside and get some fresh air, no matter how short the walk may be. Getting your body moving helps blood flow, which is going to help re-energize you. Any form of exercise will be beneficial to your physical and mental well-being – during your study breaks or otherwise.

Put On Some Music

While classical music has a particularly soothing effect — it slows heart rate, lowers blood pressure and even decreases levels of stress hormones — any music that you love will flood your brain with feel-good neurochemicals like dopamine.

Stretch –

You're likely tense from the anxiety of studying plus, when you study, you sit in the same position for long periods of time. Taking some time to stretch your muscles out can help relax you more than you know! Look up yoga poses like Eagle, Downward-facing dog, child pose.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Start with your toes and work your way up: tighten your foot muscles as much as you can, then relax them. Make your way up, tightening and relaxing each muscle until you've finished with your face. It may seem silly, but this practice can help reduce anxiety and stress and is often recommended to patients who suffer from depression and anxiety disorders.

Watch A Viral Video

A good laugh is a fine relaxation technique. "Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain," explains the Mayo Clinic. Counterintuitively, laughter first activates your stress response and then deactivates it, creating a kind of "rollercoaster" that leads to a feeling of relaxation. Watching youtube videos of cats helps calm people even those who don't like cats.

Chew Gum

Chewing gum doesn't just make your breath better — it can relieve anxiety, improve alertness and reduce stress during episodes of multitasking.

Tidy Up –

It can be difficult to focus amidst chaos. And, though you should never clean as a means of procrastination, it can be relaxing to tidy up during one of your regularly scheduled study breaks. Then, you can return to your studies in a relaxed setting – sans pigsty.

Phone a Friend –

When you haven't spoken to anyone for hours and you begin to enter zombie-mode, calling someone to actually have a conversation out loud. It takes your mind off the task at hand and helps you stay, well, human.

Take a Quick Shower –

Everyone feels invigorated when they are fresh out of the shower. Seriously, it's like you've been reborn. During your next study break, take a five or ten minute shower to help revitalize and refresh your body and mind. We also recommend you sing in there at the top of your lungs, but there's no reason for that, other than fun.

Run a Quick Errand –

If you find that your mind is racing between your studies and your to-do list, running a quick errand can help you take a break *and* knock something off your list at the same time.

Cook a Healthy Meal –

This is a way to knock out two tasks at once: a low-thought level activity to take your mind off studying for a few minutes *and* allowing yourself to take breaks to eat something healthy. While it's easy to order carry-out, taking the time to make yourself a simple healthy meal (whether it's on a stove or a George Foreman grill) will benefit your body and your mindset.

Meditate, visualize, breathe deeply–

During one of your scheduled breaks, take a few mindful minutes to meditate in a calm and quiet setting. Picture yourself on vacation in a beautiful spot and enjoy "being" there for a few minutes. Focus on some breathing exercises, which can really revitalize and invigorate the mind so that it's ready to absorb more information!

Express Yourself through Creativity–

Creative activities, like coloring, drawing, crafting or playing music. Sure, it may seem juvenile to color but, if it works, why not?

3 minute dance party- a quick dance off with a friend can boost energy, clear your mind and boost your mood – even if you aren't artistic. Crank some tunes and Shake it off!

Write down 3 things you are grateful for-

Focusing on the positive can have benefits and put things in the proper perspective.

Exam day

Create a playlist to get you focused and ready and listen while you walk to the exam

Eat something with sugar right beforeYour brain is a glucose hog, sugar helps prime it to work.

Center yourself before you start with relaxed breathing or chew some gum

What to Avoid:

There are also some things you should avoid doing on your study breaks. The wrong types of study break activities can hinder your ability to stay attentive and concentrate – exactly the opposite of what you need during study time.

Snacking on Junk Food –

Junk food isn't nutritious and, though it may be easier to order pizza or grab something sugary on the go, it won't provide the necessary benefits to help sustain you and keep you on track.

Taking a Nap –

Taking a nap can actually make you more tired, slow you down or stunt your productivity. If you *must* take a nap during your study break – a quick catnap (not longer than 20 minutes) is the best way to go.

Watching TV, Surfing the Web, Video Games & Other Media-Related Activities –These activities don't aid productivity, in fact, they can hinder it or actually make you feel more tired than you are. Go for an activity that gets you moving, breathing and relaxes your mind without putting it to sleep.

Excessive Caffeine –

Though you may think it's your best friend during finals, too much caffeine has adverse effects and can actually cause you to crash in the end. Positive study break activities help with longer-term focus – not just the spurts of energy that caffeine delivers.

Huge meals –

Though you may wait until you are absolutely *starving*, it's not beneficial for you to eat a large meal if you're looking to continue your studies. Too much food will make you feel tired and lethargic so opt for lighter meals spread out throughout your study process.

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