

EBOOK



Breaking free from hustle culture

Expert tips to balance
self-care with a busy life

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“The truth is, everybody needs help with something – if you don’t, you’re not human. In the past, people felt a need to be stoic in the workplace. But thankfully, that’s changing in favor of a more human approach...Because when a team is happy and healthy, they’re naturally more present at work. And that’s the best environment to spur innovation.”



Michael Held
CEO and Founder
of LifeSpeak

Why is it so hard to make time for ourselves?



[A study from 2017](#) sheds light on the issue: it turns out we like being busy, even when it's to our own detriment.

Researchers at Harvard and Columbia have found that people view being constantly busy as a status symbol. When they created a fictional Facebook user, they discovered people thought she had a higher status and more wealth when she posted about working nonstop than when she posted about her leisure time. The study supports previous research by the University of Chicago which found people like being busy, even when it hurts their productivity.

"People dread idleness, and their professed reasons for activity may be mere justifications for keeping busy."



Christopher Hsee
Professor of Behavioral
Science and Marketing



In a 2017 study, the average US worker had only taken half of their available PTO over the previous 12 months.

A report conducted the following year found Americans had failed to use 768 million PTO days that year, good for a 9% increase over 2017.



In a yearly poll conducted from 1987 to 2011, USA Today found that people reported feeling more busy every successive year.

A 2016 survey found half of Americans claim they usually are doing at least two things at once.



If we're busy all the time, we can't perform the self-maintenance we need to thrive in our personal and professional lives.

The following tips from LifeSpeak experts will help you and your people fight the busy bug and find time for yourselves. With their guidance, anyone can do it.

How to carve out time for self-care

Through her years of helping women find more time for themselves, LifeSpeak expert Dr. Carly Crewe has learned that having more time is not the only solution.



“I have met many women who have plenty of time for self-care activities in their schedule and still struggle to do self-care,” Crewe says. “I have also met women who maintain incredibly busy work and life schedules, but who can reliably exercise, meditate and journal daily. So, what is happening here?”

As she goes on to explain, many people leverage time-saving tricks to free up more time, but then use that time for everything but self-care. Maybe they focus on chores instead or simply entertainment. They don’t view that free time as “the gold they need to really prioritize their own wellness.” So how do you prioritize self-care in your free time?



Dr. Carly Crewe
Psychotherapist

Here's a tip from Crewe: audit your schedule to determine which activities each day are timewasters.

Maybe you spend too much time each evening (or morning, or afternoon) staring blankly at your phone, scrolling social media, YouTube or anything at all just to have something to look at. Maybe when the kids go to bed you immediately turn on the TV and binge Netflix for several hours.

At the start of each week, create a to-do list; be mindful of where you place self-care. It should be near the top of the list. As you identify wasted time in your schedule, slowly replace it with activities or practices that will help you manage your anxious thoughts and practice self-care.

Often, this will mean maximizing mornings or the in-between moments—car rides/bus rides, walks—to practice a little meditation or engage in a hobby that is meaningful to you, like reading a book or listening to a podcast. Of course, many of the time wasters you may identify will be centered around our constant, pervasive use of technology.



Dodging digital pitfalls

Digital wellness educator Lisa Pender often poses a simple question to her audiences: if you could add seven extra years to your life, how would you spend your time? Can you guess the most common responses?

“I’d take a trip around the world.”

“I’d spend more time with my family.”

“I’d engage with a hobby I’ve never had time for before.”

That’s it. Those are the three answers. She’s never heard someone say they’d watch more YouTube videos or take more Zoom calls.



Lisa Pender
Digital Wellness Educator



We can’t escape technology—and many of us wouldn’t want to. It can be incredibly convenient and even fulfilling. But our relationship with modern technology is nevertheless complicated and questions like Pender’s prove it. Finding a healthier balance between our digital lives and our in-person lives can make both more enjoyable—and can free up a lot of time for taking care of ourselves.

Here are two of her tips for making the most of our tech time.

1

Use your phone with intention

Modern technology has this way of sucking us in. We pick up a phone thinking all we're going to do is reply to a text or check the weather...and before we know it half an hour has gone by and we're scrolling, staring at nothing. Intentional technology use isn't easy. We need to apply enough awareness to know when we've been sucked down a digital rabbit hole we didn't mean to enter. But with enough practice, "intentional usage only will help to avoid the addictive, on-the-go, endless scrolling behaviors that are not productive" and that take away time we could be using for self-care.



2

Create digital boundaries

Some days our phones just won't stop vibrating. Even when we put them down to read or go for a walk, they suck us back with that quiet "zzzzt." We can hear it anywhere—on a busy street, in a movie theatre, at a birthday party. Phones are designed to not only keep our attention but attract it in the first place. "We are constantly bombarded with emails, texts messages and app notifications, all of which can lead to overwhelm and digital overload," Pender says. As countermeasures, we can use our phone's settings to silence notifications during certain periods of the day or turn them off entirely. If possible, we can also place our phone in a different room or part of the house when we really want to focus or relax, so even the sight of it won't tempt us to re-engage.

Implementing these simple strategies will help you and your people spend your time with and without technology more effectively. The final step is to make sure that free time is working for you and not against you.

Ensuring rest is an effective recharge

Once we carve out time for ourselves, we need to know how to soothe ourselves. The problem is many of us don't really know ourselves or trust ourselves to know what we need at any given moment.

As life coach and LifeSpeak expert Jenny Tryansky says, “many of us shut down the part of ourselves that knows what we need. We think that our answers are outside of us, or that other people are doing it better than us so we should mimic their ways. But if we don't trust ourselves, we completely negate the ‘self’ part of self-care.”

We need to be mindful about what we need so we can rest and recharge in ways that are specific to us. Because there isn't just one type of rest. In fact, Tryansky lists seven: physical, mental, emotional, social, creative and sensory. Interestingly, many of these rest categories can be treated actively or passively, depending on the individual.



Jenny Tryansky

ICF Professional Certified Coach



Social rest might involve connecting with others for those who have been so caught up in their work and family life they haven't had time for a conversation with a friend over dinner. But for those who have recently been swept away by a wave of office socials and birthday parties, social rest might involve a weekend at home alone, reconnecting with the inner self. Similarly, activities like meditation or journaling can facilitate mental rest, but so can running or another form of moderate to vigorous exercise. It's up to the individual to look inward and determine which type of rest is best for them.

But be careful, Tryansky warns—“there's a difference between true rest and recreation.” Watching TV or YouTube might be fun, but that doesn't mean it provides us with the rest our bodies and minds need.

The future is bright

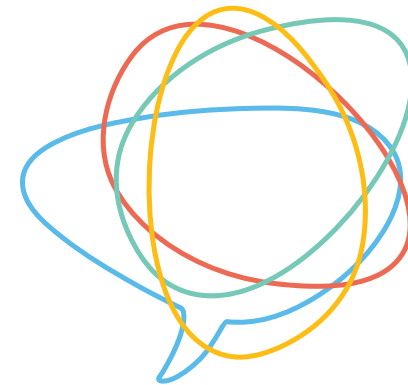
It's Sunday morning. You pour a fresh cup of coffee and take a deep breath. The house is quiet. You sip your coffee quietly and then step out for a walk. This time spent alone is rejuvenating. It fuels the rest of your busy day, preparing you for the week ahead.

So why are these simple moments so elusive?

At LifeSpeak, we help organizations and employees answer questions like this one. We provide the tools to manage, improve and overcome the full spectrum of mental health challenges. When we treat mental health issues with the care they demand, we can rise to meet any challenge. We create productive workplaces and harmonious communities.

The good news is change is coming. Organizational leaders are finally giving mental health and wellbeing challenges the attention they deserve. Executives are championing mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Employees are expecting support—and receiving it.

We see a future just around the corner where everyone has the support they need to thrive at home and at work. We invite you to take part in our vision.



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Read more about self-care and other mental health solutions on our [blog](#).