

12 Micro-Habits Of High Excellence / High Ease Leaders

Use this as a reference menu of best practices used by leaders who perform with a high level of excellence, but also a high level of ease. Practice adding these to your existing routines one at a time and enjoying the benefits at each step.

1 Thought Download

If you find yourself feeling a certain type of way that isn't helpful, get those swirling thoughts out of your head and on to paper. This can help you see them more clearly and release them. Even if you throw this paper away, it immediately diffuses the power these unhelpful thoughts have over your emotions and the actions you choose next. Remember, thoughts are not facts and just because they appeared doesn't mean we have to believe them.

2 Gratitude

In the first moment you have consciousness when waking in the morning, before any devices, no matter where your mind naturally goes, practice taking it to gratitude. What are you grateful for? How are you blessed? Characteristics you have, relationships with others, circumstances in your life are all fair game. This counteracts our brains wiring to scan for problems which can often take us to a place of worry or anxiety. Practice gratitude to start your day every day and eventually your brain will do it automatically. Of course, you can do this as often as you like throughout the day or at end of day too.

3 Mindfulness

We may think meditation is for someone else or that we could never clear our mind (which is impossible anyway). I invite you to a practice of mindfulness here for the pure benefits of actively directing your mind. Find a comfortable spot, close your eyes, and focus on your breath as a simple physical sensation that is always with you. Notice the inhale and exhale. Whenever you notice your mind wandered to another topic, without judgment gently bring it back to your breath. This helps you grow awareness and power over our mind's tendency to wander and jump from thought to thought.

4 Get Physical

Hydrate with water throughout the day and actually track it. Our brains and bodies are made up of mostly water and need this for proper function. Move your body more than you are now, remembering that we move it or lose it, mobility, flexibility, and strength. A simple walk outside in fresh air and sunlight (even when it appears cloudy) has tremendous benefit for your body and mind. Instead of the coffee or afternoon snack, opt for a brisk walk outside.

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Story Soundtrack

We tend to have a running soundtrack of thoughts we think to ourselves and a set of greatest hits that we come back to often. Pay attention to find out what is playing most often. Is it a story of how busy you are? A story of being trapped in your situation with no ability to make a different choice? A story that you should be doing better? Take notice of any unhelpful stories and rewrite them. You can take any horror story of your past or current state and instead tell your victory story. How did or will you overcome adversity and learn from it? Imagine telling the story to your by people facing the same situation to inspire them. That's the only version worth repeating to yourself.

6

Drama or Facts

A skill that anyone can build is pausing to evaluate whether their current assessment is based on drama or facts. We often find ourselves fighting with reality, wishing a current fact would be different. Our brain is constantly offering sentences as though it's the news, when really it's just a dramatic take on it. Discern what is fake news in your own assessment of things.

7

Just Breathe

Stress and anxiety is a part of our lives and may be an epidemic in our society. Use simple tools to offset the short attention spans created by media around us. When we feel the stress is getting the better of us, do this simple box breathing technique. Breathe in for four seconds (imagine drawing a line up to reflect the breath in), hold for four seconds (draw the line horizontally to the right as the top of the box as you hold), breathe out for four seconds (draw a line down as you exhale), and hold for four seconds (draw a horizontal line back to start to complete the box). This is what the Navy SEALs use for stress regulation.

8

Visual Focus

Choose a visual and tactile item to have in your workspace that grounds you in your big reason why, your purpose for your work or your inspiration for how you show up. It may be a religious item or a simple stone with a word or phrase on it. Look at or hold this small, physical representation with intention even for just a brief moment as a way to ground yourself in what is important and your own identity, interrupting the flurry of the day.

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9 Labeling Emotions

It's common to stuff any difficult emotions that arise rather than facing them. As a result, we often lack the ability to accurately recognize and name the exact emotion we are feeling. This prevents us from finding the thought behind the emotion to release it. Naming an emotion also helps to normalize it as just a natural reaction in our body that doesn't have to stay or dominate the day. Use an emotion wheel found online to help get specific about what you are feeling. Ask yourself why that emotion is here to tell you and then let it go.

10 Scheduled Rest

Rest is of clear benefit for professional athletes such that they are methodical about scheduling it. We can follow their lead knowing that to be our best, both in our performance and satisfaction, we need rest. Schedule technology-free timeslots and zones to allow yourself to fully wind down. Maybe it's meals with your partner or family and an hour before bed. Maybe one day a week, you have zero agenda other than rest and relaxation. Book this time in your calendar and honor it as untouchable.

11 Time Audit

It seems we don't have enough time in the day to do what we need or want to do. We all have 24 hours though some seem to make it count more. To know for sure where your time is going, do a time audit. Note what you are doing and for how long over the course of a day. Tally up what time is spent on things that didn't advance your goals. I like to assess how much time I dedicate to my health, relationships, and career as the superset of categories. Now that you know what's taking your time, you can design tomorrow with intention.

12 Service

With more master micro-habits in your routine, you can feel more enabled to turn your impact outward. It's said that you are unable to experience suffering when you are serving others. Consider who you are using your talent and energy to benefit and who else you may want to add. One-time or regular acts of kindness for others can be the most fulfilling part of our lives. Counterintuitively, this can be a new allocation of time and effort, but one that comes back to use three-fold as a source of renewable energy from the satisfaction of being in service of others.

12 MASTER MICRO-HABITS

OF HIGH-EXCELLENCE, HIGH-EASE BUSINESS LEADERS

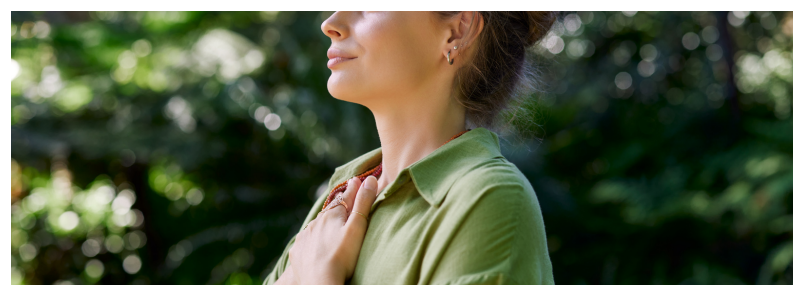
Thought Download

Get swirling thoughts out of your head and on to paper to see them more clearly and release them.



Gratitude

Counteract your brain's tendency to seek out problems by intentionally practicing gratitude.



Mindfulness

Focus your attention on your breath and gently bring your mind back anytime it wanders.



Get Physical

More hydration, movement, and time outdoors benefits the body and mind.



Story Soundtrack

Rewrite the horror story on replay to a victory story that inspires.



Drama or Facts

Check for fake news from your brain to neutralize your surroundings.



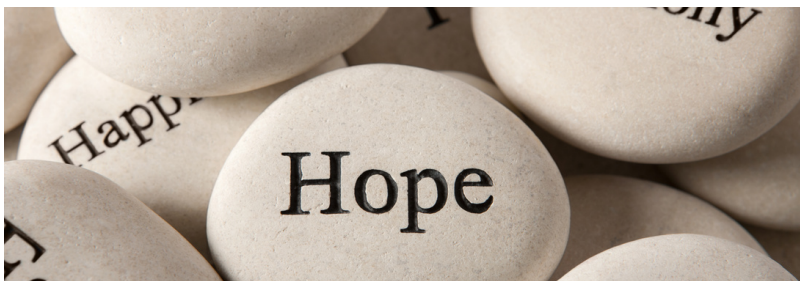
Just Breathe

Box breathing helps Navy SEALs regulate their stress, and it works for us too.



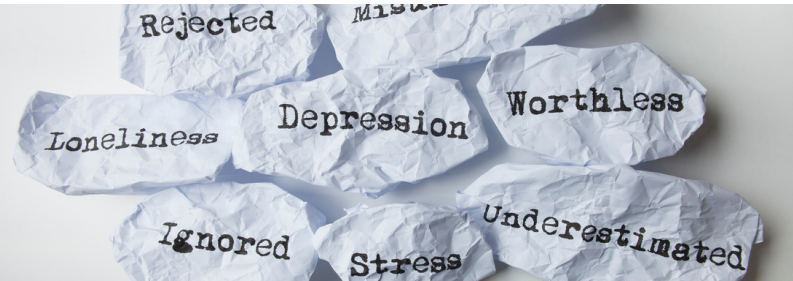
Visual Focus

Use a visual cue that you can touch or hold to ground yourself throughout the day.



Labeling Emotions

Name difficult emotions to extract value from them before releasing it.



Scheduled Rest

Plan your breaks in your schedule and honor them to reap the benefits.



Time Audit

Track where your time is going and design where you will allocate it going forward.



Service

Turn your energy and effort outward to help others for more fulfillment.



Practice these one at a time until routine, and then move on to the next

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