

Ask the expert Pausing

Adding intentional pauses into your work day can help boost creativity, improve performance, increase your impact and positively transform your relationship with time.

Why pausing matters

- ☞ Taking pauses can boost your focus and productivity, leading to higher-quality work
- ☞ It supports and sustains your energy over the long term, which is important in squiggly careers.

"Without pausing to reflect, we risk being swept along by habit or inertia, doing what's most at hand rather than what's truly important."



[Robert Poynton, author, Do Pause](#)

Coach yourself questions

What small pause can I add to my day to feel more refreshed and focused?



What would help me to make pausing a priority for how I work?



Ideas for action



1. Add small pauses into your day

Identify moments in your daily routine where you can introduce brief pauses to create space and reset your mind. These could be as simple as:

- ☞ taking a deep breath before answering the phone
- ☞ stepping away from your desk for a walk
- ☞ having a screen-free moment in the evening.

Recognise that even small breaks – such as a slow walk or a hot cup of tea – can help recharge your energy and focus.

2. Do the scanner exercise

Reflect on the time and pace of your typical work day. This exercise can help you visualise how you spend your time and identify areas where you might want to slow down.

Start by sketching out:

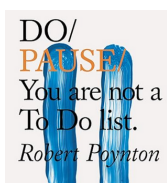
- ☞ Circles to represent moments of space in your day (*slow, spacious moments*)
- ☞ Lines for moments of speed in your day (*busy, fast-paced moments*)

Sketching your day or week can give you insight into whether you're prioritising space or speed and will help you assess if you need to make changes to your pace.

3. Create 'speed bumps' in your routines

Design daily 'speed bumps' to break your routine and slow down. These types of pauses interrupt habits, helping you to reflect more. It also helps create more space for fresh ideas.

Recommended resources



Do Pause: You are not a To Do List
by Robert Poynton



The Power of the Pause: Finding Courage in Change
TedX talk by Effie Santos



How pausing increases performance
Helen and Sarah discuss how adding pauses helps to increase performance and productivity on episode #383 of Squiggly Careers.