



By: [Kathy Oneto](#) Learn More at: SustainableAmbition.com

The Power of Pause

On Different Timeframes

Why Pause?

Why is it important to take breaks? There's a lot of evidence that our "go, go, go" lifestyles end up making us less effective in the long run. We stop seeing clearly. We aren't our best selves. We are less productive. I know this all too well, even though I'm addicted to crossing items off my to do list.

In Arianna Huffington's book, "Thrive," she references a lot of research that confirms this point, such as:

- "According to a Harvard Medical School study, an astounding 96 percent of leaders said they felt burnt out."
- "Women in stressful jobs have a nearly 40 percent increased risk of heart disease, and a 60 percent greater risk of diabetes."
- "Sleep deprivation negatively impacts our mood, our ability to focus, and our ability to access higher-level cognitive functions: the combination of these factors is what we generally refer to as mental performance,' say Drs. Stuart Quan and Russell Sanna."
- Linda Stone, who previously worked at Apple and Microsoft, found that: "She would hold her breath for short bursts of time. So she dubbed it 'email apnea.'" She found in a study that she conducted that 80 percent of participants experienced the same thing. (I have to say, I'd fall into that group!)

So, despite my own tendencies towards workaholism, I am a firm believer in taking time off and disconnecting. Sometimes we really just need to take a break, and we'd be better for it.

Why learn to take Pauses on different timeframes?

I know that not everyone is in a position to take an extended period of time off. I wasn't for 5 years. Yet, I don't believe this should stop people from taking breaks. Breaks vary in time and length. I was lucky enough to take 7 ½ months off. I realize not everyone is that fortunate.



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So, below are ideas and ways to take sabbaticals of different lengths. Print these out, especially the daily and weekly pauses to have as a simple reminder.

Ideas & Ways to Take Pauses on Different Timeframes

On the hour or in the moment

- Take 5 deep breaths at the top of every hour.
- When stopped at a stop light or standing in line somewhere, don't grab your phone. Instead take 5 deep breaths.
- Take a few moments to go back to an experience you loved. Really get it into your mind and into your body.
- Note 3 blessings or 3 things you are grateful for.

Daily

- Take anywhere from 5-60 minutes for yourself. Do something that makes you happy. Go for a walk. Exercise. Read a book. Write in a journal. Doodle. Get away from all electronics. Breath. Meditate. Take your pick.
- Carve out time to simply contemplate. Listen to music. Watch nature.

Weekly

- Take anywhere from 1-8 hours for yourself. Indulge in your hobbies. Take time for art. Go for a hike. Take a day trip on your own, with a friend, with your partner, or with one of your children.
- Choose something to explore around one of your curiosities.

Monthly

- Take one weekend day a month for yourself. Indulge in what is going to feed your soul.



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Quarterly / Bi-Annually / Annually

- Take a weekend away each quarter, bi-annually, or annually.
- Do a retreat. Visit a friend. Go camping with friends.
- Hold a friends' retreat.

Close

Pauses and breaks can be powerful no matter the length. Don't forget to take them.

Want more on the power of pauses? Check out [Robert Poyton's book, "Do-Pause."](#)

Or, read my article on, ["Take a Break."](#)

Or, check out my full ["How to Sabbatical" Guide](#).