

Hustle Recovery

This isn't a story of work-life balance via unplugging. This is a story of maintaining your momentum so you can crush all the career goals you've ever had.

By Marissa Gainsburg

Ah, hustle. A word so charged, just

hearing (or seeing) it probably makes you want to put down this magazine and get stuff done. For

your own sake, please don't! Truth is, while a go-go-go approach may seem like the fast track to checking all your professional boxes, you're only setting yourself up to lose steam right before the finish line. "Think of your brain as a muscle. For it to function at its best, it needs recovery time after a long and demanding workout," says Earl Miller, PhD, a professor of neuroscience at MIT. That's what a long week's-even day's-work is: an endurance challenge. Especially for us ladies.

The pressure to live up to our potential not only as individuals but as a gender is very real. Millennial women are more stressed

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than guys—and more than ever before citing work and money as their top strain, per a new survey. In fact, 72 percent copped to never saying no at the office, likely in an attempt to climb the ladder faster.

We get it, but that doesn't mean the approach is effective. Most of us have witnessed how the constant grind dings our health: We wind up sick, retreating from friends and family, or blowing off the gym in favor of bed. It also thwarts our best work efforts, because in a race to do it all, we multitask, which leads to greater error correction, not greater productivity. The result? More stress and feelings of failure, two mental health bummers.

Your solve: Keep those aspirations high, but learn to make the most of your on daysand off ones. We've got your power plan.

> Werkin' and crazed? Nope, actually not synonymous.



Marathon workdays (ya know, the kind where you barely have time to pee) are sometimes inevitable. But whenever possible, employ a HIIT-style approach to your agenda. suggests Mark Struczewski, a productivity specialist and podcaster in Houston. Assign a specific time increment to a single important task-30 or 45 minutes works well for most people-then switch to a lower-intensity (yet still necessary) chore, like answering emails or organizing your desk, for the same duration. If you haven't finished the earlier task, go back to it for, yep, the identical length of time. "You're calibrating your schedule to match your natural attention span, so you're making the most of your brainpower," says Struczewski. In other words, by working in preset chunks of time and allowing your mind the equivalent of "active rest breaks," you get a fresh dose of energy for your most pressing responsibilities instead of draining the tank until you've

hit the proverbial wall.



ACTUALLY PENCIL IN FREE TIME

Few things are scarier than a maxedout schedule, but fear not: "Seeing all your events—even an hour of reading or a puppy playdate—can reduce stress, because it gives equal weight to enjoyable activities," Struczewski says. "You'll be less likely to blow off the stuff that chills you out." You also train your mind not to freak at the sight of a swamped day, since your M-F schedules all look more or less the same. Still overwhelmed by the action? Try colorcoding. Use soft shades for flexible pursuits, bold ones for must-happens.



PLAY SECRETARY FOR SOMEONE ELSE

As overachievers, we tend to have higher expectations for ourselves than for others. So when creating your weekly schedule, pretend you're doing it for your boss or mom. Would you feel guilty asking so much of her, or be surprised if she's overwhelmed? "Not only does this exercise help you be more realistic about what you're asking of yourself, but it can also take the personal attachments out of your responsibilities—like your anxiety about having to give a presentation," says Miller. When we're less emotional, we make better decisions and perform at a higher level.



► We heart our two-day breaks from the office as much as the next girl, but using them purely for having fun or catching up on sleep only makes Monday seem that much worse. "If you spend just 20 minutes on Saturday or Sunday creating a to-do list for the week, or at least for Monday, you'll feel more in control, which is key to starting off strong and getting more done," Miller explains. You essentially set yourself up to think of weekends as a chance to regroup and recharge—a subtle mental shift that can help you feel less depleted.



STOP FUTURE-TENSE WHINING

► We're all guilty of venting after a rough week. And in small doses (think 10 minutes, not two hours), it's fine, experts say. But something to rid yourself of completely? Pre-complaining. "When you say, 'Ugh, this week is going to suck,' you create a self-fulfilling prophecy," Struczewski says. "You're alerting your brain to react to negative situations" say, extra traffic on your commute-"which raises your stress level." A better thought: *I can't wait to see what challenges I overcome this week.* You'll build confidence, not dread, and help quiet those inevitable Sunday scaries.