

How to wind down and switch off

Winding down after a day at work, or a day when you have been on the go, can be one of the hardest things to do. Multiply this over a few days, a week, or more, and it can seem nigh impossible. Here's 5 tips to get you started.

Think transition

Remember it's a transition to get from where you are to being more chilled and relaxed. A transition means that it goes in stages. Concentrate more on the next stage and what might help with that, rather than the end result.

You can do things to help the transition like being active e.g. exercise (I find I need high intensity exercise a few times a week), talking it out, or doing an activity that takes your mind off whatever you have been doing. You can also use calming methods like relaxation, a cup of tea, meditation, etc.

Switching off switches

Do things that gives a signal to you body, mind and emotions that it's time to switch off. Someone I know used walking out the door at work as a signal that work was over, another changing out of their 'out and about clothes', another would repeat to themselves "down tools", another used the drive home as going from 'on the go' space, and re-orientating towards the new space they wanted to be in. (Thinking of it as changing gears can be useful metaphor)

Realign your priorities and what's important

Consciously remind yourself that the most important thing to do at the moment is to relax, switch off, be with your family or friends, make tea, or whatever it is that you're doing. Know that is is the healthiest and most productive thing you can do, as the 'on the go' mind may not understand this. It makes you more present, replenished, happier, and able to concentrate better.

Don't sweat not switching off

The more you try, the more you worry about not switching off, the harder it can be to achieve. It's because 'trying' and 'doing' are probably characteristics of the space you want to move from. Just take a breath, tell yourself it's ok to be as you are, and be kind towards how you are.

Switch of during the day

Leaving it to the end of the day to switch off can be too late - it can really have taken hold by then.

Take time during the day to switch off, even if it's just for a moment. Pause, step back, take a breath, widen and relax your focus, and tune into your heart and body. Being aware of where you are at, is really useful. Remember, it doesn't have to be for long for it to make a significant difference.

What works for you?