"It’s okay to take a break". Good study breaks are as important as good study moments. In fact, study breaks have a positive effect on motivation and wellbeing, but also on concentration and focus. Our ability to concentrate varies from person to person and there are several factors that can interfere with attention span and complicate focus while studying, such as stress, fatigue and distractions. So by maintaining a healthy balance between studying and study breaks, you will not only allow yourself the necessary relaxation, but you will also increase the productivity of your study moments!

**STUDY BREAK MUST HAVEs**

**PLAN YOUR BREAKS**
It is important to plan your breaks. This way, you will guard for yourself a healthy and productive balance between studying and taking breaks. The Pomodoro technique can be a useful technique to help you schedule your study and break time (e.g. 25 min study, 5 min break).

**BREAK = RELAXATION**
Remind yourself that your break serves as a moment of relaxation to take a break from your studying. So make full use of this moment (e.g. talking to a good friend on the phone, taking a shower). Taking proper breaks can also help you boost concentration (for more information, see infographic Concentration).

**LEAVE YOUR STUDY SPOT**
Leave your study spot during your break for an optimal moment of relaxation (e.g. take a short walk). When you leave your study spot, you are in fact signalling to your body that it is time to relax.

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**Social media = fastfood for the brain**
The tendency to check your phone during study moments/breaks is often strong. However, did you know that:

- Each notification activates the same reward system as eating chips, for example. This causes us to keep scrolling and procrastinate.
- It is harder for our brain to get back into focus mode after social media use.
- You can limit this use by using a timer or app (e.g. Forest) and/or turning off your notifications.
INSPIRATION FOR ...

... a short break

- **Movement**: Every step counts. Get some fresh air outside or listen to a podcast while walking.
- **Relaxation**: Find a small activity that relaxes you and that you can use during these short breaks (e.g. listening to music, meditation, a cup of tea, going outside...).
- **Social**: A small conversation with someone close to you can work wonders. You can give your parents or best friend a call and have a fun conversation.

... a longer break

- **Movement**: Combine the pleasant with the practical. Take your bike or go by foot to the supermarket and then prepare your delicious meal while listening to music.
- **Relaxation**: Know yourself. Think of a fun, relaxing activity to look forward to during your longer break (e.g. reading a book, playing the guitar, watching a series, playing a board game...).
- **Social**: Meet up with friends for a break (e.g. lunch at the Resto) or try a group lesson from the VUB sports offer.

**TIP**

- **Relaxation**
  - **Abdominal breathing**
    
    With our breathing, we can influence how we feel. By practising abdominal breathing, you can reduce stress and calm your mind and body (see infographic Abdominal breathing).

- **Distraction**
  - **“Feel good”-list**
    
    Make a list of activities you like to do. You can categorise these activities into “small” and “big”. This way, you will always have ideas at hand to fill your study breaks with something fun!

**STUDY BREAK HOTSPOTS ON CAMPUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETTERBEEK</th>
<th>JETTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resto, ‘t Complex, Bar Pilar, Opinio</td>
<td>Resto, The Link, Java Coffee House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Fit, athletics track, pool, BBQ/campfire area</td>
<td>Basic Fit, seats in front of the library, Laarbeek forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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