

RESOURCE

"A cluttered mind is a mind that is reaching its working memory capacity."

It happens when you have to remember too many things at the same time. A mind with a high workload has a diminished capacity for creativity and for experiencing pleasure. It also produces more dull thoughts. In short, most likely your mood goes down and you feel more irritable.



Taking a few minutes to clear a cluttered mind can save you time and aggravation. Try these three tips to get started:

1. Catch yourself

In order to declutter your mind, you first have to notice your state of mind. Next time you feel irritable, or if you feel yourself speeding up in thought or action, or you catch your mood sinking - interrupt yourself for a moment; take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and check-in with yourself:



- How is my mind?
- Is a lot going through my mind?
- Am I jumping from thought to thought?
- Am I not finishing my thoughts?



- How is my body?
- Is it tense?
- Is my jaw tight?
- Are my shoulders hunched?
- Does my neck or back hurt?
- Is my stomach tight?



- How am I reacting towards others?
- Am I distracted?
- Do I have a short fuse?
- Am I irritable?
- Am I quick in speech?

If you answer most of these questions with a "yes", you are likely feeling the stress of mind-clutter. Noticing is the most important step. It gives you the opportunity and the power to act.

2

2. Box Breathing Exercise

Box Breathing is a quick rescue method that you can do anytime, anywhere. It stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system and triggers a relaxation response in your body. Concentrating on your breathing also keeps your mind focused on one task, shifting chaos to organization.

Explanation



Experience



3. Wipe Your Slate Clean with a Brain Dump

Stop your activities. Take a piece of paper or a notes app on your device. Set a timer for 10 minutes and, without thinking further, start writing down all the thoughts in your mind - no matter how random they might seem. Let your thoughts flow to the paper without any judgment. When the timer stops, take a moment, breathe deeply, and then separate the thoughts you have written into four categories:

- To Do's
- Random Ideas
- Worries
- Not To Do's

To improve your sleep and get more relief, you can try repeating this exercise each night, for a week. It seems pretty clear what you can do with "To Do's" and "Ideas", but what about the "Worries"? Try scheduling a space for worry.



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