



Tips for Recharging During Mentally Strenuous Activities

- 1) Get physical exercise on a regular basis. 3x a week for 30 mins
- 2) Take 10 minute breaks periodically during the mentally strenuous work. 10 minutes every hour is a guide.
- 3) Do a relaxation or meditation exercise for 3 minutes at the conclusion of mentally strenuous work.
- 4) Visual the rewards or outcome of the work. Sometimes it helps to make that visualization concrete. (E.g. students can make a 'fake' diploma and post it near their workstation. Or put a picture near the work station of something you are going to buy as a reward for the work.)
- 5) Use self-affirming statements before and after the work. Tell yourself "I can do it" rather than "this is going to be awful". Afterwards, give yourself a pat on the back like "Good job!" rather than being critical "you took way too long on that task".
- 6) Generate positive emotions throughout the task. Think about things that make you happy. Listen to music if you can. Smile (it sounds silly but there is a feedback mechanism in the body and brain. If you smile, you can literally change your mood.)
- 7) Consume "glucose rich" beverages during the task (e.g. fruit juice)

Adapted from "Executive Functions" (2012) by Russell Barkley.