The Human Advantage



Mental Fitness in a Digitally Connected World



Resources

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Objectives

- Explore how AI, social media and digital overload affect attention, stress and wellbeing.

- Learn practical strategies to:
  - Set healthier digital boundaries
  - Protect focus and productivity
  - Balance online and offline life
  - Build resilience and agency

- Leave with tools to use technology more intentionally—at work and at home.



Audience Pulse Check

1) How do you feel about AI?

LOVE IT | HATE IT | PROS + CONS

2) How do you feel about social media?

LOVE IT | HATE IT | PROS + CONS

Work–Life Balance in an Always-Connected World

Blurred boundaries between work & personal life

Role overload and competing expectations



Unequal capacity for flexibility and support

Pressure to be constantly available and responsive

Digital fatigue and attention fragmentation

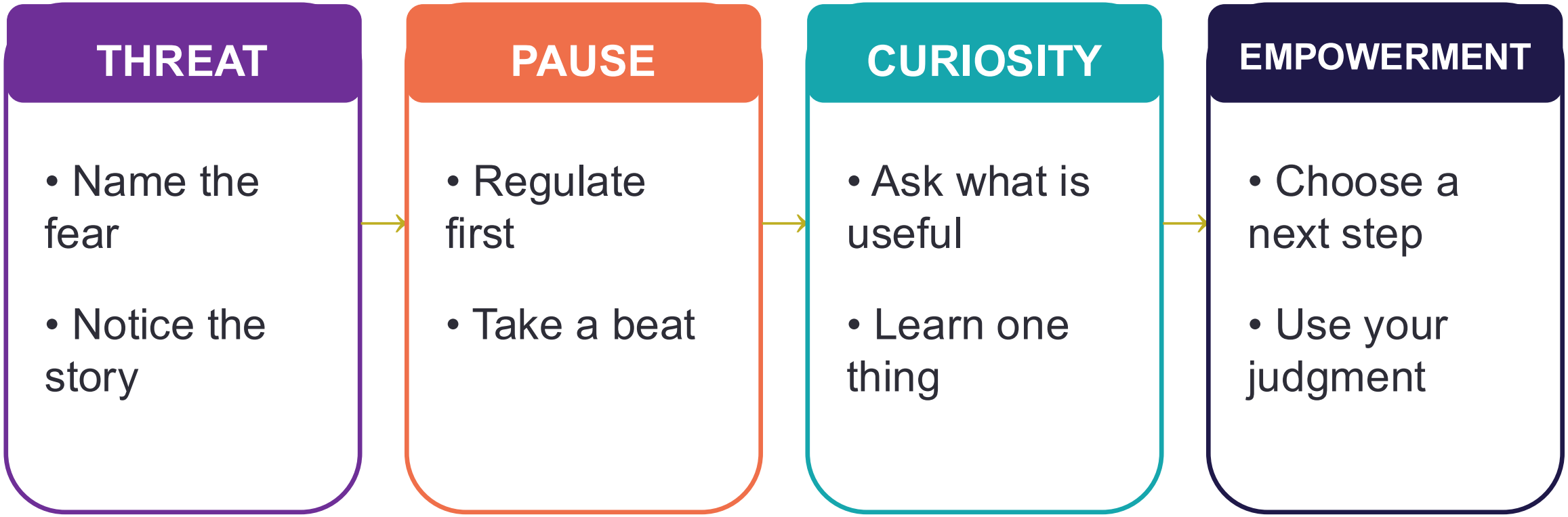
Emotional spillover across roles

AI Pressures

- Pressure to learn while already busy
- Fear of falling behind
- Cognitive overload & decision fatigue
- Role / identity uncertainty
- Job insecurity
- Privacy, accuracy & ethical concerns



AI Mindset Shift



The Division of Labor

THE ROLE OF AI

- Data processing & pattern recognition
- Scheduling, coordination & reminders
- Drafting, summarizing & content support
- Research synthesis & information gathering
- Automation of routine, repetitive tasks

THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN

- Ethical reasoning & accountability
- Contextual judgment & decision-making
- Empathy, presence & relational attunement
- Creativity, meaning & purpose
- Critical thinking + verification

The Human Advantage

- Empathy
- Ethical discernment
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Context & judgment
- Presence
- Meaning & purpose

Keep the Human in the Loop

1. **DEFINE** — What does a good outcome look like? What do I need to not outsource?
2. **DELEGATE** — What can AI assist with?
3. **VERIFY** — Check facts, bias, context & fit
4. **DECIDE** — You own the judgment & accountability

Psychological Safety: Embracing AI Learning Differences

- Career stage, generational and life stage context
- Prior technical experience, skills & aptitude
- Neuro-divergence
- Access to support, time & resources

Healthy Teams Make It Safe to Say:

- “I don’t know how.”
- “Can you show me how?”
- “I made a mistake.”
- “I’m overwhelmed/stuck.”
- “I need help/support.”



Five Practices to Thrive Amid AI

1

REGULATE

before you innovate

2

SINGLE-TASK

when quality & judgment matter

3

REFRAME

threat into curiosity & agency

4

BE HUMAN

in decisions & relationships

5

SEEK & GIVE SUPPORT

learning is a team sport

Today's Social Media Landscape

- Average American spends 2.5 hours/day on social media
- Nearly half of teens "almost constantly online."
- Algorithms reward outrage and comparison → chronic cortisol loop.



Source: Pew Research Center, 2024

How Social Media Rewires the Brain

- Dopamine feedback loops create addictive scrolling.
- Variable rewards mimic gambling reinforcement.
- Overuse shrinks gray matter in reward pathways (prefrontal cortex dysregulation).
- Chronic alerts trigger the amygdala → anxiety, hypervigilance.



Neurology & Brain Health

- Digital stress raises cortisol and weakens hippocampal memory

- Overstimulation leads to:
  - Sleep disturbance
  - Poor attention
  - Irritability
  - Relationship conflict



The Social Dilemma:

1. Social media is engineered to manipulate attention.

2. Algorithmic echo chambers distort reality.

3. Social media impacts mental health—especially among youth.

4. Technology companies prioritize profit over well-being.

5. We need ethical design and digital mindfulness.



The Disease of Being Busy & Multitasking

- Hampers Creativity
- Drains Energy
- Reduces Wellbeing
- Reduces Efficiency
- Kills Prioritization
- Decreases Quality
- Shrinks Brain



Taken from Stanford University “Cognitive Control in Media Multi-Taskers” Study



Workplace Case Example

Doomscrolling & Its Consequences

- Constant exposure to negative news = learned helplessness.
- Flood of cortisol → fatigue, irritability, poor concentration.
- Vicarious traumatization can trigger or exacerbate mental health conditions
- Notice the point where “staying informed” stops being useful



Social Media & Trauma

- Graphic/violent news
- Scams & catfishing
- Hacked accounts/privacy breaches
- Online activism
- Cyberbullying



Social Media & Self-Esteem

- Idealized images using filters or AI fuel body dissatisfaction and dysmorphia
- Link to eating disorders & anxiety (APA 2024).
- FOMO



Social Media & Addiction

- Social media often co-occurs with other compulsive behaviors: shopping, gambling, porn, gaming.
- Shared neural circuitry (reward & impulse control).
- Warning signs can include:
  - Loss of control over time spent
  - Repeated unsuccessful attempts to cut back
  - Use that interferes with sleep, work or relationships
  - •Turning to scrolling automatically to escape difficult feelings
- Encourage compassion vs. shame; addiction is neurobiological, not moral.



The Social Media Paradox

is that the more connected we get,

the more isolated we feel.

@Paradoxoflife9



Social Media & Suicide

- Recognize posts that are cries for help
- Err on the side of caution and say something
- Call 911 or 988 (Suicide Hotline)
- Seek mental health care proactively



Partner Discussion

- Am I seeing posts that make me unhappy?
- Do I follow accounts that make me feel like a need to someone I am not?
- Am I comparing my life/body/success with others?
- Is the way I am using social media affective my mental health negatively?



Audit Your Feed by Its Effect on You

1. ENERGIZES — inspires or delights me
2. EDUCATES — teaches me something useful
3. CONNECTS — strengthens meaningful relationships
4. DEPLETES — leaves me worse than before
5. DISTORTS — fuels comparison or unrealistic standards

Before You Post, Prompt or Reply

P PAUSE	Create a beat before acting
A ASSESS	What am I feeling right now?
U UNDERSTAND	What is my actual intention?
S SOURCE-CHECK	What do I know is true?
E ENGAGE	Choose the response that serves the goal. Ask yourself, is it kind, necessary and true?

Practice Acceptance

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

Maya Angelou



Control what you can, let go of the rest

What you can control:

Your own thoughts
Your own emotions
Your own behaviors
Your own choices

What you can't control:

Other people's thoughts
Other people's emotions
Other people's behaviors
Other people's choices
Outcomes

Set Healthy Information Boundaries

- Check & choose privacy settings
- Choose who connect & share information with
- Control what info you share
- Remember words matter
- Curate compassionate content
- Curate what info you receive
  - Doomscroll detox
  - Follow pro-health content



Set Healthy Time Boundaries

- Engage with intentionality and moderation
- No more than 30 min/day on social media
- No phone first 30 min of waking
- No phone an hour before bed
- Close tabs and shut of notifications at work
- Delete social media apps if necessary
- Take a social media cleanse



Workplace Tips

- Suggest "focus blocks"
- Model digital balance & emotional regulation
- Encourage "brain breaks" & mindfulness resets
  - Zen room
- Establish workplace norms
  - Meeting phone-free zones
  - Digital wellness policies
  - Quiet hours
  - Unplug campaigns
- Review antiharassment policies



Use Social Media with Intentionality

1. **WHAT** am I consuming?
2. **WHY** am I reaching for it?
3. **WHEN** is it helping—or interfering?
4. **HOW** do I feel afterward?

Source: APA guidance on social media use emphasizes context, content and individual differences.

Social Media Resources for Parents/Caregivers

- Age-readiness/Platforms/Usage rules & guidance
- Online exploitation, trafficking and grooming
- Mental health/healthy digital habits for teens





What are some small shifts you will make?

Practice Mindfulness to Connect with Your Humanity

- Maintain a moment-by-moment awareness of your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment
- Notice without judgment
- Connect with the breath
- Turn your attention inward



Strategies to Increase Mindfulness

- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Unplugging from technology
- Listening & using your senses
- Mindful eating & spending
- Yoga
- Breathing
- Body scan
- Positive mantra
- Connection to nature
- Meditation
- Morning routine



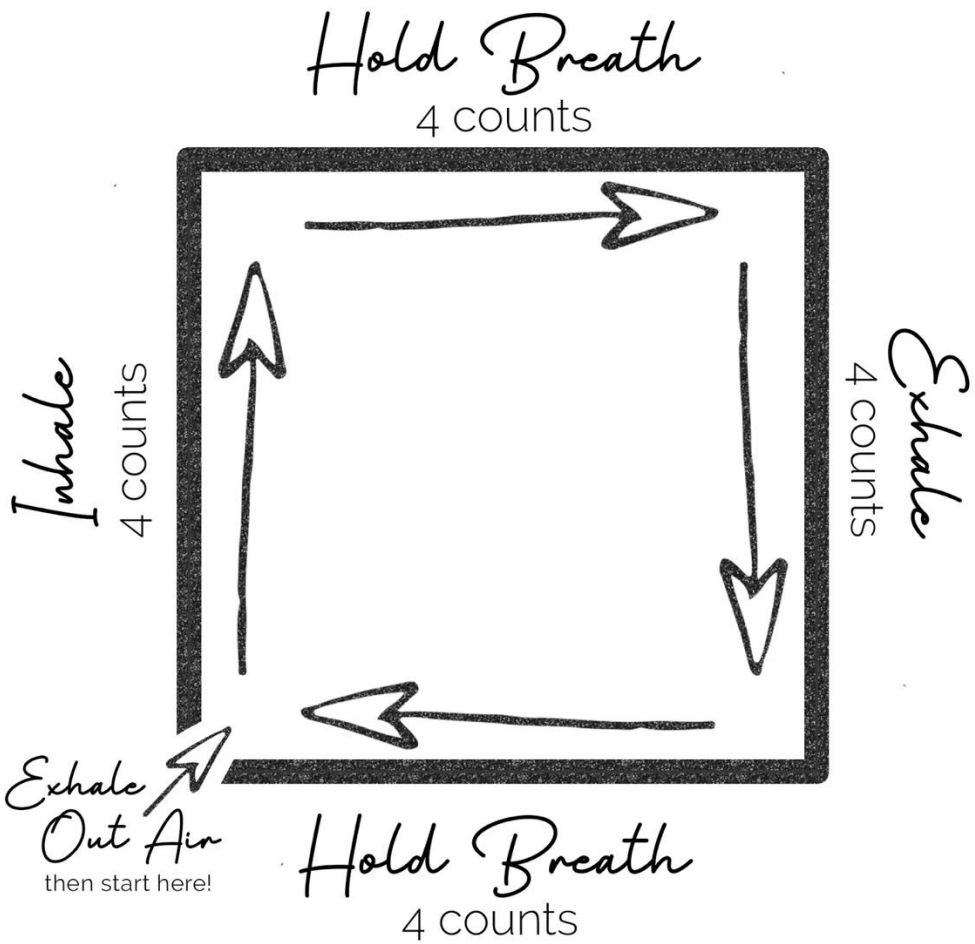
Mindful Workplace Exercises

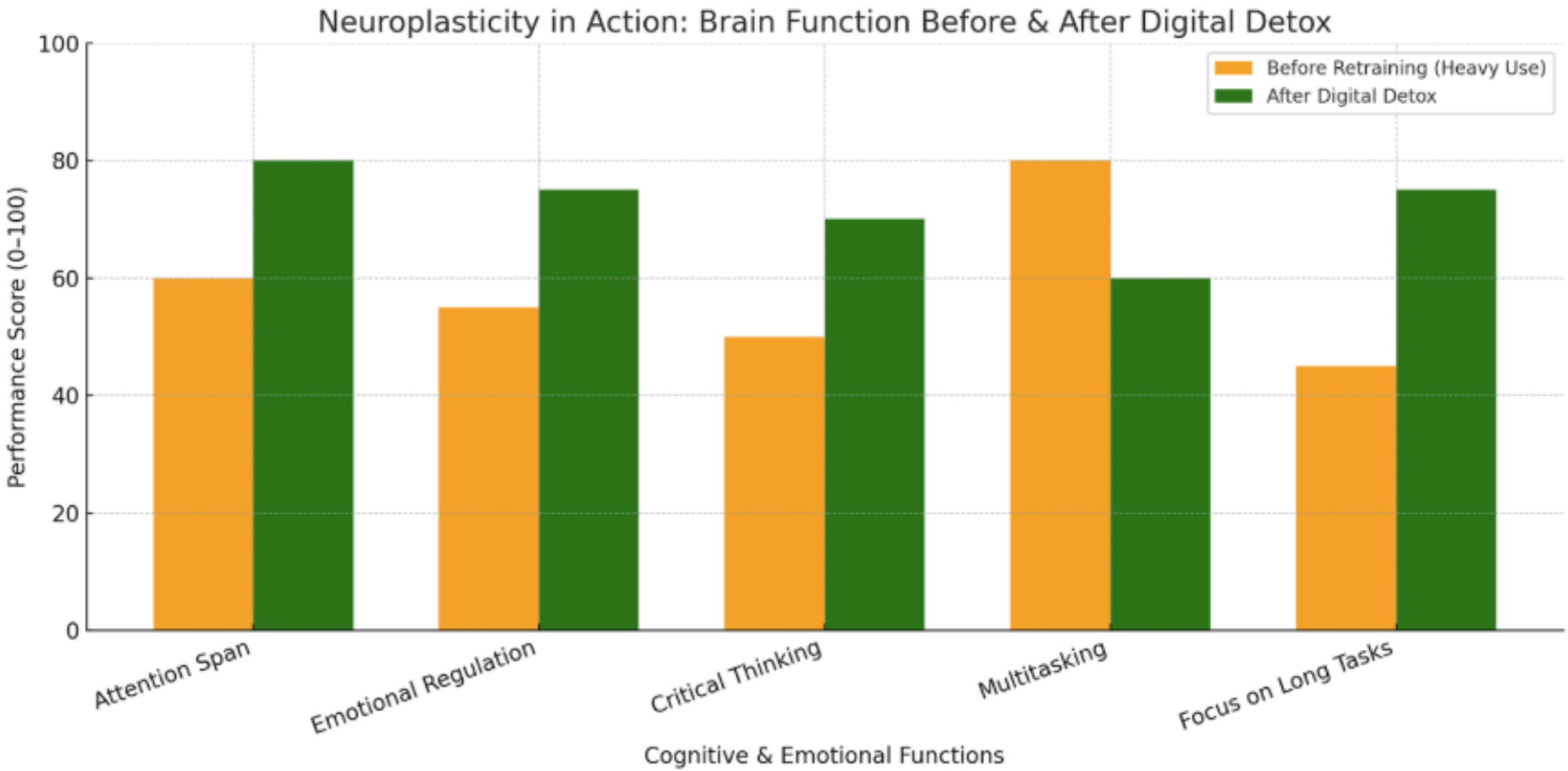
- Start your day with a mindful moment and plan for mindful breaks
- Slow down to increase your productivity
- Switch off distractions
- Be a single-tasker
- Pay attention to your coworkers



Source: https://hbr.org/2016/03/how-to-practice-mindfulness-throughout-your-work-day, http://www.mindful.org/10-ways-mindful-work/

Square Breathing





Source: https://click2pro.com/blog/brain-health-social-media-impact

Digital Reset: 5 Changes in 5 Minutes

1. Turn off nonessential notifications
2. Move high-pull apps off your home screen
3. Schedule one protected focus block
4. Protect the part of your day technology tends to hijack
5. Mute, unfollow and curate deliberately

Key Components to Thrive Inside & Outside the Digital World

- Prioritize your mental health & wellbeing
- Strive for online/real world balance
- Engage fully in life; don't isolate yourself
- Practice mindfulness
- Practice self-care
- Seek and give support





Give feedback to Joyce

Scan this QR code

Or go to

https://talk.ac/joyce-marter

and enter this code when prompted

AIMH

Powered By talkadot

The Future Needs Your Humanity

Technology should extend your humanity—not erode it.

Protect your attention. Keep thinking critically.
Choose connection. Stay human.



- **"GRAND PRIZE WINNER"**
  2023 Next Generation Indie Book Awards
- **"BEST IN SELF-HELP"**
  2023 Next Generation Indie Book Awards
- **"GOLD MEDAL WINNER"**
  Readers' Favorite Book Reviews and Awards
  Independent Publisher Book Awards
  Global Book Awards
- **"DYSINGER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION IN COUNSELING"**
  Illinois Counseling Association
- **"CATEGORY FINALIST"**
  The Eric Hoffer Book Awards!"
- **"RUNNER-UP IN NON-FICTION"**
  San Francisco Book Festival
- **"HONORABLE MENTION – GENERAL NONFICTION"**
  Southern California Book Festival
  Hollywood Book Festival
  New York Book Festival
  London Book Awards
  Los Angeles Book Festival
  Paris Book Awards





Thank You!

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