

STAFF CHALLENGES

50 Ways to Take a Break

This staff wellness initiative encourages school staff to take breaks throughout the day. It is easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day of school life so being mindful of taking time to breathe is important! Taking active or thoughtful breaks can improve well-being and model healthy behaviours for students.

Other potential benefits of taking breaks throughout the day include:

1. Increase in energy¹
2. Increase in work engagement²
3. Better overall health and vitality

Timeline:

It should take about one month to complete all 50 Ways to Take a Break collectively as a staff.

Goal:

To have everyone on staff complete the 50 Ways to Take a Break activities as a team. Ideally, each staff member should participate in at least one break.

Materials:

1. Email to staff (attached)
2. Display materials (attached)
3. Scissors, and glue or tape

¹ Blasche G, Szabo B, Wagner-Menghin M, Ekmekcioglu C, Gollner E. Comparison of rest-break interventions during a mentally demanding task. *Stress and Health*. 2018;1–10. Doi: 10.1002/smi.2830

² Kühnel, J., Zacher, H., de Bloom, J., & Bledow, R. (2017). Take a break! Benefits of sleep and short breaks for daily work engagement. *European Journal Of Work & Organizational Psychology*, 26(4), 481-491. doi:10.1080/1359432X.2016.1269750

Instructions:

1. Create and post the 50 Ways to Take a Break poster in the staff room or in a hallway where students can see staff progress.
 - a. Refer to the original poster created by Karen Horneffer-Grinter (*attached*) to see an example of the display layout.
 - b. Cut out the attached photos and text, including the title, to create your display. The picture samples provided were used by the APPLE Schools team when we ran this initiative in our office.



2. Post photos of yourself participating in one or two of the breaks to role model to staff members how this challenge works.
3. Send out email explaining the staff wellness challenge to staff (*attached*).
4. When a staff member successfully participates in a break activity and sends you a photo, post it on the challenge display. Send out email reminders to your staff to send you their photos, or to post the photos themselves.
5. Encourage staff to have fun with the photos and create new ways to take a break if their favorite is not listed.

Next Steps:

1. Once your display has some staff engagement, take a photo of it and share it on Twitter and/or Facebook. Please tag @APPLESchools so that we can re-post!
2. Continue the momentum of caring for mental health:
 - a. Encourage taking breaks, even after the activity has ended.
 - b. Check out any of the APPLE Schools mental-health-focused monthly campaigns, like [Address Your Stress](#), [Unwind Your Mind](#), or [Power of Positivity](#).
 - c. Refer to APPLE Schools' Mental Health Bin, which has many [breathing and reflection activities](#) that staff could try in their classrooms.

Suggested staff email copy

Please personalize as you see fit.

Hello **(school name)** staff,

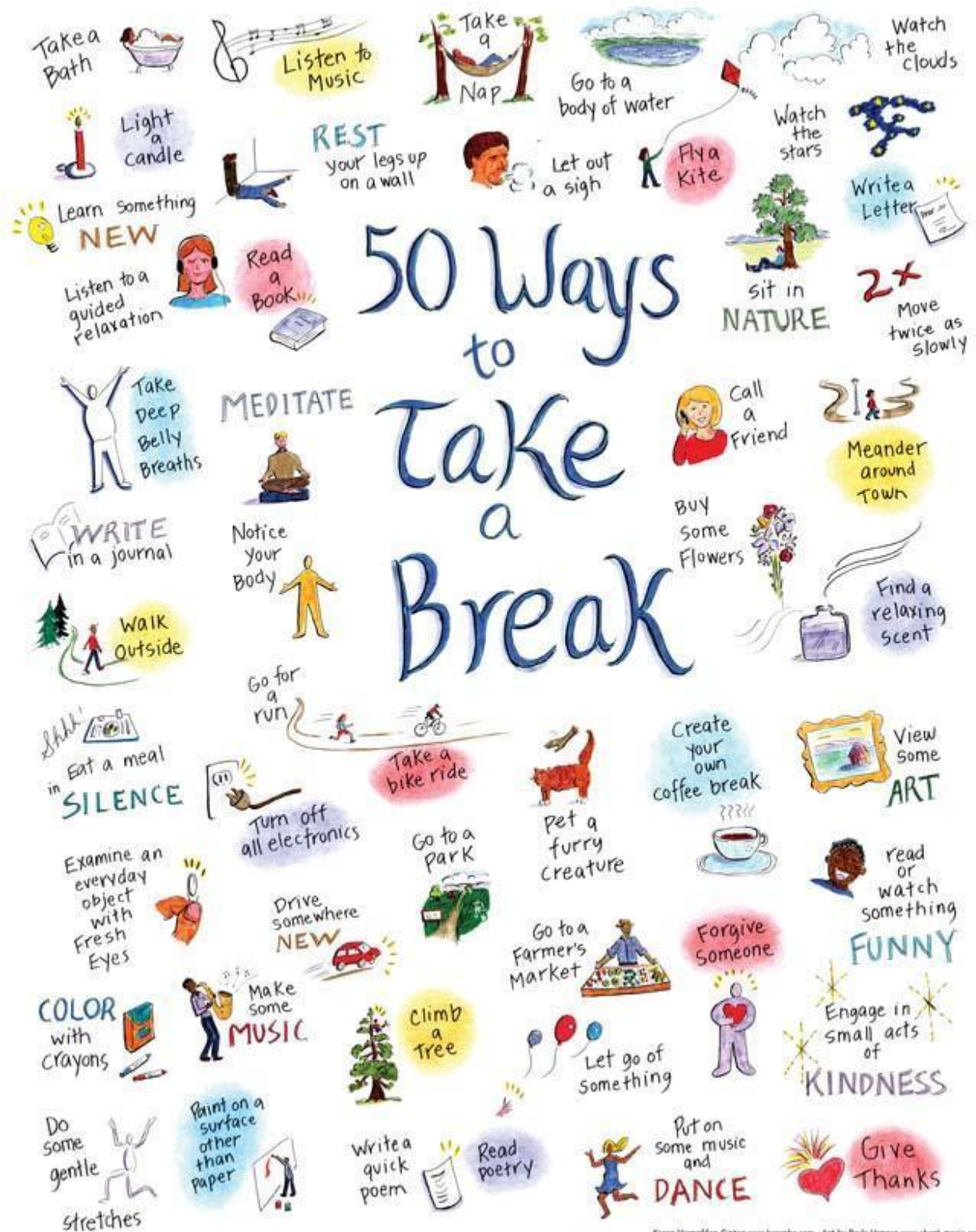
As school staff, we know how easy it is to forget to take much-needed breaks during the day -- that's why I am inviting you all to take a breather with a new staff wellness challenge.

50 Ways to Take a Break will encourage us to take active or thoughtful breaks to improve well-being and model healthy behaviour for students. The ultimate goal is to make mental health a priority in our busy lives.

- a. Check out the 50 Ways to Take a Break display located in **(location)**.
- b. Snap a photo of you doing the take-a-break activities listed on the poster.
- c. Print the photo and stick it on the poster or email the photo to me and I will post it for you.

The display will be posted until **(length of time chosen)** and I hope that by the end, each and every one of you will have taken some time to take at least one break (with an accompanying photo), because you deserve it!

Original poster by Karen Horneffer-Grinter. Use for reference.



Images and text to cut and glue to display:

50 Ways to Take a Break



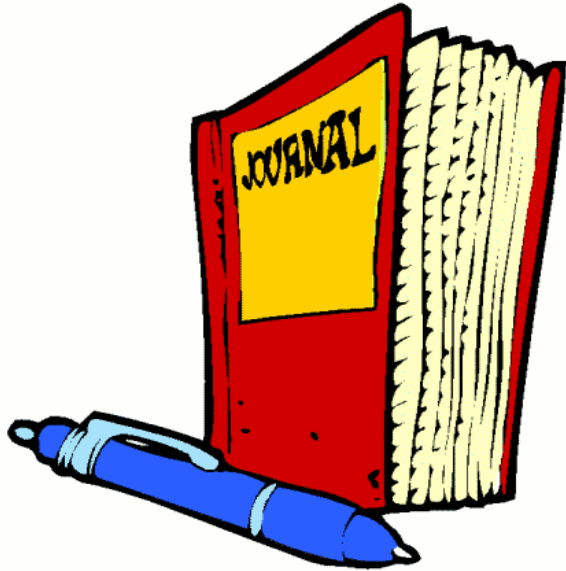
Learn Something
New



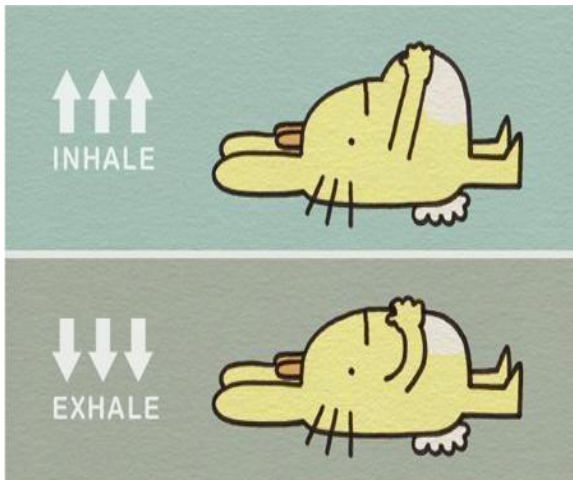
Listen to a
Guided
Relaxation



Walk Outside



Write in a
Journal



Take Deep Belly
Breaths



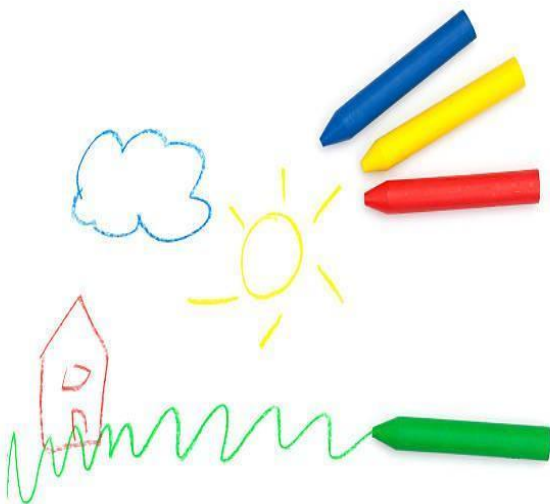
Do Some Gentle
Stretches



Eat a Meal in
Silence



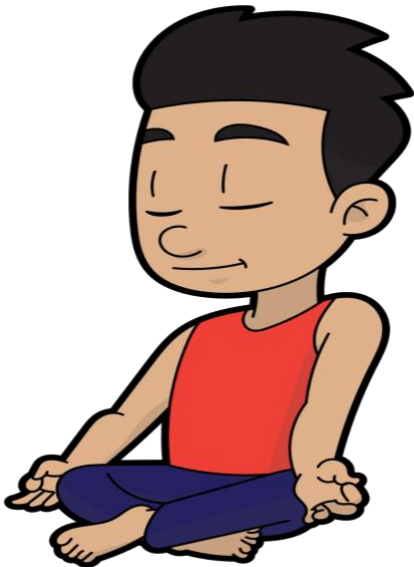
Rest Your Legs
on a Wall



Colour with
Crayons



Read a Book



Meditate



Notice Your
Body



Go for a Run



Examine an
Object with Fresh
Eyes



Make Some
Music



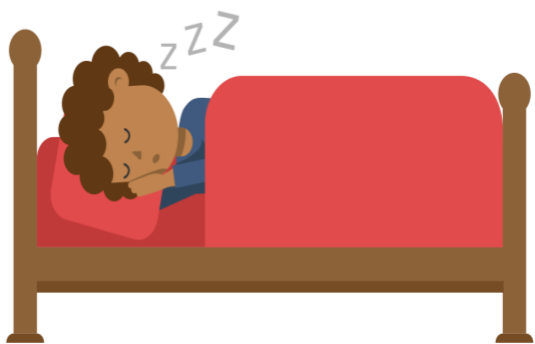
Turn off all
Electronics



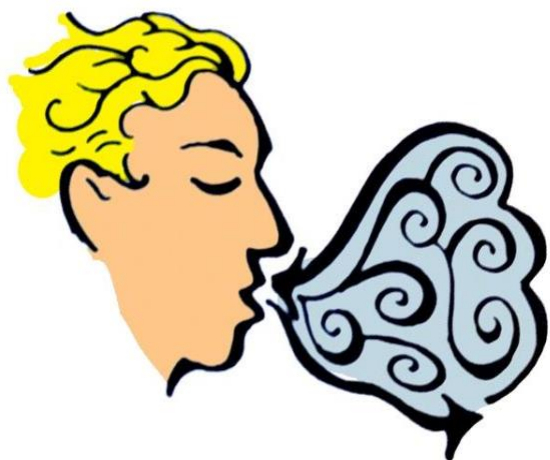
Listen to Music



Print on a Non-
Paper Surface



Take a Nap



Let Out a Sigh



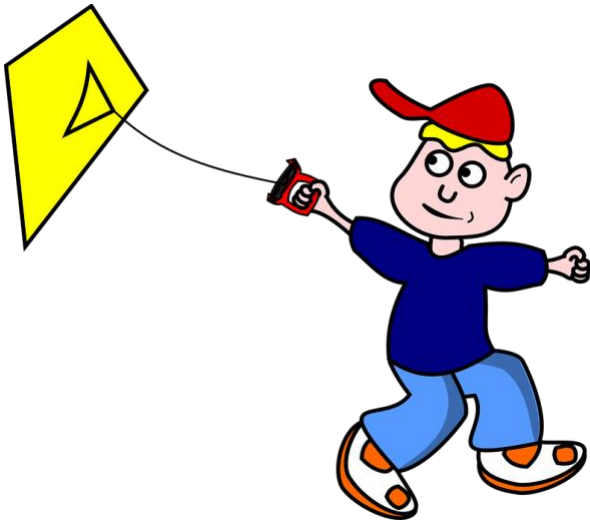
Drive
Somewhere New



Sit in Nature



Visit a Body of
Water



Fly a Kite



Call a Friend



Buy Flowers



Take a Bath



Have a
Coffee Break



Light a Candle



Pet a Furry
Creature



Climb a Tree



Write a Quick
Poem



Read Poetry



Forgive Someone



Go to a Farmer's Market



Watch the Stars



Let go of
Something



Watch the Clouds



Put on Some
Music and Dance



Write a Letter



Move Twice as Slow



View Some Art



Meander Around
Town



Read/Watch
Something Funny



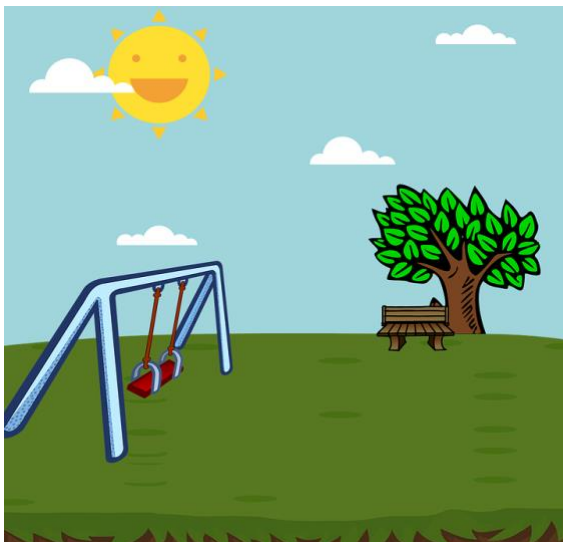
Engage in Small
Act of Kindness



Find a Relaxing
Scent



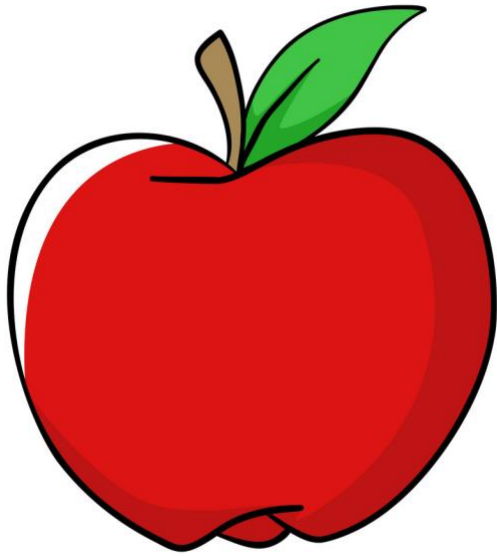
Give Thanks



Visit a Park



Take a Bike
Ride



Have a Snack