Tips for Making the Most of Your Spring Break

At seven weeks into the Spring semester, it is time to take a break. You likely already have plans for your Spring Break: a service retreat, a long-overdue trip home, an escape to someplace with (consistent!) warmer weather, or just a week with no obligations. No matter what your plans are, use these tips to rejuvenate yourself and to help prevent (or heal from) burnout. This way, you’ll return to your academic work refreshed and ready to end the year on a strong note.

1. Schedule a “Should-less” Day or Afternoon. On Lifehacker, Dave Greenbaum suggests scheduling for yourself a day or afternoon when you do only what you want to do. Don’t think about what you should get done or what you should be doing. Embrace a day of “laziness.” You’ll be recharged and ready to work again after a day-long avoidance of your responsibilities.

2. Make Few Decisions. This is another tip from Lifehacker, this time from Joelle Steiniger. Like the first tip, this might be difficult to implement on a vacation or if you are on a service trip, but I would encourage you to work toward this goal as much as possible. We have to make decisions during almost every moment of the semester—study now, or later? what should I eat? should I answer this text or keep writing my paper? What do I want to do with my life? Give yourself a break from this daily decision-making by structuring your time to focus only on a few basic choices.

3. Get Outside. We can start to feel a little stir-crazy after so many weeks of winter and days studying in the library. Take the time to go outside and, as Steiniger and Julia Schemmer suggest, experience nature. Do this even if you are still in a cold, wintry area. Take advantage of a more relaxed schedule to play in the snow or take a quick walk around the block. The sunlight and fresh air will help rejuvenate you. (Don’t forget: Sunday, March 12, is Daylight Savings Time! Set your campus clocks before you leave so you aren’t confused when you return.)

4. Read a New Book or Teach Yourself Something New. As odd as it might sound when you are stressed from mental work, you might find that you actually feel better and more capable upon your return if you’ve engaged your mind in more fun and personally-satisfying ways. Read a book for pleasure. Practice a language you’ve been meaning to become more fluent in or learn how to change your car’s oil. Puzzles and games count, too, according to Steiniger. As Schemmer encourages, give yourself some fun mental exercises or new lessons to “keep your brain active” in preparation for the remaining seven weeks.

5. Reflect, Re-Organize, and Set New Goals. In her blog on The Huffington Post, Julia Schemmer suggests both organizing yourself for the rest of the year and setting small goals for the rest of the semester. If you have the time now—and aren’t already headed toward burn-out—some checking-in and working ahead can help you handle the stresses of late-March and early April. Organizing, reflecting, and goal-setting are all good ways to ease yourself back into your daily routine. Rather than rushing right from a vacation or a service trip back into class, take a moment to prepare yourself. You don’t want to lose the benefits of your rest and rejuvenation through the shock of being back in the midst of a busy day.

Read more tips on avoiding burnout and making the most of Spring Break on The Huffington Post and Lifehacker. Have a great Spring Break! We’ll see you when you return.