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## Boost Workplace Energy: 2 Science-Backed Fatigue Fixes

### Description

In numerous professional environments, employees often find themselves grappling with the sensation that there are insufficient hours in the workday. However, a recent study has illuminated two effective strategies for combating fatigue: the implementation of regular microbreaks and the provision of supervisory support.

This research, conducted by scholars from Wake Forest University, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Northeastern University in the United States, offers insights that could determine whether employees endure a decline or experience a resurgence in productivity during the demanding hours of the afternoon.

According to the findings, both microbreaks and supervisory support contribute positively to reducing fatigue by the end of the workday, as well as enhancing sleep quality and energizing employees for the following day. The most significant alleviation of exhaustion occurs when both strategies are employed in concert.

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Microbreaks and support were charted against fatigue. (Jefferson et al., *Contemporary Accounting Research*, 2024)

Lindsay Andiola, an accountant at VCU's School of Business, notes, "Microbreaks represent a straightforward, cost-effective method to manage fatigue, particularly during intense workloads. Additionally, supervisory support is essential in alleviating employee strain."

These mechanisms collectively provide substantial relief for professionals navigating periodical high-stress work scenarios.

The researchers initially surveyed 44 accountants regarding their work practices, subsequently conducting a controlled study involving 179 additional participants. Findings confirmed that both microbreaks and regular supervisory engagement significantly diminished fatigue, particularly during peak periods. This correlation



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highlights their effectiveness in times of increased job stress.

Furthermore, follow-up examinations indicated that microbreaks enhanced accuracy in audit tasks, countering the known decline in performance under pressure. As articulated by the researchers in their paper, “Public accountants routinely confront the burdens of stringent deadlines, excessive hours, and considerable workloads, leading to elevated fatigue and burnout levels that adversely impact audit quality and long-term turnover rates.”

Microbreaks need not be extensive; even brief intervals of one minute can include activities such as reading a news article, grabbing a coffee, or stretching. Similarly, supervisory support entails checking in with staff, offering assistance, and expressing gratitude for their efforts. While employees may have limited control over managerial actions, they can proactively manage fatigue by integrating short, restorative breaks into their routines. While the study investigates brief pauses, it leaves the optimal timing for these microbreaks for future exploration.

By embracing these strategies, organizations can significantly improve employee well-being and enhance audit quality, ultimately cultivating a more sustainable and productive work atmosphere. The findings of this research are documented in *Contemporary Accounting Research*.

#### **CATEGORY**

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL5

#### **Date Created**

2025/01/27

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