



Healthy Performance

# *Prioritise your tasks*

When we have too much on our plate, we easily lose focus and switch to autopilot, trying to do everything at once. This is why it is important that we prioritise our tasks.

With Healthy Performance, we can help you become the best version of yourself today and in the future. One way to do this is by prioritising your tasks.

## **Prioritisation can be challenging**

To prioritise is to pick a few, essential activities, which naturally means rejecting others. By sorting out your priorities, you gain more stability in your daily life and build up your mental presence and focus, even under pressure.

Our ability to prioritise and create structure is challenged by our need for activity. Acting gives us immediate gratification, releasing neurotransmitters in our brain that give us a brief sense of satisfaction. As a consequence, we often become “addicted” to acting.

We answer lots of unimportant emails and tick tasks off our to-do lists, even though they may not be on our list of priorities for the day. Rather than prioritising what is on your schedule, you should schedule your priorities. This is a small investment with a major pay-off.

# How to prioritise

A good method of prioritising is using the 2-2-2 principle. The 2-2-2 principle consists of three small, specific two-minute exercises that you should do to start your working day:

- 1 2 minutes to take a mental break
- 2 2 minutes to prioritise your tasks for the day
- 3 2 minutes to plan your day in order to get your priority tasks done

\*What is a mental break?  
Scan the QR code to learn more



*Did you know that ...*

*“A survey of 350,000 people’s work priorities revealed that they spend an average of 41% on low-priority tasks. In other words, they are busy doing lots of things, but not necessarily the right things.”*

*Source: FranklinCovey global Time Matrix™ Survey, 2015*



# Tips for your training

## Where:

When you arrive at work, start by prioritising your tasks using the 2-2-2 principle.

## Plan to prioritise

Rather than just prioritising the meetings scheduled in your calendar, practice setting aside time for preparation and important priorities as well. This is a small investment with a major pay-off:

- Schedule time for preparation
- Set aside time to answer emails
- Consider how much time you should reserve for urgent tasks
- Schedule mental breaks and focusing exercises.
- Plan for miscellaneous tasks: follow-up activities, transport, etc.

## Avoid making phone calls right away

If you can avoid using your phone in the morning, you get a calm start to your day, allowing you to focus on your own tasks rather than react to other people's priorities.

## Avoid emails for the first 30-60 minutes at work

Generally, your brain is more focused, open and creative in the early hours of the morning. Use this time doing tasks that require concentration, overview planning and creative thinking.

## Avoid multitasking

Our ability to multitask is a myth. When you try to juggle multiple tasks, your productivity and wellbeing suffer. Your tasks take longer to complete, you are more likely to make mistakes and you are more easily distracted. Focus on one task at a time instead.

## Schedule your working day according to your focus

For most of us, our concentration is strongest in the morning and gradually fades in the hours until lunchtime. This means that it is not a good idea to spend your morning answering lots of low-priority emails, for example. You can do that after lunch. Focus on your top priorities instead.

*Did you know that ...*

*“62% find that their energy level is highest before lunch, and just 16% find that this is not the case.”*

*Source: YOUGOv for Danica Pension, 2020*

# Your personal prioritisation training plan

Track your personal development over the next two weeks using this form.

DAY	YES, I TRAINED	NO, UNFORTUNATELY I DIDN'T HAVE TIME	HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY? (ON A SCALE OF 1- 5)
1			1 2 3 4 5
2			1 2 3 4 5
3			1 2 3 4 5
4			1 2 3 4 5
5			1 2 3 4 5
6			1 2 3 4 5
7			1 2 3 4 5
8			1 2 3 4 5
9			1 2 3 4 5
10			1 2 3 4 5
11			1 2 3 4 5
12			1 2 3 4 5
13			1 2 3 4 5
14			1 2 3 4 5

## Congratulations!

You have completed the challenge.  
You have huge potential to become more focused and mentally present.  
Remember, you have only just begun!

Scan the QR code to learn more about Healthy Performance on Danica Pension's website.





Healthy Performance

## *Train your focus*

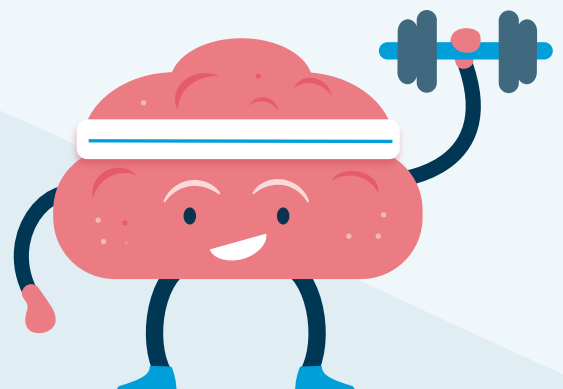
Many of us have trouble maintaining focus and being mentally present. It affects our quality of life and our performance. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. You can train your brain to handle challenges in order to optimise your performance.

With Healthy Performance, we can help you become the best version of yourself today and in the future. One way to do this is by training your focus. Here is a plan that can help you become more focused.

### **Mental training**

Mental training is an important element in Healthy Performance. It can help you at work and in your private life. When you begin training your focus, you will find that your working day improves as your mental presence and energy are strengthened.

You may find that you get better at being mentally present in meetings, at prioritising your tasks and doing the right things – instead of trying to do a lot of things at once.



# *How to train your focus*

- 1** Set aside 10 minutes
- 2** Sit with your back straight and your feet on the ground. Relax your face, neck, shoulders and arms. Close your eyes, or keep them slightly open. Breathe through your nose
- 3** Check your body for any tension as you breathe in - and let go of your tension as you breathe out. Do this for a minute or two
- 4** Turn your attention to your breathing - particularly around your abdominal or chest area. Allow your body to breathe without controlling or changing it.
- 5** When you are distracted by thoughts, sounds or feelings, just notice your distraction and return to your breathing
- 6** After this exercise, try to stay focused on your breathing for the rest of the day

## *Training tips*

### **How often:**

As the saying goes, "Rome wasn't built in a day", and just like in physical training, it takes patience and dedication to get results. To improve your focus, you need to do ten minutes of mental training every day.

We recommend that you start off using our guided training sessions, which you find on Danica Pension's website.



Scan the QR code to go to the page.

**When:**

If you keep up your new habit, mental training will become second nature to you, just like brushing your teeth. We recommend that you do mental training in the morning when your mind is fresh – this is what works best for most people. Set your alarm for 15 minutes before you usually get up, so you do not have to worry about fitting your mental training into your usual morning routine.

This also means that you should go to bed slightly earlier than usual.

Starting your day with ten minutes of mental training has a strong positive effect on the rest of your day.

If you have trouble falling asleep, it can also be a beneficial activity before bedtime. So consider repeating the exercise just before you go to bed. It can help you let go of many of the unfinished thoughts you would otherwise have to process while sleeping. If you make a habit of this, your sleep quality will improve over time.

**Where:**

Do the exercise in the same place and at the same time every day, so that it becomes a healthy new habit in your life. It is a good idea to pick a quiet spot that you return to every day. At home or at work, for example. Be pragmatic and practical. No matter where you choose to sit, there will be sounds and distractions, and that is OK.

*Did you know that ...*

*“Surveys show that daily mental training can have a beneficial effect on mental focus, ability to prioritise, sleep quality and wellbeing.”*

*Source: Goleman & Davidson (2017): The Science of Meditation*

# Describe your motivation for training

Answer the questions below about how you will organise your training. This gets your thoughts going, which is an important first step towards a Healthy Performance.

QUESTION	DESCRIPTION/TIP	YOUR ANSWER
What would you personally like to gain by training your focus?	Studies show that the most important element in forming a new habit is a clear motivation.	
What time of day will you train?	Our motivation drives us to start - but habit is what drives us to continue. Think about what time of day you want to train to make a habit of it.	
Where will you train?	It is a good idea to pick a quiet spot that you return to every day.	
How do you want to do your ten minutes of training a day?	Some people prefer silence, others prefer guided sessions. At Danica Pension's website, you find audio files with guided training.	
What is to remind you to train?	What aid will you use to keep you motivated? Calendar notifications, a note on your fridge, or your colleagues?	
How will you reward yourself if you train every day for two weeks?	Studies show that rewarding ourselves can reinforce a habit.	



# Your personal focus training plan

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## *Take mental breaks*

Some people consider taking regular mental breaks a “luxury”, but in fact breaks are an effective and simple way to improve your concentration and boost your mental strength. Giving your brain regular, short breaks from work has many advantages. Your brain gets an energy boost, your thoughts become more focused and your body more relaxed.

With Healthy Performance, we can help you become the best version of yourself today and in the future. One way to do this is by taking mental breaks.

Mental breaks are an important element in Healthy Performance. A break does not have to take more than a couple of minutes and requires no preparation. There are many good reasons to make short mental breaks a priority – and yet we often forget to take them during a busy working day.

*Did you know that ...*

*“For the brain, a day without breaks is like running a marathon without water breaks.”*

*Source: Potential Project “Et Sekund Foran/One Second Ahead” by Rasmus Hougaard.*

# *How to take a mental break*

- 1 Let go of your work
- 2 Close your eyes, or keep them slightly open, if you prefer
- 3 Feel your feet connecting to the ground and allow your body to relax
- 4 Focus your full attention on your next three breaths
- 5 Each time you breathe in, notice if you have any unnecessary tensions or thoughts
- 6 Each time you breathe out, let go of those thoughts and relax
- 7 Now let go of the exercise and return to what is important to you



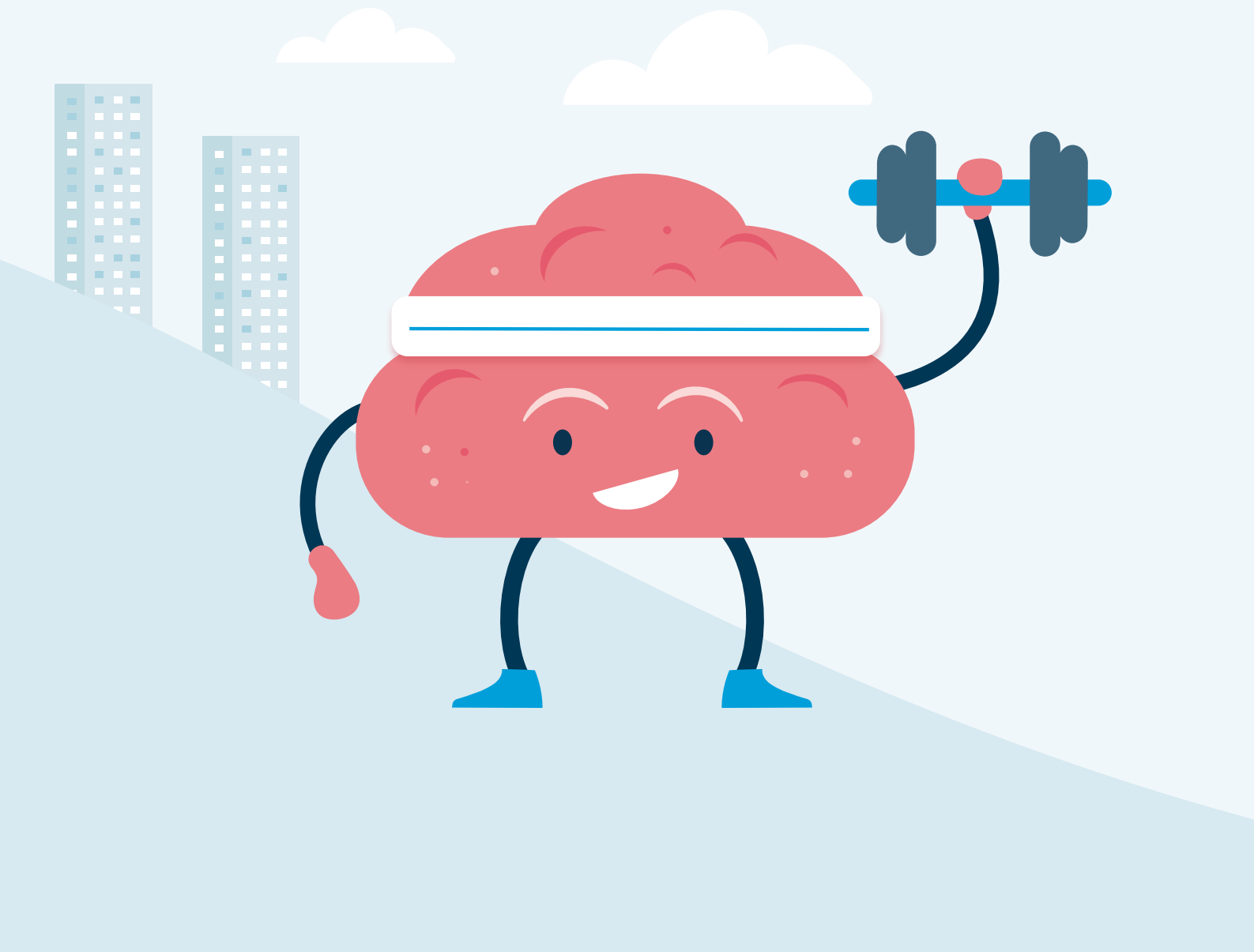
# Tips for your training

We all have a few minutes to spare during the day. Use your spare time to take a mental break. If you are on a train or a bus, for example, use the opportunity to take a mental break to boost your energy and your ability to stay focused during your next activity.

Shifting from one activity to another puts pressure on your attention. During the day, we go through many such shifts: from home to work, from one task to the next, from one meeting to the next and back again from work to home.

All these shifts require a lot of attentional resources. What often happens is that we are physically present - but have not yet adapted mentally. For example, we may be in a meeting, but are thinking about the meeting we just came from. Or we come home from work, but it takes a little while for our thoughts to shift from work to our loved ones.

If you can make a habit of taking a mental break every time you shift from one activity to another during the day, you will experience a significant positive difference over time.



# Your personal plan for taking more mental breaks

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