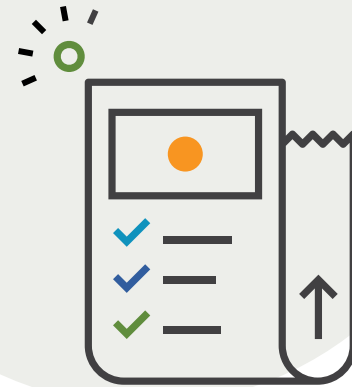
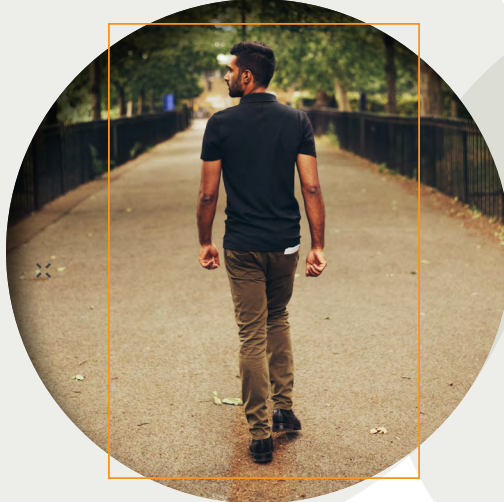




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Finding Balance

PART 1: TAKE A WALK

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When the pandemic hit in early 2020 most companies closed their office doors and sent people home to work remote. Many of us found ourselves in our homes full-time, including many kids trying to figure out virtual school. Initially, many of us thought this would be a short-lived situation that would resolve itself by summer and then things would go back to normal.

As the pandemic worsened it became clear that we'd be heading into a winter still at home. Kids would be in and out of school and essentially all travel and face to face meetings with employees, customers, and vendors moved to video conferences. The work attire became more casual, the grace increased for interruptions by a child needing help or a dog barking in the background. When the weather was nice, many would be on video sitting on their patios enjoying the sunshine or even on long walks to listen in on a conference call.

While many of these were seen as positive changes, there were some things that evolved over time and became hindrances to

overall productivity. The acceptable meeting times during the day stretched and stretched and soon people were scheduling calls at 7:00am on Monday morning and 6:00pm on Friday night. "Lunch hour" ceased to exist, instead replaced by check-in calls, work product reviews, etc. People now felt that their co-workers were home all the time anyway so what did it matter when a meeting was scheduled? If you need to eat lunch while you are on a call, so what?

Over time, these little impositions became common place. Couple that with the fact that we lost the ability to simply stand up, walk down the hall and ask a co-worker a question. That interaction now required scheduling a video call and blocking at least 15 minutes on a person's calendar. By the middle of last year, there were some days I was booked solid from 7:00am to 6:00pm with no breaks.

That expectation and situation is untenable. By the fall I was in a daily cycle of up, computer, dinner, bed, repeat. While I was

at home with my kids 24 hours a day (literally) it seemed like I spent less time with them than before. We were not going to be taking any family vacations for the foreseeable future which left little opportunity to break out of this cycle. I was exhausted all the time and could feel what seemed like an initial surge of productivity when the pandemic started turning into a spiral of unproductivity.

So, I had to make some changes. This series of articles is going to be about those changes and their benefits. The first one was around taking breaks during the day. My wife and I both like to walk so the first change we implemented was a mid-morning walk. Regardless of heat or cold, we vowed to schedule a daily time and leave the house for our daily walk. We stuck to it and made it a habit. It was amazing how much it changed my attitude. We got fresh air, reconnected on work, school, the kids, and other house projects we intended to do. When we returned 30 - 45 minutes later, my head was clear, and I could then go back to focusing on what was next on my priority list. It was a simple, but highly effective change to help break the cycle that I had created.

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