



Workspace Pausa Protocol

Design your workspace so your brain naturally shifts into focus, deep work and creativity. This protocol uses light, what you see, how you sit or stand, movement and sound to make concentration easier instead of harder.

1. Light: three phases of the day

Science: Morning light is a powerful signal for the circadian system: moving from dim to bright light shortly after waking increases cortisol and promotes alertness.[1–3] In contrast, bright light later in the evening can suppress melatonin and delay sleep, so dimmer, more localized lighting is recommended later in the day.[4–5]

Morning (Phase 1)

- Bright overhead light + natural light if possible.
- Main light source above you, never directly behind your screen.

Midday (Phase 2)

- Keep the space bright enough to stay alert.
- Reduce harsh glare and contrast for sustained, analytical work.

Afternoon / evening (Phase 3)

- Dimmer room, rely more on a desk lamp or localized light.
- Avoid bright overhead lights, especially if you'll work later into the evening.

Try this today

Choose one change: add a bright overhead lamp for mornings, or after 17:00 work only with a desk lamp.





2. What you see: focus vs creativity modes

Science: Attention research suggests that a narrowed attentional scope promotes detailed, analytic processing, whereas a broadened scope supports flexible, creative thinking.[6–7] The “cathedral effect” further shows that higher ceilings and visually open spaces bias people toward abstract thinking, while lower ceilings and visually constrained spaces favour concrete, detail-oriented processing.[8–9]

Visual focus

- Narrow, close visual field (screen, small area) supports detailed, analytical work.
- Wider visual field (seeing more of the room, higher ceilings, or a window view) supports creative, associative thinking.

“Cathedral effect”

- Low ceilings or visually “tight” spaces = better for concrete, focused tasks.
- High ceilings or visually “open” spaces = better for brainstorming and big-picture thinking.

Desk setup

- Keep only items related to the current task in your main visual field.
- Move distractions out of sight and, ideally, out of reach.

Try this today

Create two modes at the same desk:

- **Focus mode:** screen closer, fewer objects, slightly “tighter” space.
- **Creative mode:** push the chair back or stand, see more of the room or look out the window.





3. Deep work: the 45/5 cycles

Science: Human alertness follows ultradian rhythms of roughly 60–90 minutes, often referred to as the Basic Rest–Activity Cycle (BRAC), and performance tends to be better when effort is organized into work–rest bouts rather than continuous strain.[10–11] At the same time, task-switching studies show that every switch comes with a measurable cost in time and accuracy, so keeping one task per bout is important.[12–13]

Work in waves, not marathons

- 45 minutes: narrow visual focus, one task, minimal switching.
- 5 minutes: look far into the distance, stand up, move your eyes, neck and body, avoid screens if possible.
- Stack 2–3 of these 45/5 cycles before taking a longer break.
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Try this today

Schedule one block: 2 × (45 minutes deep work + 5 minutes off-screen movement). Notice when your focus starts to dip and adjust.

4. Posture, sitting, standing and movement

Science: Posture influences both autonomic regulation and cognitive performance: upright positions are associated with better arousal regulation, mood and sometimes working-memory performance compared to more reclined or supine positions.[14–15] Alternating between sitting and standing can increase physiological arousal and comfort across the day, as long as posture changes are done in cycles rather than standing continuously.[16–17]

Posture

- Upright posture supports alertness; slumped posture drags it down.





Sit vs stand

- Standing can increase energy and sometimes tension.
- Sitting can help with fine, detailed tasks.
- Alternating between both across the day is ideal.

Micro-movement

- Every 45–60 minutes: stand, look far away for 30–60 seconds, walk or stretch briefly.

Try this today

Pick one cue (end of a call, a calendar alert) as your “stand and look far” moment each hour.

5. Sound: choosing your background on purpose

Science: Noise quality matters for cognition: unpredictable background noise can impair performance on demanding tasks, whereas steady broadband noise (such as white noise) can in some contexts improve performance or reduce stress. Experiments with gamma-range (around 40 Hz) binaural beats report modest improvements in attention and training outcomes in some participants, suggesting they may be a useful optional tool rather than a core requirement.[21–23]

Noise to avoid

- Random office noise and HVAC can impair performance on demanding tasks.

Better options

- Neutral, consistent sound (fan, white or pink noise) at low volume.
- Instrumental or repetitive music instead of tracks with lyrics when you need deep focus.





Binaural beats (optional)

- 40 Hz binaural beats have been shown to enhance attention and cognitive performance in some studies.
- Best used with headphones, ideally for 10–15 minutes before a focus block or quietly in the background if you're not easily distracted.

Try this today

For one week, test one sound “preset” at a time:

- White noise or simple ambient sounds.
- Instrumental or minimal music.
- 40 Hz binaural beats for deep work.

6. Interruptions: give your brain one clean block

Science: Task-switching research shows that changing tasks introduces a “switch cost”: performance slows, error rates increase and it can take many minutes to fully re-engage the previous task.[24–25] Field data on digital interruptions indicates that frequent disruptions raise stress and make work feel more exhausting, even when total time at the desk is unchanged.

Protect at least one block per day

- Choose a 45–90 minute window.
- Turn off notifications on computer and phone.
- Put your phone in another room or in a closed bag.
- Keep only one main app or document open.

Try this today: Decide when your “no-interruptions block” will be tomorrow and put it on your calendar like a meeting.





7. The Pausa workspace day (at a glance)

Use this as a quick checklist and adapt it to your reality:

- **Morning**
 - Bright overhead + natural light
 - Upright posture, narrow visual field
 - 1-2 × 45/5 deep-work cycles
- **Afternoon / early evening**
 - Dimmer, warmer or localized light
 - Wider visual field for creative tasks
 - 1-2 more 45/5 cycles if needed
 - Short walks or stretches between tasks
- **Always**
 - At least one interruption-free block
 - Distractions out of sight
 - Sound chosen intentionally: silence, white noise, instrumental music or 40 Hz binaural beats

You don't need to implement everything at once. Start with one lever — light, visual field, movement, sound or interruptions — and notice how your workspace begins to work for you instead of against you.





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