Mental Rest

reST

Digital break

🕐 **75 minutes**

Objective
- *To help participants recognise the mental strain caused by constant digital engagement and to guide them in creating intentional, technology-free moments that promote focus, clarity, and emotional balance.*

Materials needed

- Comfortable seating (chairs, cushions, or mats)
- Printed copies of the Mental Rest manual
- Timer or clock for break exercises
- Paper and pens or journals for reflection
- Examples of digital break activities (printed prompts or cards)
- Optional: calming background music or nature sounds for the break phase
- Optional: a "digital basket" or box for participants to store devices during the session

Tool Description

This tool introduces participants to the concept of taking structured breaks from digital devices as a way to protect mental energy and reduce cognitive fatigue. Through guided exercises, reflection, and discussion, they will explore the benefits of disconnecting, learn to identify personal triggers for digital overload, and design practical strategies for integrating regular digital breaks into daily life. By the end of the session, participants will have created a personalised plan for sustaining mental rest in a hyper-connected world.

Mental Rest

Instructions

1 - INTRODUCTION (20 minutes)

- Introduce the <u>manual</u>
- Allow participants time to familiarise themselves with the manual and its content
- Focus on the chapter **Mental Rest**
- Introduce the importance of **digital breaks** as a practice and let participants know this will be the main focus of this module

2 – Exploring digital habits

Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own digital routines. They consider questions such as:

- **How many hours per day are spent on screens?**
- **Which activities feel draining versus enriching?**
- **Are there times of day when digital use feels overwhelming?**

This exploration helps them become more aware of patterns that may be contributing to mental fatigue.

3 – Guided digital break practice

The facilitator leads the group in a short, intentional break from devices. All participants are invited to switch off or place their devices in a shared "digital basket" to physically mark the start of the break. For 10–15 minutes, they engage in an offline activity such as mindful breathing, light stretching, journaling, or simply sitting in quiet reflection. The aim is to let the mind rest without the constant pull of notifications or screen-based tasks.

4 – Reflection and journaling

After the break, participants are invited to journal about how they felt during the pause. They note changes in mood, focus, or physical sensations, and whether any challenges or urges to check devices arose. This self-observation deepens awareness of both the benefits and the difficulties of disconnecting.

5 – Designing a personal digital break plan

Participants create a realistic strategy for incorporating regular device-free moments into their routine. They determine when and how often breaks will occur, what activities they will engage in during these moments, and how they will address possible obstacles (e.g., work demands, habit triggers).

6 – Sharing and closing

The session closes with a group sharing moment for those who wish to discuss their experiences and strategies. The facilitator reinforces the idea that even short, consistent breaks can have a profound impact on mental rest and encourages participants to treat digital disconnection as a non-negotiable part of self-care.

Co-funded by the European Union

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Reflection questions

- How did you feel during the digital break compared to before?
- What challenges or urges arose when you were away from your device?

> **When we step away from screens, we step closer to ourselves.**

- What offline activities bring you the most sense of rest or joy?
- How could you integrate regular digital breaks into your daily routine?
- Why do you think mental rest is important in today's digital world?