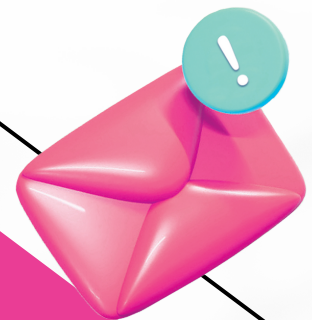


# Optimise Your Workday



DR KRISTY  
GOODWIN

# Neuroscience 101

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GOODWIN

## Decoding the neuroscience of peak-performance in a hybrid world

### 5 Brain Principles



#### YOUR BRAIN MAKES COGNITIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Your brain processes 11 million bits of sensory data every single second. 10 million of these come through our eyes, our dominant sense. We need to create coherent cognitive associations to support our brain- predictable tasks, objects or behaviours that signal certain behaviours. For example, coffee in the morning, might signal that it's time to start the day. A certain playlist, only played at the end of the day, may signal that the workday is complete and you can translation to your personal life.



#### YOUR BRAIN CANNOT MULTI-TASK

Multi-tasking, which has become a norm in our distributed workplaces, stresses the brain. Many of us now sit in Teams meetings while also triaging our inboxes. When we multi-task, our brain burns through glucose – the brain's energy supply – and releases cortisol, the stress hormone. Think of how frequently you multi-task, and consider the stress this is placing on your brain and body. We also recall fewer details when we muti-task as our brains don't send information to the memory centre, our hippocampus.



#### YOUR BRAIN HAS ULTRADIAN RHYTHMS

One of the distinct biological markers we have as humans is our ultradian rhythm. This means our energy goes through peaks and troughs roughly every 90 minutes. This rhythm consists of measurable physiological patterns that our body maintains both day and night to manage the cycles of energy production and recovery. It is like a micro-version of our circadian rhythm (our 24-hour sleep-and-wake cycle), but much shorter and occurring multiple times each day. Like our circadian rhythm, if disrupted or ignored, our ultradian rhythm can really mess with our health and performance.



#### YOUR BRAIN NEEDS TO REST

We are not machines. We're not designed to keep working and working, without taking adequate rest. Research tells us that peak performance requires cycles of rest and recovery. We're biologically incapable of working for long stretches of time without periods of rest. We need to adhere to our ultradian trough and take regular piccolo breaks each day (2-10 minute breaks interspersed throughout our days).



#### YOUR THINKING BRAIN ONLY HAS A 4-6 HOUR BATTERY LIFE/DAY

Working longer hours doesn't lead to higher impact; in fact, working long hours can impair performance. The prefrontal cortex – the part of our brain that helps with problem-solving, complex thinking and working memory – is prone to fatigue. It only has a maximum battery life of approximately six hours per day (not 12 hours, as many of us try to do). We cannot expect that we can work for continuous stretches of time without adequate rest periods; that's working against our biology.



Establish  
digital borders  
and boundaries



Adopt  
neuro-productivity  
principles



Disable  
digital  
distractions



Unplug  
for rest and  
recovery

# POWER-UP RITUALS

Start the day right

## Micro-Habit Menu



Set it up right

MICRO-HABIT 1

- Morning sunlight
- Cold showers
- Rapid breathing
- Work playlist
- Predictable tasks to signal start of the day

## *Digital Wellbeing Cards*

We're much more likely to retain information that we've read off-screen, than on. I've published a set of 60 cards containing a range of micro-habits that people can apply to their professional and/or personal lives to bolster their physical health, mental wellbeing and attention span, in the always-on digital world we're in. More information can be found [here](#).



# OPTIMISE YOUR PERFORMANCE

## Optimise your Workspace

### Micro-Habit Menu



#### MICRO-HABIT 1 Sit-stand-switch

- Set a 1:1 ratio for sitting and standing
- Set a timer
- Invest in a stand-up desk (or make your own)
- Plan three or four ten-minute walks each day
- Stand up for your phone calls
- Stand-up meetings
- Engage in a step challenge



#### MICRO-HABIT 2 Declutter your digital space

- Remove your tech temptations
- Declare email bankruptcy
- Don't be a tab hoarder
- Declutter your desktop
- Audit your downloads



#### MICRO-HABIT 3 Wear noise-cancelling headphones

- Music to your ears
- Soft, slow and no lyrics
- Listen to binaural beats

## Optimise your Workday



#### MICRO-HABIT 1 Set your work schedule in 90-minute intervals

- Determine your cadence
- Time-block your calendar accordingly
- Schedule breaks in your calendar



#### MICRO-HABIT 2 Optimise your breaks to optimise performance

- Restoration
- Exposure to light
- Movement
- Nature
- Autonomy
- Connection



#### MICRO-HABIT 3 Work in concert with your chronotype

- Determine if you're a bear, wolf, lion or dolphin
- Devote your focus hours to your most intellectually demanding tasks
- Follow a sleep schedule that matches your chronotype's biological needs
- Set core collaboration hours



#### MICRO-HABIT 4 Build a fortress around your focus

- Use a sign to indicate that you're doing deep work
- Wear specific clothes or a hat to signal that you're working when working from home
- Work behind a closed door
- Have open office hours
- Train people to stop interrupting you
- Wear noise-cancelling headphones while you work
- Have a communications policy



#### MICRO-HABIT 5 Take piccolo breaks

- Close your eyes
- Do exhale-emphasised breathing
- Do rapid, deliberate breathing
- Hum or sing
- Mammalian diving reflex
- Engage in non-sleep deep rest
- Connect and laugh
- Drink water at your desk
- Undertake deliberate cold-exposure protocols
- Create a piccolo-break chart



# POWER-DOWN RITUALS

## Micro-Habit Menu



### MICRO-HABIT 1

#### Close down the day

- Set aside time to wrap up and plan
- Close open loops
- Plan for tomorrow
- Specify your success



### MICRO-HABIT 2

#### Create digital depots

- Have a phone basket or drawer
- Have a device landing zone



### MICRO-HABIT 3

#### Have screen sabbaticals

- Have a tech sabbath
- Cut it down, don't cut it out
- Capture moments to your personal hard drive
- Use tech tools
- Go for a walk without headphones
- Communicate your tech-spectations



### MICRO-HABIT 4

#### Meditate for 12 minutes per day

- Start small
- Use tech tools
- Self-directed hypnosis as an alternative

# Dear Digital, We need to talk...

If you want to put an end to constantly feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and distracted the best place to start is... with a good old-fashioned book. Dear Digital, We need to talk... in fact!

Dominate your digital distractions and stop screens from adding to your stress.

Learn brain-based strategies to tame your toxic tech-habits and thrive in the digital world. And no, don't worry. You don't need to cancel your Netflix subscription or take Slack off your phone. Grab your copy here.

To find out more information about our special Speaking and Book Bundles please contact:

Karen [info@drkristygoodwin.com](mailto:info@drkristygoodwin.com)



## About Dr Kristy

*Having personally experienced how our always-on digital culture is compromising people's wellbeing and is counter to optimal and sustainable performance, award-winning researcher and speaker Dr Kristy Goodwin is on a mission to promote employee wellbeing and bolster workplace productivity in an always-on digital world.*

*As one of Australia's digital wellbeing and productivity experts, she shares practical brain-based hacks to tame tech habits and the latest evidence-based strategies to decode the neurobiology of peak performance in the technological era.*

*Senior business leaders and HR executives from the country's top organisations engage Dr Kristy to help them promote employee digital wellbeing and performance. Her roster of clients includes Apple, Westpac, AMP, Deutsche Bank, Bank of Queensland, DLA Piper, Westfield, Randstad, the Reserve Bank of Australia, NSW Health, Cuscal, State Street, National Broadband Network and Foxtel.*



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