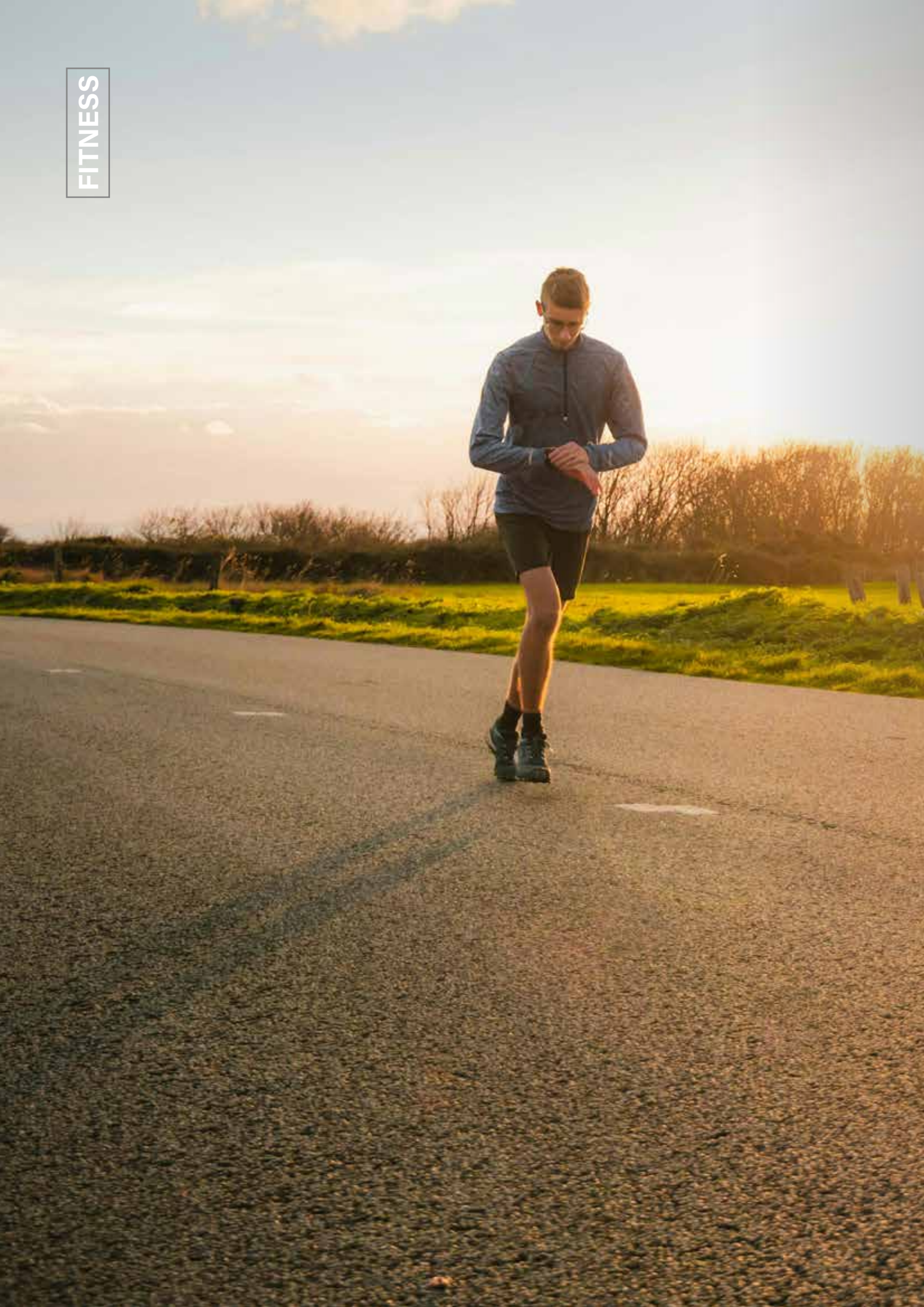
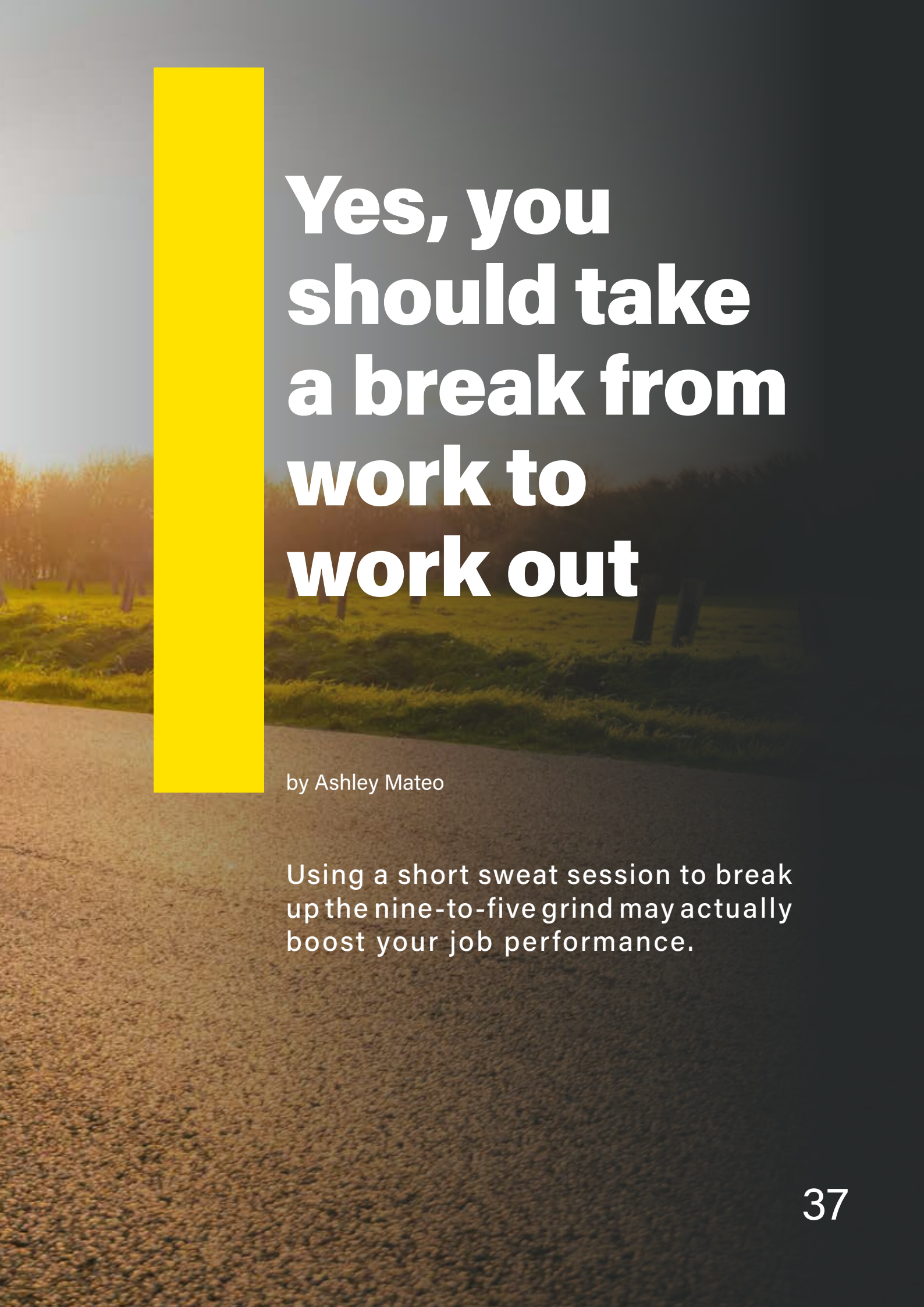


FITNESS





# **Yes, you should take a break from work to work out**

by Ashley Mateo

Using a short sweat session to break up the nine-to-five grind may actually boost your job performance.

When boutique studio classes ruled the fitness world, they did so by evangelizing the idea that a workout only “counted” if it lasted a certain amount of time—say, 45 minutes or an hour. But in 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated their recommendations for exercise and, for the first time ever, explicitly removed the need for any duration around physical activity.

All of a sudden, every little bit of movement counted towards the suggested **150 to 300 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity per week**—including short bursts of exercise through the day, AKA “exercise snacks.” Marching up and down stairs while taking a call? A 15-minute yoga flow to chill out before doing a presentation? A five-minute session to fire up your abs between meetings? Yep, those mini workouts all qualify.

You can DIY any kind of brief movement session, or choose from short, pre-programmed sessions on most fitness platforms—including the **Technogym App**, which is packed with on-demand workouts that prioritize convenience and last as little as ten minutes. Even better, the app is equipped with artificial intelligence that can help you train smarter, not harder, optimizing the limited time you have with personalized training suggestions.



With the line between people's work and leisure time more blurred than ever, this bite-sized approach to exercise makes **working out more accessible**—especially during your work day, since it can eliminate commute times, there's no need to share fitness machines, and you probably won't sweat enough to warrant a post-workout shower.

While exercise snacks won't replace occasional longer workouts (you still need to hit your weekly quota of active minutes), stacking them throughout the day can **promote fitness gains**—and **make you better at your job**.

Physical activity enhances **thinking, learning, and judgment skills**, according to WHO. That may be due to increased blood flow to the brain, 2023 research in the journal *Cerebral Cortex* found, as well as the fact that exercise triggers a protein called **brain-derived neurotrophic factor**, which **boosts your cognitive abilities**, according to older research.

There's a clear link between **working out** and **getting work done**. Employees who exercise demonstrated higher work-quality and better job performance than less active workers, a study published in *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* found as far back as 2004.

That still stands true today. When people exercised before the end of their business day, they were able to better focus on their tasks, 2022 research published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* determined. In fact, **workers who exercised on their lunch break reported an average performance boost of 15 percent** in an older study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*—and six out of 10 employees said those workouts improved their time management skills, mental performance and ability to meet deadlines, and helped them avoid that dreaded 3 p.m. slump.



Bringing your A-game to work requires executive functions, AKA a set of mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control. And exercise is consistently linked in research with improvements in attention, processing speed, working memory capacity, and the ability to switch between tasks—all of which can help you impress your boss and coworkers. Case in point: Active people came up with more and **better ideas** than people who were relatively sedentary in a 2020 study published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

It may feel tough to justify a workout break when you're on the clock, but companies benefit as much as you do. Workers who moved more got more work done and **took fewer sick days** in a 2017 study published in *BMC Public Health*. And on days when employees exercised, they reported managing their time more effectively, being more productive, having smoother interactions with their colleagues, and going home feeling more satisfied, older research from the *International Journal of Workplace Health Management* found. By prioritizing time to work out, you're really doing your company a favor (at least, you can tell that to your boss).

Plus, exercise snacks are a no-brainer for your mental health, giving you a reason to escape from the onslaught of Slack messages and emails pinging through all your screens. Think of a quickie workout as a grown-up version of recess—a practice that helps students pay attention and perform better, older research published in *Pediatrics* suggests. Except you get to take this kind of break any time you want, and can even do it more than once a day.

Next time you need to be firing on all cylinders, don't resign yourself to staring at your computer until you're cross-eyed. Whether you're working from home or back in the office, whether you have access to a gym or not, take a step back from the task at hand instead. Then **go move your body** juuust enough to get your heart pumping—ideally with one of Technogym's 40-plus trainers, who will motivate you through your workout no matter how short it is. By the time you wake your computer screen back up, the creative juices will be flowing and you'll be ready to power through your to-do list.



