



DASH

slow it don't blow it

**How does the need to always feel busy affect your health,
and how can you break the habit?**

In today's society, being busy is sometimes viewed as a badge of honor. Many of us measure our self-worth by the number of things we check off our to-do lists. The more we accomplish, the more value we offer to our work, families and friends.

P sychologists say that some of us may even be addicted to being busy. This is because when we complete tasks, our brain releases the pleasure hormone, dopamine, which makes us feel good. It's easy to get addicted to this feeling, so we repeat the pattern, craving the feeling that being busy and accomplishing things gives us.

But is the point of life to rush through it in order to cross things off our never-ending to-do list? And what toll does being constantly busy have on our physical and mental health?

ARE YOU ADDICTED TO BEING BUSY?

Here are some of the signs:

Being Busy is a Status Symbol. We all want to feel like we are successful. Our society praises productivity and working hard, so being constantly busy can make you feel as though you are ahead of the game and can elevate your sense of social status.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMo). Does FoMo rob you from your personal downtime that you need to relax and recharge? If you overschedule yourself due to FoMo, or if you feel anxious at the idea of slowing down, you may be addicted to being busy.

Doing Nothing Makes You Feel Guilty. The pressure to be busy can make us feel worry or guilt if we are not continuously doing something that we consider productive. Because of the value we place on accomplishments, you may feel pressure to constantly complete tasks and feel anxious or guilty if you don't.

Staying Busy Helps Distract You from Dealing with Negative Emotions. Sometimes, being busy can be used as an excuse to avoid dealing with family issues or relationships problems. When your mind has downtime, you are left with your own negative feelings, which can make you feel anxious or depressed.

You Feel that Keeping Busy is the Only Key to Success. Some people feel that the only way to achieve success is to be busy. When you aren't busy, you feel a sense of failure and that you will never be able to achieve your goals.



Health Risks of Being Constantly Busy

Mental Health - Studies show that people with FoMo tend to have lower self-esteem, and increased feelings of inferiority, especially for those who have the sense that other people are more successful than they are. This can lead to a perpetual cycle of negativity, since being depressed leads to increased FoMo.

When you are always trying to stay busy, it keeps you from living in the moment. When you are more mindful, you usually have less anxiety and are more adaptive to new situations.

Physical Health - Feeling the compulsion to be constantly busy causes stress, which is your body's way of preparing for a threat—real or imagined. When you're stressed, your body physically prepares for danger. Your heart rate increases, your pupils dilate, and your blood is diverted to your muscles. It's the classic "fight or flight" mode. When the immediate danger passes, your physiological functions return to normal.

People who struggle with chronic stress, however, are stuck in "fight or flight." Over time, chronic stress can cause headaches, sleep problems, sadness and anger, as well as serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and depression.

Breaking the Busyness Habit

Here are a few tips for managing the stress and anxiety that is associated with the urge to always be busy.

Breathe. Taking a few slow, mindful breaths can significantly reduce stress and worry.

Unplug. Periodically unplugging (taking a digital detox) is good for your mental health.

Connect socially—IRL (in real life). Don't let social media replace spending quality time with people you care about—especially your children.

Take care of yourself. Eat right, exercise, limit your alcohol consumption, get enough sleep, and spend time on enjoyable activities.



ACTION ITEMS

DO ONE THING: If the constant need to be busy defines your self-worth, talk to your healthcare provider about how it may be affecting your mental and physical health.

SHARED DECISION MAKING: Work together with your healthcare provider to find effective strategies to manage your stress and help you be more mindful.