



6 Things People Do Around the World to Slow Down

A) Warm up

1. What do you like to do in order to slow down after a busy day?
2. To what extent would you agree with the idea that we live a faster pace of life today compared to 20 years ago?

B) Adapted Text - 6 Things People Do Around the World to Slow Down

6 Things People Do Around the World To Slow Down

Adapted from an article published in 2023 by TED Ideas

Are you **overwhelmed** by the speed of your life? Are you constantly **juggling** emails, notifications, WhatsApp messages from friends, family and colleagues? If so, how can you slow down to see things more clearly and enjoy them more?

One way is to **draw inspiration from** calming rituals and traditions found across the world. If you've already mastered the Spanish siesta — everyone's favourite midday nap — what other practices can you **incorporate into** your life?

I have **drawn up** a list below of 6 insights and techniques to help you shift into the slow lane.

1. Shinrin yoku

Eco-therapy. Green time. Wilderness cure. Whatever name you give to it, spending time in nature is a wonderful way **to wind down**.

It makes you calmer, happier and less stressed. It **fosters** strong memory, creativity and concentration. It can also deepen friendships.

In Japan, spending time in nature is called shinrin yoku ("forest bathing") — and Japanese doctors prescribe it to their patients.

I prescribe it to myself. My favourite way to reset is to wander around the park near my home in London.

Shinrin yoku is easy to do: Just head to the nearest green space and start walking, picnicking, camping, gardening.

2. Fika

The Swedish word fika translates as "coffee and cake break," although its meaning is

significantly more **profound** than that. Fika is a **mindset**: slowing down, being present, **savouring** the moment.

Forget drinking a latte while walking down the street and using your phone. When you fika, you put away the screens and sit down somewhere cosy. You slowly sip your coffee (or your drink of choice). You bite into a delicious cake or cookie, and you enjoy a proper chat with someone.

You can fika any time, anywhere. Do it with a friend over homemade muffins in your own kitchen. Or head to a coffee shop for light chat over croissants with a colleague. Fika is so uplifting that regular fika breaks are written into some job contracts in Sweden.

3. Slow Radio

A rich soundscape can offer a **safe haven** from the craziness of modern life. That's why I love Slow Radio on the BBC.

I listen to elephants bathing in Zimbabwe, birds singing in Buenos Aires or a small boat navigating the Thames River in London. The sounds are deep, immersive and calming.

Slow Radio is free online. Just put on some headphones, hit "play" and let a symphony of slowness **overwhelm** you.

4. Ubuntu

One of my favorite proverbs is: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

It's a reminder that a slower life is built on strong relationships. That spirit is captured by the word ubuntu, which means "I am because we are" in the Zulu and Xhosa languages of southern Africa.

You **foster** the spirit of ubuntu by being kind, generous and compassionate. Being of service. Building community.

I practice ubuntu by committing random acts of kindness, such as chatting briefly with the cashier at the supermarket or helping a vulnerable person cross the road.

5. Dolce far niente

In a world terrified of wasting time, doing nothing feels like a crime or a sin. I'm here to say: It is neither! Because doing nothing is an art form.

It offers sweet relief from the daily grind and the **relentless** pressure to achieve, and Italians call it 'il dolce far niente'.

Trust me: When you overcome the guilt, doing nothing is actually very easy. Put down tools, turn off your phone, stop **striving** and then ... sink into the moment.

Lie in the grass or look out the window and let your mind wander. Pretty soon you'll be **singing the praises of** living more by doing less.

6. Indian head massage

Massaging the head has been a tool of Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. Whatever your view on chakras, a good head massage has been shown to relieve stress and headaches as well as **kick-start** the lymphatic system. It can leave you feeling relaxed and better able to concentrate.

A head massage from an expert is the ultimate luxury. But you can also do this yourself. Place three fingers at the point where your neck joins your head just behind the ear. Then rub your fingers back and forth. Within 30 seconds, you'll feel a slow, pleasant warmth.

Link to the original article:

<https://ideas.ted.com/6-things-people-do-around-the-world-to-slow-down/>

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

overwhelmed	to juggle	to draw inspiration from	to draw up
to incorporate	to wind down	to foster	profound
to savour	relentless	to strive to	to sing the praises of

1. To deal with several tasks at the same time: _____

"I am currently _____ 3 projects, so it is a really stressful period for me."

2. Showing a clear and deep understanding of important or intellectual matters:

"I was impressed by her _____ knowledge of the current political landscape."

3. Continuing in an intense way: _____

"We are struggling to keep up with the _____ pressure to stay ahead of our competitors."

4. To include something as part of a whole: _____

"We need to _____ these important habits into our weekly routine."

5. To encourage the development of something, especially something positive:

"We aim to _____ a strong work-ethic among our team members."

6. To enjoy food or to enjoy an experience as much as possible: _____

"He _____ every mouthful of the meal."

"I really want to _____ this beautiful evening."

7. To express enthusiastic approval for someone or something: _____

*"She has been _____ of this new methodology for many weeks now.
Maybe we should test the same approach."*

8. To try very hard to make something happen: _____

"As a company, we _____ to provide the best service for our customers."

9. To prepare and write a document: _____

"I have _____ a contract, which they need to sign by the end of the week."

10. To come to an end slowly: _____

"The day normally _____ at about 4pm."

"Trading is _____ as we approach the Christmas holidays."

11. To get inspiration from: _____

"For the advertising campaign, we _____ previous campaigns which had been really successful."

12. Feeling as if something is too much or too strong for you: _____

"When I started in the new position, I was completely _____ by the fast pace of the industry."

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. According to the author, what are the key benefits of 'Shinrin Yoku'?

2. What are the key differences between 'Fika' and simply drinking a coffee?

3. What do you think is meant by the phrase 'safe haven' in the 'Slow Radio' section of the article?

4. How does the author describe the sounds experienced in 'Slow Radio'?

5. How can we practise 'ubuntu'?

6. What can 'il dolce far niente' help to counter?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

overwhelmed	to juggle	to draw inspiration from	to draw up
	to incorporate	to foster	profound
to savour	relentless	to strive to	to sing the praises of

Striking That Elusive Work-Life Balance

Finding Work-Life Balance in a Busy World: Unveiling the Art of Juggling Responsibilities
 In today's fast-paced and demanding society, many individuals find themselves _____ by the _____ pursuit of success, often at the cost of neglecting their personal lives. The delicate balance between work and life can seem like an elusive dream, but with the right strategies and mindset, it is possible to achieve a harmonious blend that allows for personal growth, professional accomplishments, and a _____ sense of fulfillment.

The first step towards finding work-life balance is to _____ your responsibilities effectively. It's essential to recognize that life comprises more than just work. By understanding your priorities and allocating time accordingly, you can strike a healthy equilibrium between your professional and personal pursuits. Take a step back and assess the different aspects of your life that require attention. Work-life balance is not necessarily about dedicating equal amounts of time to each area, but rather about giving appropriate attention to the things that matter most to you.

It is healthy to _____ not only from people who have achieved great things in their career, but also people who have done great things for their community or built a happy family life. Today's society tends to _____ of those who earn huge sums, work round the clock or make it to the top of the career ladder, whilst at the same time ignoring those who _____ a healthy family environment. Learn from those who have faced similar challenges and have discovered effective methods to _____ their passions, hobbies, and relationships into their busy schedules.

It's important to incorporate self-care activities into your routine to ensure you have time to wind down and recharge. Engage in activities that bring you joy and help you relax, whether it's reading a book, practising mindfulness, or pursuing a hobby. _____ a specific schedule for these activities listen to your mind and body's signals, as they can guide you towards a balanced lifestyle.

While _____ to excel in your professional endeavours, it's equally important to _____ and appreciate the moments spent outside of work. Cherish quality time with loved ones, engage in meaningful conversations, and create memories that will last a lifetime. The true essence of work-life balance lies in finding fulfilment and happiness in both spheres.

In the pursuit of work-life balance, it is essential to acknowledge that perfection is simply unattainable. Embrace the imperfections and learn to adapt to the ever-changing demands of life. Be kind to yourself and celebrate your achievements, no matter how small they may seem.

Finally, it's crucial to seek out employers who offer a healthy work environment, offer flexible schedules, and encourage their employees to maintain a fulfilling personal life. By choosing to work for organizations that value work-life balance, you increase the likelihood of achieving the equilibrium you desire.