

#MonthlyMotivations Rushing Through Your Day?

Presented by Helka Casey, August 18, 2026

[Helka] All right, good morning, Buckeyes. As you know, I am Helka, one of your internal OSU EAP counselors, and let's talk about the rush. Do you ever find yourself rushing through your day? Do you rush through your lunch? Maybe just rush from one task to the next without even a pause? Do you find yourself thinking about the next thing while doing the current thing? I do. Um, and does the day sometimes feel like it's a complete blur? Well, many of us spend our day just hurrying without even realizing it. And I noticed this even in myself the last couple weeks that I just fly through things, especially during my workday, and I'm like, "Ooh, what is that telling me?"

There are many reasons why we rush through our day. And the truth is, there's lots and lots and lots of reasons. Sometimes it is an imposing deadline. Maybe it's part of your people-pleasing. Sometimes it's just the pressure to be productive every minute of the day. And we got those messages growing up. Um, sometimes it's just stress, right? And this constant sense of urgency. Um, and sometimes it's simply a habit we've practiced for years. Whatever the reason, the first step is awareness. Because before we change our pace, we have to notice it. So, research does show us that chronic stress and frequent multitasking are associated, believe it or not, with reduced focus, not so great well-being, and not the best productivity. Task-switching itself comes with a lot of cognitive costs. It also comes with some other costs. Less enjoyment because we're not in the moment. We tend to make more mistakes because we are just trying to get task completion and we're not putting in those checks and those audits. It does reduce our focus because we basically have multiple tabs open in our little computer brain and we're focusing on all those instead of maybe just one or two. It does increase stress and it does play with that nervous system response, right, of constantly being activated. And when we're being so stressed, there is less connection with others. So, first we need to bring that awareness in, right? When do you rush the most? Is there a particular time of day? Is it when you're at work or is it more at home? Is it in the morning, evening, what have you? Just think about that for a moment.

And what does rushing feel like in your body? How does your body kind of indicate, 'dude, we're rushing?' And then what are some clues that urgency has taken over for you? Whether that's your thoughts, whether that's your body, whether that's um

maybe a behavior or a feeling. Some clues might be you're doing some shallow breathing, eating quickly. This is a big one for me. In fact, I was talking to a colleague last week about this. Like, I rushed through lunch. Like, when's the first time I rushed through lunch? To be quite frank with you, it was back in high school. We only had like what 20 or 30 minute lunch breaks. You spent the first 10 minutes or 15 in the lunch line if you didn't pack and then you rush through your day to get to the next class. And that's when I noticed it. And I repeated that same behavior in undergrad and through all the jobs I've had. And I've had administrative corporate jobs. I've had my counseling gig. Even here, I notice that I work through my lunch and I eat at my desk a lot. I know a classic therapy. No, no, a therapist would say not to do that, but it's interesting.

Do you find yourself more impatient, interrupting others? Are you skipping your breaks or I've been known to do this one, checking email while someone is talking? Just those are little cues of just to bring awareness. We're not judging and we're not going to focus on really why, right? We're going to focus more on the what. Sorry about that. Um, so that awareness first is key. Now, there's three ways, just three suggestions. There's plenty of other ways to do this, but we need to pause before the next task because what we do is if we are activated like within the nervous system, we're carrying that activation into the next task, but we also haven't really closed the loop or if there's a stress cycle, we didn't close that stress cycle. So, try to pause between the next task. So before opening the next email or starting the next meeting, just stop, take one slow breath, relax your shoulders, even roll them a little bit, and then just maybe ask yourself what matters most right now. Now, this isn't a productivity hack. It's really kind of a nervous system reset and a focus reset. Try to make an intentional transition. Complete before switching. Like I said earlier, notice when that one task ends. Let yourself complete it mentally before jumping into the next one. And a bonus is you can do a lunch reset. That could literally be just spending the first 5 minutes of your actual lunch with no phone, no email, no work, just eat your food. I know this doesn't sound revolutionary, but what this really does, it reinforces to your brain, your body, and your nervous system that it's allowed to stop and take a break and that it's safe to stop. And it really is a way to re-energize and reset. Lastly, practice the term enough. Not every email needs an immediate response. We don't have to be perfect on every task. Yes, do we strive for excellence? Obviously, we're Buckeyes. Yet, it doesn't have to be perfect. And not everything is so dang dirty urgent. We have this thing in this um this grind culture in the United States. It's called relentless performance pressure and everything

feels urgent. Not everything is. So just remind yourself to just you know what this is enough for now might be a way you can adopt that. Sometimes the most productive thing we can do is pause long enough to decide whether we're responding to what's important or simply reacting to what's a sense or feeling of urgency. The goal really is to be more intentional about the pace that you choose. So just a little motivation to give yourself a moment. Lastly, of course, the EAP is here for you and your eligible family members. We're the ones that offer you the complimentary confidential counseling sessions as well as work-life resources and we support managers in helping them support their staff and we're a big part of the critical incident response teams here at The Ohio State University and Wexner Medical Center. Uh you can always get a hold of us at 800-678-626-5247.

Check out our portal. There's tons of resources. And if you have any questions about your benefits, you're always welcome to email the internal team at eap@osmc.edu.