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Mind Hacks At Work

Everyday resets for focus, calm and recovery, on shift.

Neurosculpting · Vagal toning · Cerebellar boosting

A ProHealth UK wellbeing guide

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INTRODUCTION

Small resets, real change

The brain is a dynamic organ, capable of change, growth and adaptation. We call this neuroplasticity. Whether you want to sharpen focus, steady your stress response, or simply reset between jobs, small and regular actions build lasting change.

This guide shares simple, practical techniques you can use at work: on station, at your desk, or in the cab, with nothing more than the things already around you. No special kit, no complicated routines. Just quick resets that help you feel and function a little better through a shift.

Pick one or two that fit your day. Even a couple of times a week is a good start.

PART 1

Neurosculpting hacks at work

Neurosculpting is the art of gently rewiring your brain for steadier emotions, sharper focus and more resilience.



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1

Shift-end journaling, with a twist

HOW TO

- Keep a small notebook and a few coloured pens in your locker or bag.
- Give colours to feelings: blue for calm, amber for energy, green for growth.
- At the end of a shift, note how the moments felt, not just what happened.
- Now and then, write a few lines with your non-dominant hand.

WHY IT WORKS

- Colour engages emotional processing and builds self-awareness.
- Non-dominant writing nudges new neural pathways and flexibility.

2

The two-minute mirror reset

HOW TO

- At a washroom or locker mirror, make eye contact with yourself.
- Quietly repeat a steadying line: “I am capable.” “I can hand this over.”
- Take two or three slow breaths before you head back out.

WHY IT WORKS

- Engages self-reflection areas and the mind-body connection.
- Builds self-compassion and softens the inner critic after a hard job.

3

Sticky notes that travel

HOW TO

- Write a short, steady reminder on a sticky note.
- Put it where you will see it: locker door, cab dashboard, the kettle, your screen.
- Swap it each week so it keeps catching your eye.

WHY IT WORKS

- Friendly, repeated cues interrupt automatic negative thinking.
- Acts as a quick reset in the middle of a busy shift.

4

A grounding object in your pocket

HOW TO

- Keep something small and textured to hand: a smooth stone, a bit of cord, a stress ball.
- When things feel like a lot, focus on the texture: smooth, rough, firm, soft?
- Name the sensation to anchor yourself in the present.

WHY IT WORKS

- Brings you back into the present moment through the senses.
- Eases a racing mind by shifting attention to something solid.

PART 2

Vagal toning between jobs

Vagal toning gently switches on the body's rest-and-recover system, easing stress and steadying you.



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1 The cold reset

HOW TO

- At the sink, splash cold water on your face a few times.
- Or hold a cold, damp paper towel, can or bottle to the side of your neck.
- Breathe slowly while you do it.

WHY IT WORKS

- The cold triggers a natural calming reflex and gently slows the heart rate.
- Nudges the body towards its rest-and-recover setting.

2 Humming in the quiet room

HOW TO

- Somewhere quiet (the cab, the mess, a corner), hum a single steady note.
- Carry on for a minute or two.
- Feel the vibration in your chest and throat.

WHY IT WORKS

- The vibration stimulates the vagus nerve and the calming system.
- Helps steady focus and ease tension between jobs.

3

Straw breathing, or a long exhale

HOW TO

- Breathe in gently through your nose.
- Breathe out slowly through a straw or narrowed lips, longer than the in-breath.
- Carry on for a couple of minutes.

WHY IT WORKS

- A long, controlled exhale stimulates the vagus nerve and slows the heart.
- Shifts the body out of high alert and into rest-and-recover.

4

Gargle at the sink

HOW TO

- Fill a cup with water and gargle firmly for about thirty seconds.
- Focus on the vibration at the back of your throat.
- A good one to pair with a brew or brushing your teeth.

WHY IT WORKS

- Works the throat muscles, which stimulates the vagus nerve.
- A quick lift for mood and stress.

PART 3

Boosting coordination and focus

The cerebellum drives balance and coordination, and supports attention and memory. A few moves keep it sharp.



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1

Balance while the kettle boils

HOW TO

- While you wait for the kettle or stand at the sink, stand on one foot for thirty seconds.
- Swap feet, and repeat.
- To progress, close your eyes or add slow head turns, only where it is safe.

WHY IT WORKS

- Challenges the balance system and cerebellum.
- Sharpens coordination and spatial awareness.

2

Sock or ball toss

HOW TO

- In downtime, toss a rolled pair of socks or a ball from hand to hand.
- Build up a little speed.
- Add a second object for a juggling-style pattern.

WHY IT WORKS

- Builds hand-eye coordination and cerebellar activity.
- Encourages mental flexibility as the brain learns a new pattern.

3

Cross-body moves

HOW TO

- Standing, touch your right elbow to your left knee, then left elbow to right knee.
- Keep going for a minute or two, building a little speed.

WHY IT WORKS

- Engages both sides of the brain and the links between them.
- Supports coordination and attention.

4

Eyes-closed steadiness

HOW TO

- Stand still in a clear, safe spot with nothing to trip on.
- Close your eyes and notice your balance and your breath. Stay put.
- Open your eyes if you feel unsteady. Do this standing still, never walking about.

WHY IT WORKS

- Sharpens your sense of where your body is in space.
- Gently challenges the cerebellum and balance system.

PART 4

Mindfulness to tie it together

Four practices that pull the whole guide together, blending awareness, breath and movement.



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1

Grounding with the five senses

HOW TO

- Take a couple of slow breaths, then notice, in turn:
- 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.
- Take your time with each one.

WHY IT WORKS

- Brings you firmly into the present and steadies emotion.
- Engages the senses, tying together the resets in this guide.

2

Breath and body check

HOW TO

- Sit with both feet on the floor.
- Breathe in slowly through the nose into the belly, then out through the mouth.
- Scan from head to toe, noticing tension and letting it soften.

WHY IT WORKS

- Combines slow breathing with mindfulness for a calming effect.
- Reconnects body and mind after a demanding stretch.

3

Mindful walking

HOW TO

- On a walk between the bay and the office, slow down and notice each step.
- Feel your foot meet the floor and your balance shift.
- Pair it with the breath: in for four steps, out for four.

WHY IT WORKS

- Engages coordination and body awareness.
- Links movement, breath and attention in one simple practice.

4

Reset and reframe

HOW TO

- Close your eyes and picture a calm, safe place.
- Imagine putting a worry onto a leaf on a stream or a cloud, and letting it drift by.
- Bring your focus back to one steady, useful thought.

WHY IT WORKS

- Helps loosen automatic thought patterns.
- Combines calm and focus to ease stress and lift flexibility.

Two-week habit tracker

Pick a handful of hacks and colour a box for each day you do one.
Even one every few days is a good start.

Week 1

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Long exhale							

Week 2

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S

Conclusion

Well done for working through these resets across neurosculpting, vagal toning, coordination and mindfulness. Each one is a small, practical way to look after your focus, your stress response and your recovery, using only what is already around you at work.

Making it stick

1. Choose one or two hacks to fold into your shift.
2. Track them with the habit tracker on the previous page.
3. Notice any shift in your mood, focus and sleep.
4. Be patient. Change comes with steady, repeated practice.

“The mind is like a muscle. The more you work it, the stronger it gets.”

If you are struggling, you do not have to use these alone. Speak to your GP, Occupational Health, or the crisis lines: 999, NHS 111 (option 2), Samaritans 116 123, or text SHOUT to 85258.



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**Look after your mind the way you look after
your kit: a little maintenance, often.**

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