

VETERINARY PULSE PODCAST

Leaving Work at Work: A Daily Transition Checklist.

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Four habits (plus one nighttime rescue plan) to help you fully arrive at home — mind and body together. [Tune in to the accompanying podcast episode.](#)

1. DEPARTURE RITUAL (Last 15 Minutes at Work)

- ☐ Block off the final 15 minutes of your shift as dedicated shutdown time
- ☐ Scroll through today's appointments and lock any charts still open
- ☐ Reflect and name ****three high points**** from the day (even a good lunch counts!)
- ☐ Identify ****one new thing**** you learned today
- ☐ Optional: share your highs/grows with a teammate
- ☐ Make a physical change that signals "work is over" — change your shoes or clothes
- ☐ Remind yourself: **leaving on time is a chosen, sustainable act — not laziness**

2. REJUVENATION PLAN (Built Into Your Daily Schedule)

- ☐ Choose a regenerative activity for your daily routine (before or after work — whichever actually fits your energy)
- ☐ Experiment with a few options: workout, yoga, walk, pilates
- ☐ Try parking farther away to get a few minutes outdoors before/after work
- ☐ Protect at least ****15 minutes**** of buffer time before diving into home life
- ☐ Notice what's working, and adjust — this plan should be something you love, not a chore

3. TECHNOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

- ☐ Turn off non-essential notifications; use Do Not Disturb or Focus modes
- ☐ Switch your screen to grayscale to reduce the phone's dopamine pull
- ☐ Put physical distance between you and your phone (drawer, another room)
- ☐ Set "no-phone zones" — especially the bedroom and mealtimes
- ☐ Delete, hide, or relocate time-consuming apps off your home screen
- ☐ Swap phone scrolling for an analog alternative — a book, a hobby, a walk
- ☐ Add a "speed bump" (rubber band, custom lock screen) to prompt a pause before checking

4. HOMECOMING TRANSITION RITUAL:

On the drive home:

- ☐ Pack a healthy snack and a refreshing beverage for the commute
- ☐ Choose an uplifting scent for the ride — citrus, bergamot, or lavender are good starting points
- ☐ Queue up music or a podcast that's fun or relaxing (save the medical podcasts for morning)
- ☐ Notice if work thoughts creep in — if so, change the sounds or scents next time

At the front door:

- ☐ Communicate with family/roommates that you need 5–30 minutes before fully re-engaging
- ☐ Take that time for yourself — a soak, a dog walk, a few quiet minutes in the car
- ☐ If home isn't set up for a transition yet, pause in the car first to breathe and reset
- ☐ Keep encouraging each family member to build their own transition ritual too

5. HANDLING THOUGHT SPIRALS

When a work spiral hits (falling asleep or waking at 2 a.m.):

- ☐ Accept the spin: Don't fight it; that only feeds it
- ☐ Assess: Is this an emergency? Is it happening in real life, or just in my head?
- ☐ Remind yourself: *"This is my brain prepping me for something that isn't happening right now — just electrical activity."*
- ☐ Choose a self-soothing reset technique:
 - ☐ 4-7-8 breathing
 - ☐ A short mindfulness/meditation session
 - ☐ The Category Game (list dog breeds, cities, instruments — or the spelling chain version)
 - ☐ 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Grounding:
 - ☐ 5 things you can see
 - ☐ 4 things you can touch
 - ☐ 3 things you can hear
 - ☐ 2 things you can smell
 - ☐ 1 thing you can taste

Tip: You won't nail every step every day — and that's fine. Reset the goal fresh tomorrow. [VIN Foundation](#) and [Vets4Vets®](#) are here to help.