



By: Leslie O'Connell

## One Minute Challenge

Deb is a super-popular fitness trainer at the club where I work out. Even though her classes start at sunrise on Saturday mornings, they're a magnet and packed with people. She's positive, high-energy, and fun. She knows what to say to keep us going.

She always thanks us for getting out of bed to show up. Just when we're about to give in on a circuit, she reminds us to finish strong. I've noticed a pattern, too – we'll have 50 seconds of high-intensity exercise, then 10 seconds for recovery and a sip of water.

Wow! A lot happens in just one minute. Why not treat our mental fitness like our physical fitness? How often we get caught up in intense workdays . . . a string of back-to-back meetings or Zoom calls, the nagging (and endless!) checklist of things to do, deadlines, and all those the "gotta minute?" conversations. As the day goes on, it's no surprise that our energy, stamina, and focus decline. It's a challenge to keep showing up at our best.

**Try the one-minute challenge.** Treat mental fitness like physical fitness. Just breathe. Take a brain break. All it takes is intention and commitment. Here's how: Set your smartphone alarm for a time – say, 9:59 a.m. – a cue to stop what you're doing. Now for your mental fitness recovery:

- Sit or stand comfortably, relax your shoulders, rest your arms.
- Feel your feet on the floor.
- Set a timer for 60 seconds.
- Close your eyes, clear your mind, exhale, and just breathe.
- For added focus, touch the pad of your pointer finger to your thumb and gently rub them together.

It may surprise you how refreshing just a minute of intentional breathing can be to your mental fitness. Ideally, take a one-minute break every hour. Or just start small – once in mid-morning, once in the afternoon. Not only will it refresh your day, but you'll also be able to finish strong.