

FRICTION

INTERNAL

Management Begins in Your Feet

The Experiment: Reframe Your Walk

Duration: One week

Time required: 10–20 minutes daily

Goal: Get the biggest impact from your walk.

Make it an experiment goal to improve your walks in these ways:

1. Leave your phone or lock it.

If you bring it for safety or notes, use airplane mode.

2. Keep the pace conversational.

Light aerobic intensity best supports prefrontal control and mood without adding “workout stress.”

Short, moderate-intensity interruptions of sitting have improved processing speed and prefrontal task activation in randomized crossover designs.

3. Lengthen your exhale while you move.

Try 4 seconds in, 6 seconds out. Longer exhales stimulate parasympathetic activity, complementing the calming effect of light ambulation (consistent with the autonomic downshift observed during active microbreaks).

4. Eyes up to invite optic flow.

Let your gaze rest at the hallway “horizon,” not your shoes or phone. The visual flow of forward movement helps the nervous system down-regulate threat scanning and widens attention.

5. Name, then aim.

Mid-walk, label your primary emotion in a sentence (“I feel ____ because ____”) and follow with “What outcome do I want 24 hours from now?”

6. End with one next step.

Before you “re-enter,” choose a single action (e.g., send a three-bullet reply; schedule a call; capture a defer until date). Behavior specificity is how a calmer state becomes better leadership.

The best time to walk? Any time.

But here are 2 specific use cases that can have outsized impact:

- **Use short, frequent resets around high-stakes moments.** Ten to fifteen minutes before difficult emails, feedback, or negotiations. Evidence favors repeated walks for cognitive steadiness across the day.
- **Make some 1:1s walking talks.** Side-by-side movement lowers defensiveness and, in controlled studies, walking increases creative ideation, useful for problem-solving conversations. Capture decisions immediately after returning to your work space.

Reflection: What did you notice?