

RECHARGE Instant Recess Toolkit

What is Instant Recess?

RECHARGE Instant Recess (IR) is a relaxing, short (5 to 10 minutes), and organized break that is built into the workday. It can be done anywhere, any time, and is a great way to have fun and destress as a team.

Background:

According to the American Psychology Association, allowing yourself to step away, RECHARGE, and truly relax has a major effect on lowering stress. Breaks are the best way to prevent job burnout.

- ✓ 65% of City employees say they want to cope better with stress.
- ✓ Money, work and family responsibilities are the top 3 stressors for adults in the United States.

Taking regular breaks throughout your workday help promote physical and mental relaxation, while skipping breaks can lead to stress and exhaustion.

RECHARGE IR allows for time to incorporate an active and relaxing break during the workday. IR breaks can help to reduce stress, relieve muscle tension, and activate the body's relaxation response. It also helps increase energy, productivity, and a sense of calmness.

How to start RECHARGE Instant Recess

Designate a time and space. Find the right space and time for employees to move and relax. Then, use the [guide](#) provided to lead a breathing or movement break from the [RECHARGE IR activities](#) deck. Remember, the most important component of RECHARGE Instant Recess is incorporating [mindful breaks](#) in the workday.

Instructions

Consider Logistics:

- **Ask for leadership support.** RECHARGE IR should be introduced to the workplace as an ongoing resource. You can start off with a 6-week pilot to see how participation is. When identifying the space, time, and day for RECHARGE IR consider allowing Department Leaders to weigh in and support the activity by encouraging staff to participate and by participating themselves.
- **Choose the right space.** Find a space where employees can safely gather once a week for RECHARGE IR.
 - Remember to follow [health and safety guidelines](#) when in the same space. Consider holding the Instant Recess outdoors if it is safe to do so and space is available.
 - Possible **indoor locations** can include break areas, conference rooms, clearings between cubicles, or hallways. The space doesn't have to be large, just large enough for everyone to safely move. Make sure the location you choose for RECHARGE IR is close in proximity to employees. The farther they must go, the more likely they may opt out.
- Consider **using MS Teams** to facilitate Instant Recess virtually if it makes sense for your workplace, so participants and facilitators can join and have access from almost anywhere.
- **Schedule RECHARGE Instant Recess:**
 - **Choose a day of the week.** Select a day that works when most employees are at the workplace. Avoid hosting activities during alternative work schedules and on heavy meeting/offsite days.
 - **Choose a time of day.** It is difficult to find a time that works for all, so aim for a time that is the most accommodating. Consider hosting one session in the morning so employees can have a boost of energy to start the day, and hosting another in the afternoon for a refreshing break.
- **Provide multiple RECHARGE IR breaks.** If space is limited, offer additional 10-minute sessions throughout the workday. For example, a 10am morning session and a 3pm afternoon Instant Recess break.

Adding additional sessions during the week or day ensures that people have space to move comfortably and safely while adhering to health and safety guidelines.

- **Who is leading the activity?** It's ideal to have a dedicated person(s) help lead the activity. Rotate activity leads among your team if possible. Make sure to schedule it into your day to avoid having other obligations or conflict. You can also consider rotating leaders for each week. Use this [sign-up sheet](#) to help schedule leaders and diversify the activities throughout the weeks.

Advertise & Promote:

- **Send emails.** Send an email using this [promotional email template](#) to introduce and explain RECHARGE IR. People are more likely to attend when they have more information about the event.
- **Hang Flyers.** Post [flyers](#) in the break area or locations that are highly visible to employees, after receiving manager approval.
- **Send email calendar invitations.** Calendar invites helps employees easily add the breaks to their schedules. Create a Microsoft Teams Channel or chat to communicate and remind employees of when activities will take place.

Start RECHARGE Instant Recess!

- **Select activities that work for your employees.** Use the RECHARGE Activities deck. Choose activities that is appropriate and most beneficial for your workforce and employees job functions. For example, consider standing stretches for desk workers or deep breathing exercises for first responders.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Be sure to practice the activities beforehand to ensure proper posture and to help guide participants. It's important that the person leading the activity feels comfortable with the activity and providing instruction and guidance for other participants.

- **Start the Activity.** Here is a [guide](#) to help lead activities effectively and safely. Make sure to stick to the specified time and provide exercise modifications when possible.
- **After Recess--Reflect.** Some questions to reflect on and ask feedback from others include: What movements were helpful and what movements were not? Were the activities too difficult or too easy? Did you go over the specified time?
 - Solicit anonymous feedback by sending a short poll or survey using [SurveyMonkey](#) or [Doodle](#), to participants. Check-in with participants before a new session or after a session. Ask how they liked the RECHARGE IR break and if they found it helpful. Welcome participants to share what can be done differently or how to incorporate other activities into the next session.
 - Using feedback and your reflections adjust teaching style and activities accordingly.

Tips to Encourage Participation

- **Send a [reminder email](#).** Send an email with the location and time in advance of the activity. Some employees may need a reminder email to show up. Please also utilize calendar invites so employees can add Instant Recess Breaks to their calendars. In addition, creating an MS Teams Channel or chat will allow for quick and easy reminders about the breaks.
- **Provide multiple RECHARGE IR breaks.** Additional IR breaks allow for more space, comfort, and options for employees to attend.
- **Share stories/testimonials.** Spread the news about RECHARGE IR by asking participants to share their experience with others. With permission, consider sharing participants' stories in a department newsletter, intranet site, all staff meeting, or bulletin board posting.
- **Play music.** Having music sets the mood for relaxation and encourages people to keep coming to these sessions. Consider some calming songs from the [Instant Recess playlist](#). Small speakers or even your phone will do the trick.

TAKE TIME TO



RECHARGE

- **Get employees involved.** Let employees pick activities of the day, consider a rotation of employees who will lead the activity, or let participants choose the songs to play during the break.

Need additional support? Contact well-being@sfgov.org