



The Desk Rewilding Checklist: 5 Science-Backed Ways to Lower Cortisol Indoors.



We weren't built to stare at screens all day; unfortunately, that's the deal for many of us.

But when we're bombarded with bright lights, notifications and deadlines, our nervous systems get stuck in "fight or flight". Our brains start constantly scanning for danger, sudden movements, and noise. We might not notice it, but this low-level, constant stress keeps our cortisol (the stress hormone) pumping.

We can counteract this using the concept of biophilia. This is our innate human instinct to connect with nature.

When we bring elements of the natural world into our indoor spaces, we signal to the brain that we are safe. The best part is you don't need to live in a forest to feel the benefits!

You just need to trick your nervous system into feeling the wild, even at your desk.



Here are 5 simple, biology-based ways to rewild your workspace today.



1. The Fractal Fix (Visual Safety)

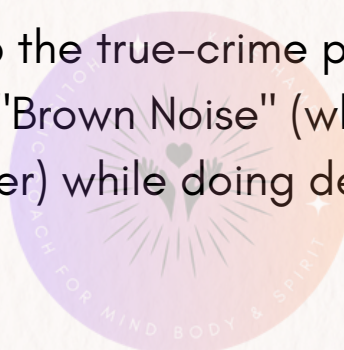
- The Science: Fractals are repeating patterns found in nature (like fern leaves, snowflakes, or tree branches). Looking at fractals has been proven to significantly lower stress levels because our brains process them effortlessly.
- The Action: Swap your desktop wallpaper to a high-quality image of a forest canopy, ocean waves, or a close-up of a leaf.
- If you can, put a real (or highly realistic fake) plant on the corner of your desk.

2. The Panoramic Gaze (Eye-Brain Connection)

- The Science: Staring intently at a screen triggers "foveal vision," which is linked to high alertness and stress. Expanding your vision to a panoramic view physically signals the nervous system to stand down.
- The Action: Apply the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Ideally, look out the window. Let your eyes go soft and take in the wider horizon.

3. Auditory Anchoring (Soundscapes)

- The Science: Sudden, unpredictable noises (like phones ringing or traffic) spike adrenaline. Continuous, natural soundscapes mask these triggers and promote calm brainwave activity.
- The Action: Swap the true-crime podcast for a playlist of birdsong, rainfall, or "Brown Noise" (which mimics the sound of a rushing river) while doing deep-focus work.





4. Tactile Grounding (Touch)

- The Science: Our modern environment is entirely smooth plastic and glass. Engaging our sense of touch with natural textures brings us back into our physical bodies, stopping the mental spin.

- The Action: Keep a smooth river stone, a piece of textured wood, or a pinecone on your desk. When you feel an anxiety spike, pick it up. Notice the weight, temperature, and texture in your hands for 60 seconds.

5. Light Signalling (Circadian Rhythm)

- The Science: Artificial overhead lighting confuses your circadian rhythm, leading to the "tired but wired" feeling. Natural light tells your biology what time it is, regulating your energy and sleep cycle.
- The Action: If possible, position your desk so you are facing or sitting sideways to a window. If you are in a windowless room, use a warm-toned desk lamp rather than relying solely on harsh overhead office lights.





You don't have to live in a state of constant stress.
If you are feeling frazzled, exhausted, and running on
empty, this checklist is just the beginning.

I'm Kate, a Holistic Coach for Mind, Body & Spirit,
and I help people move from surviving to actually thriving
using science-based positive psychology.

Ready for a deeper reset?
Find my 5-Day Nervous System Reset at
madeahames.com.

Just 10 minutes a day to clear the mental clutter, set
graceful boundaries, and finally catch your breath.
Sign up for some group sessions, or take a look at my 1:1
coaching.

Find me on Facebook or sign up for my newsletter so you
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