

A Break With What You Have

One person, 25 minutes. Choose an activity you would enjoy.

Available at home: a comfortable place to sit or rest, usable light, and a book already owned. If no suitable book is available, take a quiet pause instead. No new supplies or equipment are required.

Assume the time fits your existing responsibilities, with no extra journey or paid care arrangement. This plan needs no bath, special drink, skincare, candle, app, or subscription. Change the plan or include any added costs if those conditions do not fit.

The 25-minute plan

Time	What to do
Minutes 0-3	Choose reading or a quiet pause. Set aside unrelated tasks if you can; keep necessary contact available.
Minutes 3-18	Read for up to 15 minutes, or take a quiet pause. Change your choice or finish early if you prefer.
Minutes 18-23	Spend five minutes sitting or resting comfortably without adding another activity.
Minutes 23-25	Put the book away and decide what comes next in your evening.

Timing check: 3 + 15 + 5 + 2 = 25 minutes.

Other options to check

Music, 10-15 minutes: use existing access or an offline recording. Check data and subscription requirements; quiet is the fallback.

A short note, 5-10 minutes: use available paper and pen or an offline notes app. A new journal is optional; thinking without writing is an alternative.

Time outside, 10-20 minutes: check access, route, weather, clothing, and travel needs. Choose an indoor activity if it does not fit.

Conversation, 10-15 minutes: agree on a time with another willing person and confirm calling or data charges. If unavailable, arrange another time.

No new purchase does not mean every resource is free. Existing belongings, utilities, and consumables can have costs. There is no required mood score or deadline for feeling better.

Check the Complete Cost

One occasion, all participants. Write on a copy; calculations are manual.

Worked example: free admission, paid travel

Hypothetical US-dollar example: one person reads at an open, accessible library for 25 minutes. Travel takes 10 minutes each way, making 45 minutes total. Assume on-site reading is free and no supplies, refreshments, service fees, or paid care are needed.

New payment for this occasion	Amount
Admission and on-site reading	\$0
Return transport, both directions and charges included	\$4
New supplies and refreshments	\$0
Total for one person	\$4

With \$5 available, $\$5 - \$4 = \$1$ remains. For two people each paying the same \$4 return fare, group transport costs \$8. Prices are assumed; verify local access and charges.

Backup: use the 25-minute at-home plan if the library is closed, unsuitable, or beyond the available budget. Check card, device, availability, and data requirements before choosing an ebook instead.

Plan your own break

Activity and date:

Participants / availability confirmed:

Activity time + travel = total time:

Supplies, space, and access available:

Purchases, fees, and consumables:

Travel, data, care, or other added cost:

Total for group / amount per person:

Funds available / amount remaining:

Backup if the first option is unavailable:

Afterwards: would you choose it again? Note practical preferences; one occasion does not prove that an activity will address a particular feeling next time.

Activity reference: NIMH, Caring for Your Mental Health. It includes enjoyable activities and notes that preferences differ. This planner does not assess mental health.

nimh.nih.gov - official self-care guidance