

You need a break! It can be tough to step away from important assignments or materials for an important exam, but studies have shown that **regular breaks will actually increase your potential for success.**

Skip the Instagram feed for now: a recent survey by *Huffington Post* found that online activities can significantly increase stress. There are other ways to recharge your batteries.

Sleep is good! Researchers tell us that 10-20 minutes is the ideal ‘power nap’ duration. A 60-minute rest period helps when you are attempting to memorize facts, names, dates, and other important items. 90-minute naps boost creativity and emotion-driven memories.

Other ways to re-fresh and re-focus...

We’ve thought of ten creative ways to make the most of a ten minute pause—*wherever* you may find yourself around the Grounds of the University of Virginia.

#1 Stop in to the UVa Chapel. Walk along the windows and find a piece of stained glass that draws your eye. Sit down, set a timer on your phone if you like (then put it away), and take ten minutes doing nothing but gazing at the window. Let your eye wander deeply into the colors, the lines and the images. Breathe deeply and let the quiet of the chapel surround you.

#2 Open the gate into an empty Pavilion Garden (you’ll find them behind both the East and West Lawn rooms & Pavilions). Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes walking the garden paths. Step slowly, taking time to notice the path, the plantings, light in the sky. Listen for the noises of animals. Breathe in the fresh air. Walk a bit further along the path.

#3 Walk into the Fralin Museum of Art on Rugby Road. Leave your backpack in the coat room and wander into the galleries upstairs. Find a painting that intrigues you and stop in front of it. Sit down if you like. Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes to lose yourself in the painting--taking in the details, wondering about the scene, maybe even imagining yourself in the painting. There’s no hurry.

#4 Climb up to the top of the marble steps of the Rotunda. Put down your backpack and sit looking out on the view from that height. Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes to notice what you see from there: the people, the light, the natural beauty. Listen for sounds around you. Relax to know that, for now, you’re not doing anything at all.

#5 Step into the lobby of Old Cabell Hall. You are surrounded by Lincoln Perry’s mural, “Students’ Progress”. Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes to peruse the painting, stopping

wherever an image or a color draws you in. You don't have to examine the whole painting. Notice the details in the mural. Imagine yourself in the scene. Lose yourself for a little while.

#6 Stop at your favorite coffee shop or café. Buy your favorite drink (or make it for free in your room). Sit down in an inviting chair—or take your drink outside. Leave aside your phone or your book or your laptop. For now, only savor the warmth, the flavor of this treat. Take all the time you need to drink it. Feel free to close your eyes or look at your surroundings. Daydream about the coming break. How will you relax then?

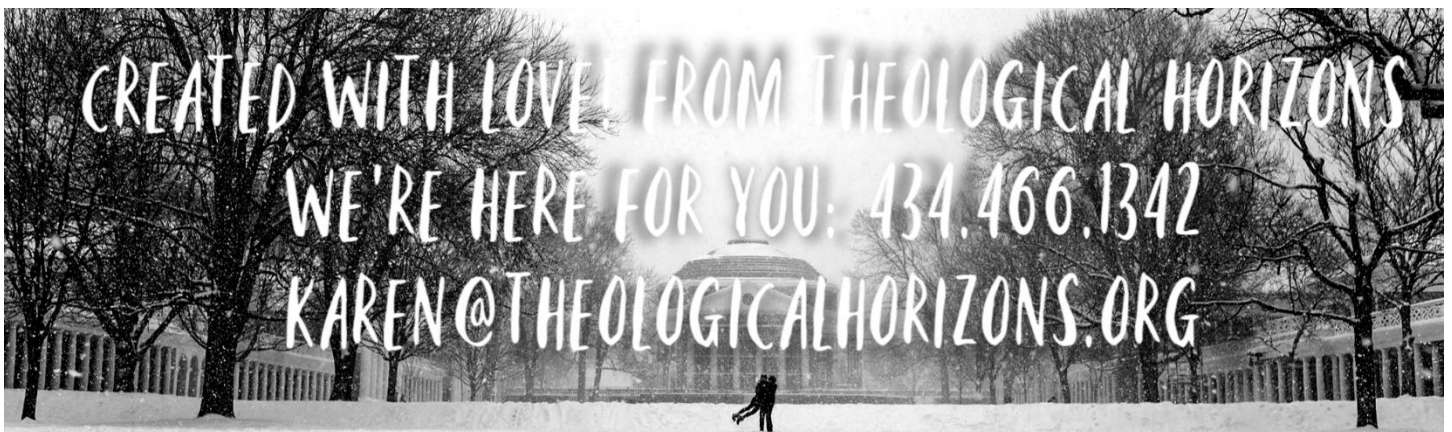
#7 If you're in the library, stand up and stretch. Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes to wander along shelves of books. Stop along the way to notice the titles; pick up books that interest you and flip through the pages, reading if something draws your eye. Look for engaging illustrations. There's nothing you need to study or remember here. Simply enjoy.

#8 Find a place to sit down. Anywhere that feels out of the way. Outside on a bench, in the grass. Or inside in a comfortable chair or on the floor. Set a timer on your phone (then put it away) and take ten minutes to close your eyes and let your body relax. Imagine yourself in a place you love—or with people you enjoy. Put yourself in the scene, picturing details that take you deeper into that welcoming space. Allow your eyes to stay closed; nobody is watching you. Just rest for a while.

#9 Choose a piece of music—or a favorite playlist--and listen to it with earbuds. Wherever you are, take a wandering walk, letting the sounds fill your mind and your body. Don't check your phone or do anything else right now; there will be time for that later. For these ten minutes, let the music be the soundtrack for your walk.

#10 Pause wherever you are. Get comfortable. Use your phone or laptop to visit the website, **Pray as You Go**. Explore this link: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/prayer-resources/imagining-the-nativity/> Here you will find a series of short guided reflections. Choose a character from the nativity story and listen to that very short podcast. Put yourself into the story.

Or try out their 4 minute guided breathing exercises: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/prayer-resources/prepare/>



Need to talk? Feel free to text Karen. She'll call you back! 434.466.1342