Production Line Micro-Recovery Protocol

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

New York State Trauma-Informed Network & Resource Center

ABOUT THIS TOOL

Audience

- Production Workers
- Machine Operators
- Assemblers
- Packing Operators
- Maintenance Technician
- Material Handlers

Description

This is a 90-second physical reset. Repetitive tasks—like gripping, lifting, or assembling—can create muscle strain, joint stiffness, and reduced circulation over time. Without short breaks, this tension can build up and lead to fatigue or discomfort.

When to Use

Use this every **90 minutes** during repetitive or high-volume assembly work, or during scheduled microbreaks

WORKPLACE STRESS

Manufacturing and factory work is mentally and physically demanding. Highly repetitive tasks require a high level of focus but can also lead to boredom over time. Physically, performing the same motions over and over can lead to Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs). This reset is based on the idea of workplace "Booster Breaks," which use brief, structured movement pauses to support the body during repetitive work. The goal is to reduce strain, improve circulation, and help the mind and body recover during the work shift without stopping production for long periods.

WHY THIS HELPS

Repetitive motion keeps certain muscles working in the same way for long periods. This can reduce blood flow, increase stiffness, and lead to fatigue or overuse strain. Short movement breaks help the body reset, improve circulation, and reduce the buildup of physical stress. These small resets also help maintain focus and comfort, which can support safer and more accurate work over time.

THE PRACTICE

Shoulder Decompression (15 seconds)

1. Clasp hands gently behind your back
2. Straighten your arms slightly
3. Lift your chest and open your shoulders
4. Hold for 15 seconds while breathing slowly

Wrist Tendon Glide (10 seconds)

1. Extend one or both arms forward
2. Gently pull fingers back with the other hand
3. Feel a light stretch through the wrist and forearm
4. Hold for 10 seconds, then switch if needed

Spinal Reset (about 30–40 seconds)

1. Place hands on hips
2. Slowly lean back slightly to open the chest
3. Keep movements small and controlled
4. Take **3 slow, deep breaths** into the belly

Return to neutral posture and resume work

WHY THIS WORKS

- **Microbreaks reduce muscle strain.**
  Short pauses help muscles recover from repetitive use.
- **Movement improves circulation.**
  Gentle stretching supports blood flow to working muscles.
- **Joint resets reduce stiffness.**
  Light stretching helps maintain mobility in wrists, shoulders, and spine.
- **Breathing supports recovery.**
  Deep diaphragmatic breathing helps the body relax and reset.
- **Short breaks improve long-term comfort and performance.**
  Regular resets can reduce fatigue and support safer, more consistent work throughout the shift.

Resources:
Find additional wellness information on the NYS Trauma Informed Network and Resource Center at traumainformedny.org

Looking to go deeper? Explore BREATH-BODY-MIND™ (BBM) for weekly breathwork practice, expert tips, and a welcoming community. Check out the website here for additional details.

Sources:
This tool was informed by occupational ergonomics research on microbreaks, workplace stretching programs such as CDC "Booster Breaks," and musculoskeletal injury prevention guidance from NIOSH and OSHA.