



HALT

TAKE A BREAK

A simple tool that puts a spotlight on some of the physical and mental elements that commonly affect wellbeing and performance.

Use HALT as your reminder to pause...

...and to plan and prioritise the daily pauses that we all need.

BACKGROUND

Our inspiration comes from a similar campaign that is currently being led by Guy's & Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. We believe that veterinary professionals are affected by many of the same working pressures as those within the human healthcare sector. Working in collaboration with Dr Mike Farquhar, a leading sleep researcher at Guy's and St Thomas', we have aligned our campaign with theirs and have received insights from their experience. Our vision at VetLed is to inspire, create and champion positive veterinary culture for our people, our patients and our profession. We want this message to reach everyone within the profession, and to ensure that all practices and organisations have equal access to the support materials.

As part of VetLed's focus on enhancing performance in practice, we continue to promote our HALT Campaign nationwide. It is driven by our patient safety, human factors and strategic communications experts, with the aim to reinforce the importance of physical and mental wellbeing within our profession.

"Unless critically ill patients require your immediate attention, our patients are always better served by clinicians who have had appropriate periods of rest during their shifts"

Dr Mike Farquhar, Consultant in Sleep Medicine at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

WHAT IS HALT?

HALT is a simple self-care tool...

HALT is also:

An acronym

A simple tool that puts a spotlight on some of the physical and mental elements that commonly affect wellbeing and performance.

A reminder to pause, as well as plan and prioritise those daily pauses that we all need.

Hungry and/or thirsty

Angry and/or anxious

Late and/or lonely

Tired

Does HALT make a difference to how we perform?

HALT has been used in many contexts for decades as a reminder of key aspects that can leave us vulnerable. In our environment the HALT factors affect how we physically and mentally feel and function and therefore, how we perform clinically. This subsequently has an impact on patient safety and our performance in practice.

HALT serves as a reminder to prioritise our own wellbeing alongside that of our patients. Self-care is anything but selfish!

The HALT acronym helps us to remember what Human Factors are in play affecting our clinical performance, personal wellbeing and even patient safety. But what now?

We've recognised there's an issue. It's important to mitigate against these factors or resolve them. We can do this by scheduling breaks. But how can we achieve this in a busy practice?

Remember the three Ps.



Plan out your team's breaks at the start of the day; think ahead so breaks are designed not to disrupt the day. This doesn't need to take long. Hold each other accountable for actually taking them. That way they will be more likely to happen!



Breaks, even for a very short time are important. They improve performance, safety and team dynamics. Prioritise scheduling breaks! Breaks are especially important to mitigate the effects of being hungry, thirsty, anxious, angry, late, lonely and/or tired. It is important to acknowledge that these factors are at play and can negatively affect your performance.



Take your break. Support each other to take your break. It is good to HALT. Can you mitigate any of the HALT factors now? After even a very short break, you will be more energised and alert, less prone to error, and perform more effectively. Team leaders can lead by example in making sure they HALT.

HOW TO DO IT

How might you support HALT happening at your practice...

Morning Huddle?

This could be in the morning before work begins, before a certain shift or at any convenient time at the beginning of a day. Ideally it will involve everyone in the practice (or a working team for a larger hospital) and only needs to be a few minutes.

The key ingredients are open communication, common language and a willingness and openness to discussing things and sharing concerns.

This will look different in each veterinary practice – make it work for yours!

Break planning?

Planning out the day, including short breaks, offers many benefits such as making what might initially seem like an unrealistic workload, more realistic. Some work could be re-distributed for example and team members have the chance to support each other when facing a heavy workload. This is something which may not seem reasonable or normal...until it becomes the norm!

Also, once a break/lunch is planned, you are subconsciously far less likely not to take it. Make yourself accountable to taking the break to which you have 'committed'!

Be accountable to one another for taking breaks?

This also involves remaining accountable to yourself. Ask yourself if are you taking your break? And if not, why not?

Be inquisitive - are your colleagues taking their planned breaks? If not, why not?

And if you are in leadership, have you thought about the effect on your team of leading by example?

Teams that are not hungry, thirsty, anxious, angry, late, lonely and/or tired are better performing, more productive and safer teams.



For more information on the HALT Campaign
visit our website, drop us an email or follow us
on social media



vetled.co.uk



info@vetled.co.uk



[@VetLedteam](https://www.facebook.com/VetLedteam)



[@vetledteam](https://twitter.com/vetledteam)



[@VetLedteam](https://www.instagram.com/VetLedteam)



[VetLed](https://www.linkedin.com/company/VetLed)

