

THE DAILY SHUTDOWN

A close for the end of the workday, so your brain doesn't restart it at 2am.



A five-move closing protocol from Order Under Load.

You stopped working. The day was still open.

The inbox is still open in your head. The message you forgot to answer is still pulling at you. The tab you left open still has a claim on your attention. The thing due tomorrow is half-remembered. So your body comes home, but the workday keeps following you.

That is why the evening disappears, and you enter the gray-zone of kind of working but not fully. It's not weakness or the need for a better relaxation routine. The day was never shutdown.

The Daily Shutdown is a close. Not a routine. Not a sleep hack. Not tomorrow planning in disguise.

It is ten minutes at the end of the workday where you shut down the open channels, clear the core work deck, and mark the workday done.

This does not mean you do nothing else tonight. You may still cook dinner, train, clean the house, help your family, pay a bill, or handle a small task. The point is that those things are no longer tangled with the big open loops from the workday.

The point is simple: when you walk away, be where you are.

“

You stopped working. The day was still open.

”

The details will be different for every man. The shape is the same.

1. Draw the line.

The core workday ends when you decide it does, not when the work runs out. Pick the time, stop taking on new work inputs, and begin the close. Everything after this point is shutdown, not pushing the workday forward.

Principle: the close begins on purpose.

2. Close the channels.

Go to every place someone can reach you: email, messages, Slack, CRM, DMs. Clear each one to a stopping point. Not zero. Not perfect. Just nothing urgent left unseen, and everything handled or parked where you will see it again. As you go, catch the ones where someone is blocked on you -- a reply, a decision, a yes or no they need -- and send the one line that frees them, so their morning does not wait on your inbox. Then pause the channels so they stop pulling at you all night.

Principle: an open channel is an open loop until you have looked and triaged it. A person waiting on you is the loudest one.

3. Clear the system.

Check the people most likely to be carrying your delay first: spouse/family, team, customer/client, vendor/contractor, or your future self tomorrow morning. Unblock the one person who matters most before you close. Then check the places where responsibility lives: task manager, reminders, calendar, waiting-for list, due items. Clear the surfaces that keep the day visually alive: downloads, desktop, inbox, desk. Forty open tabs keep the day running in your head whether you look at them or not. Last, empty your head: anything still circling that never made it into the system goes into the one place you trust, now. The loop you never wrote down is the one that wakes you.

Principle: a closed day leaves nothing open behind it — not with people, not in your system, not on your desk, not in your head.

4. Guard the evening.

Stopping is not enough. The tired hour after work is when you pick the phone back up without deciding to, and that is the worst moment to lean on willpower. Set a guard that runs on its own: scheduled app blockers, Do Not Disturb, work devices charging away from you, closed laptops, logged-out apps, removed shortcuts, or evening limits on the channels that reopen work. Decide it once, not every night. This is not a ban on evening life. It is a boundary around the work loops that would keep reopening themselves.

Principle: the guard should run without you. Structure, not willpower.

5. End in thanks.

End the day on purpose. A few words of thanks for the work, the provision, the ability to do it, and the people you are returning to. The work was a gift. It is not something you have to earn your way out of. Then mark it done the same way every night -- one fixed line your mind learns to hear as the end. Close the laptop. Stand up. Go be with the people in the next room.

Principle: the day ends in thanks and handoff, not collapse.

The fast-close -- the bare minimum. A full close is best, but a skipped close is how the rhythm dies, and the hardest days are the ones that most need closing. On those days, run the floor: empty your head into the trusted place, clear the one channel still burning, say your line. That still counts as closing the day. Run the close tomorrow.

No sixth step. Do not plan tomorrow here. Closure is its own job.

Instruction:

Fill this out once. Run it for seven days before changing it.

1. Draw the line.

The time I begin my shutdown (this might vary day-to-day, but put the ideal time):

The one action that starts the close:

2. Close the channels.

Every channel I clear and pause:

Who is waiting on you? Unblock the person most likely carrying your delay – list 3 – your spouse/family, team, customer/client, vendor/contractor, or your future self tomorrow morning.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

3. Clear the system.

Head-sweep -- loops still in my head, capture now

System checks: task manager due items calendar
 waiting-for reminders

Surfaces: downloads desktop inbox
 desk _____

4. Guard the evening.

My structural guard: what will automatically block, remove, or interrupt the work loops after shutdown?

5. End in thanks.

The words I end on (the same line every day):

Run the close for seven days without changing anything else about your system. Do not optimize it midstream. Do not turn it into a new productivity project. Run it and watch what changes.

Day	Closed the day?	What I noticed
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		

Watch one signal across the week:

- fewer loops at night
- less work bleeding into the evening
- a faster close
- fewer 2am wakeups
- more presence after hours

If something shifted in seven days, the order is doing its work.

If the close helps, keep running it.

If the same pressure keeps rebuilding by afternoon, it's just information, not failure. Don't get derailed.

It means the break is further upstream, where work enters your life and becomes responsibility. Maybe the wrong things are getting in. Maybe too much is held in your head. Maybe you don't have a good place to put them. Maybe decisions have no owner. Maybe the system exists, but the pressure keeps revealing the same break.

That is what the Order Under Load Diagnostic is for.

The Diagnostic maps where responsibility is turning into pressure, identifies the first operating break, and installs one structure that holds for the next seven days.

[Learn about the Founding Diagnostic](#)