

Healthy AI First, Episode 7: A Workday with Energy Left at Night

Sources and evidence for this episode

The episode rewinds Jonas's Tuesday and tells it again: a single change, an appointment reminder with a daylight-saving catch, from sorting the task through exploring, a short four-line contract and Daniel's second look to a careful go-live. Alongside, Miriam's day with a calendar that is only half hers. Plus breaks, rhythm and logging off: what micro-breaks do, why unfinished tasks are not remembered better but do push us to resume, and how a short plan helps us switch off. The workflow is a proposal to try, not a proven optimal work cycle. Tool tip: what Claude Code checkpoints do not undo.

All links were checked on 17 October 2026.

What we mention in this episode

Before You Set Out

- **Claim:** A new task only starts with an owner, an agreed reviewer and a free slot within the WIP limit; WIP limits come from Kanban practice; assigning an owner and reviewer in advance is the series' own proposal. Each team has to find its own limit.

Source: DORA: Work in process limits; basis of the series, chapter 10.

Link: <https://dora.dev/capabilities/wip-limits/>

Strength and limits: Practice guidance; the whole workflow is explicitly a hypothesis to be tested.

Exploring, and Sometimes a Map

- **Claim:** Explore, plan, build is a vendor recommendation; the plan is skipped if the change fits in one sentence (covered in depth in episode 3).

Source: Anthropic: Best practices for Claude Code.

Link: <https://code.claude.com/docs/en/best-practices>

Strength and limits: Vendor practice, not a controlled study.

- **Claim:** Depending on the season, UTC is one or two hours behind German clocks; counting back 24 hours in UTC across a clock change lands at 5 p.m. or 7 p.m. local time.

Source: Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB, Germany's national metrology institute): time zones.

Link: <https://www.ptb.de/cms/fachabteilungen/abt4/fb-44/ag-441/darstellung-der-gesetzlichen-zeit/zeitzonen.html>

Strength and limits: Official time reference (German page); the calculation follows from it (clock-change days have 23 or 25 hours).

The Short Contract

- **Claim:** A short contract states the goal, non-goals, checkable examples and open points; for high risk, rollout and rollback are planned in.

Source: Basis of the series, chapter 10.

Strength and limits: Proposal; the switch, metric and alert in the scene are invented.

Letting It Run

- **Claim:** While the agent works: stay in the same context, do a small self-contained job or take a break, no new complex topic; the reason is attention residue (covered in depth in episode 4).
Source: Basis of the series, chapter 11; Leroy, S. (2009), Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 109(2), 168-181.
Link: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2009.04.002>
Strength and limits: Lab finding plus proposal.
- **Claim:** Anthropic recommends letting the agent show evidence instead of claiming success.
Source: Anthropic: Best practices for Claude Code.
Link: <https://code.claude.com/docs/en/best-practices>
Strength and limits: Vendor practice.

Cairns

- **Claim:** A short plan for returning reduces attention residue (resumption point, covered in depth in episode 4).
Source: Leroy, S. & Glomb, T. M. (2018): Tasks Interrupted. Organization Science 29(3), 380-397.
Link: <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2017.1184> (press release: <https://www.washington.edu/news/2018/01/16/task-interrupted-a-plan-for-returning-helps-you-move-on/>)
Strength and limits: Four studies; applying it to agent work is a proposal.
- **Claim:** In a setup described by Anthropic, a new agent session first reads the progress file and Git history; this is a deliberately built setup, not standard behavior of all agents.
Source: Anthropic (2025): Effective harnesses for long-running agents.
Link: <https://www.anthropic.com/engineering/effective-harnesses-for-long-running-agents>
Strength and limits: Vendor technical case study; measures agent performance, not human load.
- **Claim:** In Claude Code, a prompt that starts a new turn creates a checkpoint; /rewind or pressing Esc twice with an empty input opens the restore menu. Only changes made with its own editing tools are captured, most subagent edits are not; what happens via commands stays; database changes, calls to external services and sent emails are not undone by any checkpoint.
Source: Anthropic: Claude Code, Checkpointing.
Link: <https://code.claude.com/docs/en/checkpointing>
Strength and limits: Vendor documentation; that external effects are not undone follows from checkpoints only saving files.

The Whole Day

- **Claim:** Put focused work into your individually stronger time windows and batch messages in planned communication windows.
Source: Basis of the series, chapter 11.
Strength and limits: Recommendation; that it works as a team agreement backed by the team lead is the series' own assessment.
- **Claim:** Micro-breaks of at most ten minutes bring slightly more energy and slightly less fatigue; the effect on performance is unclear, and more than half of the studies took place in the lab.
Source: Albulescu, P., Macsinga, I., Rusu, A., Sulea, C., Bodnar, A. & Tulbure, B. T. (2022): "Give me a break!" A systematic review and meta-analysis on the efficacy of micro-breaks for increasing

well-being and performance. PLOS ONE 17(8), e0272460.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0272460>

Strength and limits: Meta-analysis, 22 samples with 2,335 people; vigor $d = 0.36$, fatigue $d = 0.35$ (small effects), performance $d = 0.16$ not significant; 13 of 22 studies in the lab.

- **Claim:** Neither a 25-minute cycle nor a 90-minute rhythm is proven to be the best work cycle; the 90-minute rhythm comes from sleep research and is disputed for waking hours.

Source: Basic rest-activity cycle (Kleitman), overview.

Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_rest%E2%80%93activity_cycle

Strength and limits: Secondary source only; origin and early criticism summarized there.

Logging Off

- **Claim:** A meta-analysis from the University of Bern found no memory advantage for unfinished tasks, but a tendency to resume interrupted ones.

Source: Ghibellini, R. & Meier, B. (2025): Interruption, recall and resumption: a meta-analysis of the Zeigarnik and Ovsiankina effects. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 12.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05000-w>

Strength and limits: Meta-analysis; corrects the common claim that unfinished tasks are remembered better.

- **Claim:** Planning at the end of the day how open goals will continue makes it easier to switch off, especially for people highly involved in their work.

Source: Smit, B. W. (2016): Successfully leaving work at work: The self-regulatory underpinnings of psychological detachment. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology 89(3), 493-514.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12137> (summary: <https://www.bps.org.uk/research-digest/heres-si-mple-way-improve-your-worklife-boundaries>)

Strength and limits: 103 employees plus an experiment; effect mainly in a subgroup.

- **Claim:** Detaching from work goes, on average, with better reported health and well-being.

Source: Wendsche, J. & Lohmann-Haislah, A. (BAuA, Germany's federal institute for occupational safety and health, 2017): A Meta-Analysis on Antecedents and Outcomes of Detachment from Work. Frontiers in Psychology 7, 2072.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02072>

Strength and limits: Meta-analysis, 91 samples, 38,124 employees; correlations, no causal evidence.

Energy at Night

- **Claim:** With recurring fatigue, look first at workload, interruptions and the review backlog, not at individuals' break discipline; do not immediately fill saved time with more agent work.

Source: Basis of the series, chapter 11.

Strength and limits: Recommendation, not a study. The 1 to 5 energy scale is a convention of the series.

Tool tip: what Claude Code checkpoints do not undo

- Checkpoints, `/rewind` or pressing Esc twice with an empty input, limits (Bash changes and most subagent edits not tracked, not a replacement for version control): <https://code.claude.com/docs/en/>

Further reading

- Masicampo, E. J. & Baumeister, R. F. (2011): Consider it done! Plan making can eliminate the cognitive effects of unfulfilled goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101(4), 667-683. Lab experiments. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024192>
- Sonnentag, S. & Fritz, C. (2007): The Recovery Experience Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 12(3), 204-221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.204>
- Basis of the series: Healthy AI First Software Development, version 2 (1 October 2026), chapters 10 and 11.

Note

Healthy AI First is AI-researched and AI-generated, narrated in Björn's voice, recreated with AI, and reviewed by him.

Jonas, Daniel and Miriam are fictional characters used as illustrations; the appointment reminder, the clock-change bug and the on-call duty are invented scenes.