

# Shut the Tabs

A practical tool for slowing mental clutter when your brain feels like too many tabs are open at once.



# Too Many Tabs Open

After shift ends, your brain does not always get the memo. Your mind keeps cycling, open calls, unfinished reports, what you said, what you should have said. Then the personal stack loads on top: family, money, sleep, plans, the thing you forgot to handle three days ago.

This is not weakness. This is what happens when a high-alert brain tries to shift gears without a protocol. Every unresolved thought stays running in the background, drawing power, keeping you restless and reactive.

- ⓘ The goal is not to solve everything. The goal is to identify what is running, and decide what actually needs to stay open right now.

## Name the Open Tabs

Take two minutes. Write down whatever is running in each category. No editing. No judgment. Just get it out of your head and onto the page.

### Work Tab

Calls, incidents, reports, coworkers, supervisor, anything still unresolved from shift.

### Home Tab

Household tasks, chores, repairs, responsibilities sitting on your list.

### Money Tab

Bills, expenses, debts, financial stress, anything with a dollar sign attached.

### Health Tab

Sleep, pain, appointments you have been putting off, how your body feels.

### Relationship Tab

Partner, kids, parents, friendships, anyone you feel tension or distance with.

### Other Tab

Anything else running that does not fit a category above. If it is in your head, it counts.

# Close What Can Wait

Not every tab is urgent. Some are just loud. Use these three questions to decide what you can power down tonight – and give yourself permission to actually set it aside.

## 1 What does not need to be solved tonight?

If it cannot be acted on before you sleep, keeping it open only costs you rest. Name it. Set it aside.

## 2 What can be written down and handled later?

A task on paper is no longer a task spinning in your head. Write it. Close that tab.

## 3 What is not actually yours to fix?

Some tabs belong to someone else. Carrying them does not help them – it just weights you down.

### Remember

Closing a tab is not quitting. It is a tactical decision. You are choosing where your mental resources go – and right now, rest is the mission.

# Keep One Tab Open

You do not need to carry the whole stack. Strip it down to one. The single most important thing that genuinely requires your attention right now – not tomorrow, not eventually, but *right now*.

What is the one thing that truly needs attention right now?

Write it down. Be specific. Vague tabs stay open. A clear, named next action can actually be completed – or consciously set aside. If nothing genuinely needs action tonight, name that too. "Rest" is a valid answer. "Decompress" is a legitimate next action for an officer post-shift.

- ✔ One focused tab performs better than twenty scattered ones. You are more effective – and more present – when you stop splitting attention across problems you cannot solve right now.

# One-Minute Reset

Use this sequence at the end of shift, in your vehicle before you walk through the door, or any time the mental noise gets loud. It takes sixty seconds.



## Write It Down

Get the loudest tab out of your head and onto paper. Named things lose power.



## Slow Your Breathing

Four counts in. Four counts out. Repeat three times. Your nervous system will follow your breath.



## Unclench Your Jaw

Most officers carry tension here without noticing. Let it go deliberately.



## Relax Your Hands

Open your fists. Drop your shoulders. Your body has been on guard. Give it the all-clear.



## Focus on One Next Action

What is the single next thing you can actually do? Name it. Then only do that.

# Closing Reminder

You do not need every tab open to stay in control. Close what can wait. Focus on what matters next.

Carrying everything does not make you more prepared. It makes you more depleted. The officers who last – the ones who stay sharp, present, and effective – are the ones who learn to set things down without losing them.

<b>Name It</b> Identify what is running in the background.	<b>Sort It</b> Decide what actually needs action tonight.
<b>Set It Down</b> Give yourself permission to close the rest.	<b>Reset</b> Use your sixty seconds. Then move forward.

- This worksheet can be completed in under five minutes. Keep a copy in your vehicle, your locker, or your phone. Use it as often as you need to – there is no limit on a reset.

