



# Pair Retros

## What is a pair retro?

A pair retro is a short retrospective (usually around 5 minutes) held at the end of the day with the person you've been pairing with. The purpose is to talk about how the day went, reflect on what went well, and determine if there are ways the pair can collaborate better in the future. It's a good opportunity to get to know your teammate's working style and improve your future pairing sessions.

## What should I talk about in a pair retro?

- Times throughout the day when you felt things were going really well
  - "I felt like we were really in a groove after lunch - we crushed out that feature and managed to get in that sweet refactoring"
  - "I liked that we took a break when we got stuck on that test - I felt a lot more refreshed coming back, and we were able to get unstuck a lot faster"
  - "Today was really fun!"
- Times when you felt like pairing could have been better
  - "When we were working on that story after lunch I felt like we were spinning because neither of us were familiar with Spring Security. Next time I think we should split for a bit and review the docs, so we can understand what's going on"
  - "I felt a bit behind when we were working on the front end code. Next time I'd like to drive so I can get more familiar with that part of the codebase"
  - "I was really dragging in the middle of the afternoon, sorry if you felt like I wasn't fully present. I'll suggest that we take a quick break next time"
- Any questions you might have for your pair

- “I’m working on explaining complex technical solutions in a simpler way. Do you have any feedback for me from the meeting earlier when I was explaining that new system?”
- “How do you feel today went?”

## FAQs

- Should pair retros be every day?
  - Ideally, yes! During pair retros, it's essential to engage in meaningful conversations with your pair, even if you feel aren't any significant concerns to address. These conversations provide an excellent opportunity to connect with your pair and allow them to express their thoughts about how the day went. It's a great way to reflect on what went well throughout the day and identify areas where you can improve your collaboration in future pairing sessions. Additionally, these conversations provide insight into your pair's working style, which can help you understand them better and optimize future pairing sessions. So, it's highly recommended that you take advantage of every pair retro session, even if you don't have any big concerns to address.
- What if I don't have any critical feedback for my pair?
  - It's okay to not always have critical feedback! Take a moment to see what could have been improved, but if a pairing session went really well, that's great. There's no need to force feedback just for the sake of finding something to criticize. However, changing your perspective can sometimes be helpful when thinking about feedback. We often think of pair feedback as simply "critical", but it can also be a valuable tool for understanding each other's strengths and desires for growth. By doing so, you can optimize your partnership and support your pair in achieving their goals for growth.
    - If you and your pair were working in the physical world, building a complicated structure and the plans were continuously in flux, and you were collaborating on a physical task, what worked today and what didn't work today? If you were building a house, and your pair was holding the hammer while you held the nail, what worked and what didn't work for the two of you? Would it be better for someone to mark where the nails should go instead, and you use the nail *and* hammer? Do you want them to

demonstrate how they use a different type of tool? Is there anything about how you worked together that could be changed to make things more efficient / fun / engaging / simple?