

# Slack, Zoom, and Meeting Fatigue: Practical Tactics for High-Velocity Teams

## Opening Hook

In fast-paced environments like ours at AI2-Compute, the relentless cycle of Slack notifications and back-to-back Zoom calls can feel overwhelming. You're not alone—constant context switching, heightened nonverbal demands, and accumulating decision fatigue are real challenges that drain focus and energy. The encouraging part? This issue is well-documented and addressable through targeted structural and behavioral adjustments you can implement right away.

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## The Slack Overload

Slack's real-time nature—endless threads, channel chatter, and frequent switches—can spike cognitive load and fragment deep work sessions. Studies on multitasking highlight how these switching costs escalate with task complexity, ultimately hindering overall productivity.

**Quick strategies to minimize Slack interruptions:**

1. **Refine notifications:** Limit alerts to direct messages, mentions, and key project terms.

Enable Do Not Disturb during dedicated focus periods.

2. **Define a VIP contact list:** Keep it concise (no more than 10 people) for genuine urgencies; mute all others.
  3. **Maintain channel discipline:** Star or pin high-priority channels, mute or exit those with minimal value, and leverage Saved Items for deferred reviews.
  4. **Adopt timed check-ins:** Schedule reviews at fixed intervals (e.g., 10:30 AM and 2:30 PM) instead of reactive monitoring.
  5. **Foster asynchronous communication:** Promote brief updates, Slack Clips, and norms that reserve Slack for non-emergencies—escalate to calls or texts as needed.
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## Zoom Fatigue is Real

Research from Stanford validates the exhaustion many of us experience: Zoom fatigue arises from sustained eye contact, persistent self-view (and its associated anxiety), limited physical movement, and the added effort to interpret subtle nonverbal signals. Microsoft's EEG studies further show that intentional breaks between meetings can lower stress and boost engagement.

**Actionable steps to safeguard your energy:**

1. **Reevaluate video defaults:** Opt for audio-only or asynchronous alternatives for routine

discussions. Consider walking meetings where feasible.

2. **Carve out meeting-free zones:** Reserve mid-week slots for uninterrupted work, such as recurring 90-minute calendar blocks.
  3. **Shift start times to :05 or :35:** This built-in buffering prevents back-to-back fatigue. In Outlook, set defaults to 25- or 50-minute meetings for natural pauses.
  4. **Conceal your self-view:** Reduce mental strain by hiding your video feed—resize or reposition the window if helpful.
  5. **Incorporate audio-only pauses:** Make brief camera-off moments routine during extended calls, with a simple heads-up like, "Switching to audio for the next five minutes."
  6. **Eliminate divided attention:** Multitasking in meetings incurs high costs—commit to full presence or politely opt out.
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## Meeting Overload and Decision Debt

The familiar complaint—"Still endless meetings"—points to a deeper issue: unclear decision accountability breeds redundancy and revisions. Traditional models like RACI often falter in dynamic, cross-functional settings such as OCI Compute.

**RAPID offers a proven structural solution.**

RAPID establishes clear roles from the outset:

- **Recommend:** The individual or team preparing the proposal
- **Agree:** Those required to approve
- **Perform:** The group responsible for implementation
- **Input:** Contributors offering expertise or feedback
- **Decide:** The final authority on the outcome

By clarifying responsibilities upfront, RAPID streamlines agendas, cuts unnecessary

meetings, and drives faster results. Endorsed as a leadership best practice in 2022, it's a tool ripe for broader adoption.

### **Implement RAPID effectively:**

- Mandate a concise one-page RAPID matrix prior to any decision-maker-involved meeting.
  - Handle R, A, P, and I alignments asynchronously; reserve meetings for D ratification.
  - Tailor the framework to the decision's scale—keep it lightweight for straightforward choices.
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## **Establishing Rhythms**

These individual practices gain maximum impact when integrated into a balanced daily cadence. Use time-blocking to delineate deep work from collaboration phases.

### **Sample daily framework:**

- 7:00–10:00 AM: Deep work session (90 minutes, with Do Not Disturb activated)
- 10:30 AM–1:00 PM: Collaboration window (Slack, email, and approvals)
- 3:00–5:00 PM: Deep work session (90 minutes, with Do Not Disturb activated)
- End of day: Complete disconnect to avoid carryover

### **Define team-wide guidelines:**

- Reserve Slack for non-urgent exchanges (escalate emergencies via calls or texts)
  - Make Zoom optional for informational briefings
  - Select tools thoughtfully: Slack for rapid updates, Zoom for interactive dialogue, email for detailed, non-time-sensitive matters
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## **Try This Next Week**

Launch with these focused pilots:

- **Slack:** Restrict notifications to DMs and mentions for a full day. Curate a 10-person VIP list and mute peripheral channels.
  - **Zoom:** Configure meetings to begin at :05 with 25- or 50-minute defaults. Capture setup instructions for Outlook and circulate to your team.
  - **Meetings:** Test RAPID on a single initiative. Enforce a one-page RAPID matrix before any leadership convening.
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## References

- Stanford VHIL: Four Causes of Zoom Fatigue
  - Microsoft WorkLab: Brain Research on Breaks
  - APA: Multitasking and Task Switching Costs
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↳ Explore RAPID framework case studies

↳ Async collaboration tool recommendations

↳ Add engaging team testimonials