



Welcome to the VetLed HALT 2020 Campaign!

Thank you for choosing to champion the VetLed HALT 2020 Campaign, the aim of which is to raise awareness of HALT, a simple tool that places the spotlight on some of the common things that can affect performance in practice.

Our HALT 2020 Campaign aims to reinforce the importance of the physical and mental wellbeing of veterinary professionals and includes some simple things that can be built into day-to-day schedules to mitigate these effects.

This campaign is a part of VetLed's ongoing mission to support safe, efficient and effective veterinary care. We believe that raising awareness of HALT and the related veterinary human factors has the potential to significantly impact the wellbeing of professionals in the veterinary industry, and as a consequence improve care - for the animals we treat, and also for our fellow veterinary professionals.

Aligned with

mindmatters



This Campaign Support Pack is intended to provide you with what you need to promote HALT in a safe, applicable and effective way in your practice or organisation. Every practice is different so please ensure you fully consider how to make this campaign work for you in a safe and effective way. Before you launch the HALT 2020 campaign in your practice, we do ask the 'important information' section within the Support Pack is read by the practice manager, lead vet or nurse, or equivalent position. If at any stage you would like any further advice or assistance, please get in touch with the VetLed team: ru@vetled.co.uk.

Many thanks and very best wishes,

The VetLed Team

How to implement the HALT 2020 Campaign in your practice – a handy guide

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Introduction

Thank you for choosing to be a part of the **VetLed HALT 2020 Campaign**. This handy guide is intended to provide you with what you need to promote HALT in a safe, applicable and effective way in your practice. If at any stage you would like any further advice or assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the VetLed team (ru@vetled.co.uk).

Before you launch the HALT 2020 Campaign in your practice, **we do ask the ‘important information’ section within this guide to be read by the practice manager, lead vet or nurse, or equivalent position.**

Important information for practice management

We believe the HALT 2020 Campaign will have a positive impact on your team. Primarily, we hope that it will help to establish a culture in which all members feel ‘safe’ to look after themselves and to support each other, so that they are feeling and therefore functioning at a level where they can provide high levels of patient care. Every practice is different so please ensure you fully consider how to make this campaign work for you in a safe and effective way.

We believe that unless critically ill patients require immediate attention, patients will be better served by a team who have appropriately considered their own physical and mental wellbeing. We feel it is important to emphasise the point about patients requiring immediate attention as we do not advocate any process which would be in any way detrimental to their needs.

We strongly recommend having one (or a few, depending on practice size) members of your practice chosen to champion this campaign. The key to a real and lasting change is for aspects of self-care within the HALT 2020 Campaign to become ‘the norm’, achieved through a buy-in from all members of the team. We sincerely hope that this is something that yourself and other leaders within your practice are able to be involved in, as we truly believe your commitment is a central element within the campaign.

Please do not hesitate to contact the VetLed team (ru@vetled.co.uk) if you would like any further information.



Making your HALT 2020 Campaign a success

The steps listed below are a guide to support you to implement the HALT 2020 Campaign in a safe, applicable and effective way in your practice. They contain suggestions and questions that you might want to think about. Please bear in mind that every practice is different and that you ensure you fully consider how to make this campaign work for you in a safe and effective way.

- 1) Identify your HALT Champion(s). Your HALT Champion(s) will be passionate about raising awareness of HALT and establishing a safe and supportive culture in the practice. We recommend at least 1 champion for every 10 practice members.
- 2) Allow time for the HALT Champion(s) to read through the HALT Support Pack materials and gain a thorough understanding of what the campaign involves and what it aims to achieve.
- 3) Ensure the practice manager, lead vet or nurse, or equivalent position has read the 'important information' section of this guide.
- 4) Gather your practice team at a convenient time to launch the HALT Campaign. This could be in the form of a lunch and learn (or breakfast!). The presentation slides provided within the HALT Support Pack are a useful resource and contain handy notes to help you prepare for your launch session or presentation.
- 5) Once your practice team are aware of the HALT 2020 Campaign, hold a discussion with them about how you can safely and effectively implement HALT at your practice. Consider the following points during your discussion:
 - a. Time before each day/shift for a team briefing/huddle, during which time workload can be discussed and breaks planned in a way that works for everyone.
 - b. HALT Champion(s) to liaise (or delegate to someone else) to make sure everyone gets suitable breaks (e.g. lunch or equivalent during OOH).
 - c. Establish individual triggers to remind everyone to 'check-in' with themselves at the beginning of each break or even just during a quiet few seconds between tasks.
 - d. What aspects of the HALT presentation stood out, what will be our own common language we can use to remind each other to encourage the uptake of HALT?
- 6) Put up the posters provided within the HALT Support Pack around the practice. These posters will act as visual triggers and reminders to the team to incorporate HALT in to their daily routine. We recommend posters are put up after the HALT presentation is delivered, to avoid the posters creating any confusion. Also remember to send out the HALT 2020 Campaign handouts so everyone has access to the information. Here is the link - <https://simplebooklet.com/halt2020handout>
- 7) Plan to assess the progress of the HALT 2020 Campaign at intervals deemed suitable for your practice. Openly invite feedback and try to establish key questions such as:
 - a. How often do people feel they experience 2 or more of the HALT elements at any one time?
 - b. How easy is it to plan breaks and communicate concerns in a constructive manner?
 - c. Does our workload allow for any breaks?

If any member of the team has any questions or concerns please encourage them to seek advice or further support from either yourself (HALT Champion(s)) or to contact VetLed at ru@vetled.co.uk.

Questions

1) Hungry/thirsty, Angry/anxious, Late/lonely, Tired – why these?

HALT is an acronym to help draw attention to some of the key physical and mental elements that can affect our wellbeing and performance. Whilst there are dozens of other aspects that are of relevance, those used within HALT have been used for decades as a self-care tool by many groups and organisations. They act as a good summary for areas that can leave us vulnerable. Research by the Medical Protection Society (MPS) on doctors under investigation following complaints against them, has highlighted the importance of the HALT indicators...

*“...be mindful of how human factors can affect your performance.
Remember the HALT mnemonic;
where possible anticipate these, and take action
to mitigate their impact.”¹*

2) Why do we think this campaign is so important?

We know that working for long hours without taking breaks isn't healthy - not for individuals, their colleagues or their patients. It doesn't make anyone more productive either. The HALT 2020 Campaign encourages everybody to focus on their wellbeing, recognise physical and emotional states, and take regular breaks when it is safe to do so.

HALT is not only an acronym but also acts as a reminder to pause and check in with ourselves. Even a brief pause can help to recognise how we are feeling. Whilst aspects within HALT might seem obvious, the reality of the human condition is that we don't always do what we know we should. Often the instinctive need to achieve the current goal beats the logical intention to stay hydrated, to take a break or to take time to address sources of stress. Combine this with social pressure such as team members (especially leaders/managers) not taking their breaks, and it's inevitable that 'pushing on regardless' then becomes the cultural norm.

We believe that raising awareness of HALT has the potential to significantly impact the wellbeing of professionals in the veterinary industry, and as a consequence improve care - for the animals we treat, and also for our fellow veterinary professionals.

3) Why are VetLed running this campaign?

Our inspiration comes from a similar campaign that is currently being led by Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust within the human healthcare sector, as we believe Veterinary professionals are affected by many of the same working pressures.

Dr Farquhar, a leading sleep researcher at Guy's and St Thomas' strongly believes in the HALT 2020 Campaign as a means of creating a workplace culture conducive to wellbeing and performance. Our vision at VetLed is to inspire, create and champion positive veterinary culture for our people, our patients and our profession. The campaign at Guy's and St Thomas' resonated strongly with us and as such we have aligned our campaign with theirs and have received insights from their experience.

We want this message to reach everyone within the profession, and to ensure that all practices and organisations have equal access to the support materials.

4) What to do if we need more help with the HALT 2020 Campaign?

Communication within your practice is paramount when it comes to making positive change. For this reason, we strongly recommend everyone maintaining open conversation around the topic. Discuss what works and what you find challenging with each other and with your HALT Champion(s). It's really important for everyone to see the value of this openness when it comes to creating a culture of self-care in which everyone supports one-another.

If at any point, you or a member of your practice would like more information, please feel free to contact us directly at ru@vetled.co.uk. We will then direct your question to our either a human factors or leadership specialist, coach or psychologist as appropriate.

5) What can I do individually?

Your practice culture is the sum total of everyone's attitudes and behaviours from within. This means that when it comes to creating a strong culture supportive of team wellbeing, that your actions and attitude are key. It's really important that you see the value in all the things you do and how they contribute towards a working environment in which people feel safe to take a break, to communicate concerns, to attend to their needs and to look after each other.

6) What if we just don't have time for a break?

This is likely to feel like the case sometimes! If this is the norm due to unrealistic workloads then it's really important that this information is fed back to people who are in a situation who can do something about it. On some occasions however, for example due to an unforeseen emergency, a very high workload may be unavoidable and even if carefully planned, a scheduled break might not be possible. On these occasions, this may result in higher levels of tiredness or feelings of stress due to running late. It is on these occasions, when being HALT aware is even more important. By checking in with ourselves, we might notice that we are stressed and tired – all the more reason to have established an easy method of staying fuelled and hydrated when you don't have time to stop.

7) Why is it important to plan?

Getting together regularly (ideally daily) to manage workload and plan breaks amongst the team has several benefits:

1. It can make what may initially seem like an unrealistic workload, more realistic. Some work could be re-distributed and team members have the chance to support each other. This is something which may not seem reasonable or normal until it becomes the norm!
2. Once a break/lunch is planned you are subconsciously far less likely to work through and you make yourself accountable to others to take the break to which you have 'committed'!
3. Opens communication amongst the whole team and encourages people to speak up, raise concerns and offer support around the topic of wellbeing and beyond.
4. Includes everyone, not just those you usually work with directly.
5. Applies the common language established during the initial HALT 2020 Campaign presentation and keeps conversations about HALT, breaks and wellbeing part of the daily routine.
6. Offers an opportunity to discuss other things, e.g. major considerations/potential complications for an upcoming operation at a time of low workload; a good way of managing potentially stressful situations is to plan ahead and communicate.

As part of our focus on enhancing performance in practice, we will be promoting our HALT 2020 Campaign nationally and internationally! It will be driven by our patient safety, human factors and strategic communications experts, with the aim to reinforce the importance of physical and mental wellbeing within our profession. We would love you to help us spread the word. Our social media details are noted below and we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you in advance for your support!

