

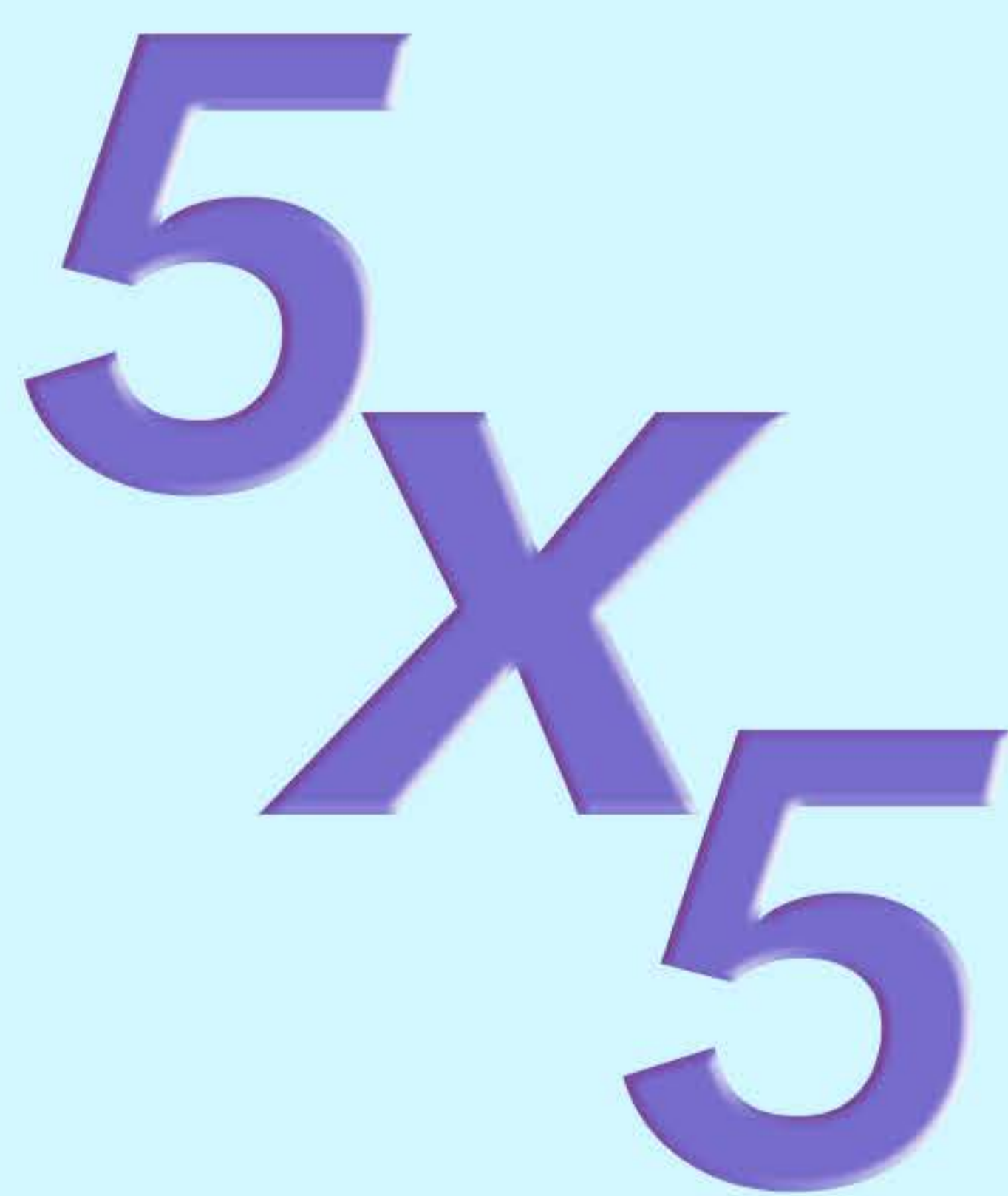
High 5 – use the 5x5 rule to help you get perspective

Stress makes it hard to get perspective

On any given day, we're all constantly making decisions - from really big ones like "What's my creative vision and how am I going to achieve that?" to much, much smaller ones such as "What time am I going to finish work today?"

As artists, creative freelancers and entrepreneurs, the chances are we're juggling a whole heap more decisions than a lot of other people. And it goes without saying that life as an independent in the creative sector brings with it a load of stresses (as well as some real wins too though of course!). In the heat of the moment, when stress levels are high and the pace fast, it can be really hard to work out what are the really important decisions and what are those that - in the big scheme of things - don't matter so much. Our tense and stressed minds find it difficult to sort the emotional wheat from the chaff! So what to do?

Say hello to the 5x5 rule!

A large, stylized purple graphic of the text '5x5' is positioned on the left side of the page. The numbers are bold and the 'x' is a simple cross shape.

So the 5x5 rule is one of our absolute favourite stress busting tools here at hub towers. It's super useful when it comes to combatting stress because it really helps you to put into perspective any problems that are worrying you. Here's how it works....

The 5x5 rule simply states that if you come across an issue or problem that is really stressing you out, you should take a moment to think whether or not it will

If the answer is yes, then you'll want to get to work on coming up with a strategy to address it. But, if the answer is no, then don't spend more than 5 minutes stressing out about it. It's a brilliant way to break out of a worry spiral!

Say you're worrying about whether or not to take on more financial burden to get a new qualification. Will the decision you make affect you in five years? Yes! So continue thinking it through, perhaps even dipping into our Balance Your Books [Debunking Strategy](#) resources to help.

If you're stressing about skipping a friend's exhibition opening because of an urgent deadline though, we'd suggest you might want to put a cap on the time and emotional space you give it. It could affect you in 5 years' time, say if you didn't message them to tell them why. But the chances are they'll understand, especially if you suggest another time to meet up and see the work. So, after talking yourself through what you'll do, give yourself permission to move on, and get on with your day.



What's going on with that rule?

The 5x5 rule works in 2 ways.

First up, taking a long term approach helps put the issue into context and gives you some distance from it. Think back to other times you've been stressed out by something that in reality wasn't a biggie, and you'll see how helpful that can be.

Secondly though, the 5x5 rule also works by allowing you to spend a few minutes really feelinIf you're stressing about skipping a friend's exhibition opening because of an urgent deadline though, we'd suggest you might want to put a cap on the time and emotional space you give it. It could affect you in 5 years' time, say if you didn't message them to tell them why. But the chances are they'll understand, especially if you suggest another time to meet up and see the work. So, after talking yourself through what you'll do, give yourself permission to move on, and get on with your day. g what you're feeling. If you'd instead simply tried to push the feeling to the back of your mind, the likelihood is that it would have only popped back up. In our experience, spending those 5 minutes really reflecting on what you're feeling and deciding what to do about it can really help you move on, in all sorts of ways!

So, the next time you find yourself struggling with a problem that's stressing you out and needs to be put into perspective, take a breath and ask yourself, "Hey, will this matter 5 years from now?" If it won't, don't let it consume your day. Trust us, the 5x5 rule is a really good thing to remember...

If you've found this useful, do also check out another favourite stress buster of ours – the **5-4-3-2-1 exercise**. If you fancy reading about some others you can also check out a list of top stress busting tips compiled together with our community of curious and generous creatives.