

The Flux Book of

# FOCUS & WELLBEING



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Happy New Year from Fluix

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# Welcome letter from Julia Nikolayenko,

Executive Director of Fluix

Dear Fluix Family,

May I be one of the first to wish you a very Happy New Year, as we settle into the first few days and weeks of 2023.

Reflecting back on 2022, as the world reopened more and more, in-person events and vacations were back on our calendars. Over the course of the year, some of our Fluix team members gained insights and inspiration from attending events in Dublin, London, Lisbon, and New York. In November, we welcomed some of our Fluix team to our Berlin office to celebrate Fluix's 8th Birthday! Some of our customers celebrated 10 years of being with Fluix in 2022, and to them we extend our thanks and appreciation on reaching such a momentous milestone with us. Alongside product updates and improvements, 2022 was a busy year for the Fluix team.

All of the many positive, productive, and happy occasions and achievements throughout 2022 were brought about by our team and our customers. It was a particularly challenging year for those of our team members who are located

in Ukraine. I have always been incredibly proud of the team we have built at Fluix, and seeing how our team members have adjusted to living and working under very difficult circumstances has surpassed even the definition of pride. It has also widened the conversation around wellness, and about doing our best work for our customers while also ensuring that we are setting time aside for our health and wellbeing.

With that in-mind, we created the Fluix Book of Focus and Wellbeing, which I'm sharing with you as a New Year gift. It contains tips and recommendations from our global Fluix team, to help you to focus on doing your best work while also prioritizing your wellbeing. I hope you will gain inspiration from the personal perspectives of our team.

My hope for 2023 is that it will be a peaceful and healthy year for everyone. We at Fluix are grateful to you for your loyalty and the opportunity to help you and your teams to do your best work. We look forward to continuing to grow alongside you in friendship and productivity.

Happy New Year, dear Fluix Friends and Customers!

*Julia*

## 1

# Appreciating Your Inner Aesthete, Finding The Best Workout Routine, & Enjoying Audiobooks

Julia Nikolayenko, Executive Director

Instead of some extraordinary piece of wisdom, I'd like to share something more personal - what works for me. If I had to think of things that help me to relax, yet stay focused and productive, I'd say it's beauty around me. My inner Aesthete loves when my surroundings are harmonious, lovely, and perhaps even a bit festive. I guess that is why I love the Winter Holiday Season and New Year's Day in particular so much. I love all the decorations and the general festive mood of everyone and everything surrounding me. I usually try to decorate my own space early and accordingly, to get myself into the mood and keep my level of personal happiness high. This really helps me at work, too.



Photo Credits: Julia Nikolaenko

A few other crucial things for me are my daily workout routine and an abundance of various audiobooks for me to listen to. Covid really impacted my workout process, and I got used to bringing my routine home instead of going to the gym. I found the best online trainer, and her style works great for me, so even though gyms are back open, I'm still a big fan of home workouts.

Lastly, I'm a huge fan of Audible! I listen to hundreds of audiobooks a year, both fiction and business literature alike. This is a way for my brain to switch, re-focus, and then go back to an abundance of work-related matters. The photo I'm contributing to this book combines a few things I've listed above.

## 2

## Choir Singing, The Pomodoro Technique, & Spending Time With The Best Cat In The World

Maria Curteanu, QA iOS Team Lead

In my free time, I like to go to the gym in the morning. Working out fills my body with energy and power, and it's also a great way to liberate bad energy! I also like listening to audiobooks while I walk around my neighbourhood. The walk gives me more physical exercise, and the audiobook transports me to a world of fantasy and fairytales for a little while.

The current situation in Ukraine has reminded me that life is short and that it should be lived to the maximum. Managing stress is very important, therefore I consulted a psychologist and found out that screaming could be a good potential way of liberating stress! As singing is one of my



Photo Credits: Maria Curteanu

hobbies, I decided to attend more singing classes, and I joined a choir that sometimes performs concerts for our military forces. Singing brings joy back into my life, gives me the opportunity to scream as much as I need, and they say I'm good at it!

In terms of staying focussed on busy or stressful days, my teammates are my best motivators, as we work really well together. I always try to find something new and interesting to learn so that I can spend time on that, instead of doom-scrolling through the news. I also have a to-do list, as every time you accomplish a goal, you increase your serotonin levels! The Pomodoro technique - where you give yourself 20 minutes or so to dedicate to a certain task without hopping over to another one - would be one of my top productivity tips.

Last but absolutely not least, spending time with my cat is my best antistress solution! We support each other through stressful situations, and we are always there for each other. 🐱

## 3

## Meditation, The Benefits of Doing a Digital Detox, & Understanding Your Chronotype

Dasha Gaioshko, Growth Marketing Manager

Last year I wanted to cultivate a habit of daily meditation, and the [Balance mobile app](#) (which is free for the first year) helped me a lot with this. There are different courses available for beginners, as well as for more experienced meditators.

I also like to read. When I choose books for pleasure I always pick those that either transport me to places I've never been to (either because they are fictional or just geographically remote) or books that make me feel for the main characters. My recent favourite authors are Kazuo Ishiguro and Fredrik Backman.

In terms of general productivity tips, I have a few I can share with you:

- ❖ Limit the amount of work-in-progress by only focusing on 1 to 2 big projects and seeing them to completion before moving on to what's next.
- ❖ Keep a "done list", which starts empty in the morning, and which you then gradually fill with whatever you accomplish throughout the day.
- ❖ Do a digital detox for two weeks, and after that introduce limits on using those apps or websites where you feel like you waste the majority of your time. For example, I set a limit on browsing Instagram to once a day for no longer than 30-45 minutes.
- ❖ Understand your chronotype and try to follow your body's biological clock. For me, it works best if I focus on deep work earlier in the morning and leave the second half of the day for meetings and more creative tasks.

## 4

## Morning Walks With Dogs, Short Breaks In Your Work Day, & Spending Time With Friends

Olga Zakharova, Product Manager

To get an active start to the day, each morning I wake up at 7am to go for a walk with my dogs.

To ensure I have a productive day, I make a to-do list with priorities and start with the most important/biggest task. Once it is accomplished, emotionally I feel much better.

To stay focused during the day, I take short pauses for coffee with chocolate, petting cats, or simply washing dishes.

After a busy week, I love going to the seaside to relax and spend some time with close friends.



## 5

## Creative Brainstorming, Managing Energy Levels, & Planning Ahead For Optimal Productivity

Brandon Hull, Head of Sales

It's important to learn when and how you work your best from a creativity and focus standpoint. I block off time in the afternoons when I seem to be more open to creative brainstorming. By blocking off the time, I'm also giving myself structure so the creativity doesn't go on and on forever.

In my case, my internal scheduled calls are over well before the afternoon, so I'm out of my decision-making mode and I can think in a more playful, creative way.

Productivity isn't just about to-do lists and time-blocking, though I do believe in those too. It's just as much about managing energy levels and planning for when I'm at my best for different types of work. Maybe you're the same?



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## 'Zero inbox' Rule, Video Games, & Going For Walks

Serhii Smoliarchuk, Product Engineer

Staying focused is important in my daily work - I have deadlines and several meetings each day, so I can't procrastinate. To help me to keep everything organized, I use the 'Zero Inbox' rule for my email inbox. I also use auto labels in my Gmail inbox to put labels on emails, which helps me to process my inbox faster (there's a great email tool called Spark that synchronizes with my Gmail account and provides lots of helpful additional options for folders and labels).

When it's time to relax and enjoy my free time, I usually play video games, watch movies, or go for a walk outside.



**Inbox Zero!**  
Relax and enjoy the moment

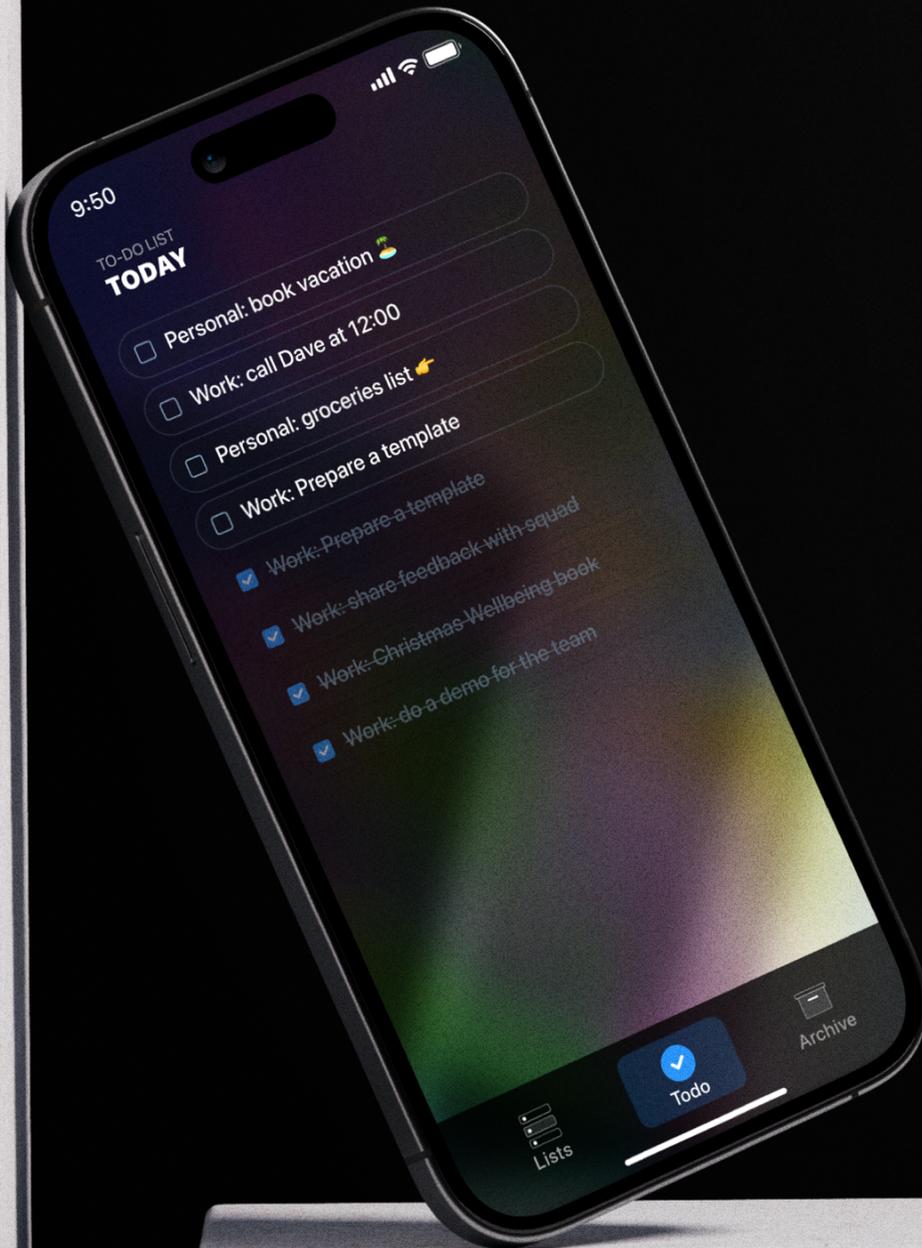
**Inbox Zero!**  
Relax and enjoy the moment

## 7

## Embracing the Chaos, Getting Things Done, & Knowing Your Working Style

Dimitry Adamyan, Customer Success Manager

We all occasionally have those days, when we have an overwhelming number of items on our to-do list. It's great when you can steadily concentrate and focus on each item, but what if it's another one of those days when you just can't, or you get easily distracted? Below is my approach to how I deal with such situations, which you may call a kind of organized chaotic focus.



## **1. Before you start - Wrap up everything that can be done quickly.**

Prior to starting 'long-haul' tasks, I usually sort through everything according to David Allen's principle described in his Getting Things Done book: If the item will take less than 2 minutes, complete it right away (I consider 5 minutes to be an optimal measure). These tasks can be quick email replies, reading through company announcements, answering your teammates, making coffee - frankly, whatever can be done in 5 minutes or less, in order for you to fully focus on your organized chaos! Once these things are done, we can move to the rest of the tasks.

## **2. Embrace the Chaos.**

In my line of work, I often have up to ten simultaneous items on my to-do list daily, which usually have completely different and unique contexts (e.g., working on a customer discovery project, setting up an account for a newly joined company, tweaking the structure of a PDF document

for an existing client, or making reports in our internal CRM). As you can see, those do not depend on each other, and completing one will not make my life easier in relation to the other. My approach here is fairly simple and will most likely contradict a popular opinion that you have to concentrate and steadily resolve tasks one by one. Instead, I prefer to work on everything simultaneously in 15/20-minute iterations: Start task A and work on it. In 15-20 minutes, fully abandon it and switch to Task B. Repeat for task C, D, etc. Go back to task A and repeat until done.

Why I like such an approach & what's good about it:

On those tricky days when you just can't focus on one thing for a long time - this works well as a distraction on one hand, but still gaining progress on the other. When you've reached the stage where everything is 'almost done', ticking off those tasks in quick succession is a fantastic feeling. This approach might not work well for everyone, but people who can easily switch between contexts may find it quite useful, fulfilling and less stressful.

## 8

## Motivating Music Playlists, Chillhop Radio, & Creating a Cozy Workspace

Denys Lazutkin, 3D & Motion Artist

I like to fill my workspace with quiet & cozy music. This allows me to dive deeper into my work and focus on tasks. The best solution for me is listening to [Chillhop Music](#) broadcasts on [YouTube!](#) I am a big fan of their amazing tracks for focused work and study. When I listened to music in the form of playlists, it quickly began to get boring and repetitive, and with some tracks, my brain formed stable associations, so instead of focused work, my day felt like "Groundhog Day" 😂 With Chillhop Radio, I just need to turn on the stream and enjoy not only amazing lofi and chillhop tracks, but also add some warmth to my workspace, thanks to the absolutely amazing illustrations created by dozens of artists for this channel!



Photo Credits: [Bandcamp.com](#)





## The Rule of 3, The Pomodoro Technique, & Doing Your Best Work

Kate Katrachenko, SDR

The best way to measure productivity is to ask yourself at the end of the day: Did I do everything I intended to do?

This leads to the rule of 3: before heading to sleep, I write down the 3 most important tasks I want to tackle the day after. Thinking about when, where, and how I'm going to accomplish each task drastically improves the chances of me getting them done.

Sometimes I use the Pomodoro Technique: Set a timer for 25 minutes and, during this time, work without distraction. After that, take a five-minute break and repeat the cycle all over again. After every fourth cycle, take a big break of 30 minutes. The idea of the method is that monotonous work is broken down into small parts, and after completing each part, you get a well-deserved rest. This makes it easier to take on big tasks.



10

## Spending Time With Family, Enjoying Traditional Pottery, & Planning For The Future

Serhii Tkach, Web Developer

In Ukraine, we have a saying, “dgittya bentegne” (loosely translated as “life is restless”), to describe times like we’re having now, when you don’t know what will happen tomorrow. I’m still trying to do my best to bring our Victory closer by doing my job as best I can, or even better. Long-term plans help me to keep in a positive frame of mind. Someday soon, I want to visit the city of Poltava with my family again, to have fun and do some pottery. I feel most relaxed when I spend time with my close relatives, planning for the future and figuring out how we will make our plans a reality. So, my best advice for focus & wellbeing is to just do what you should do, keeping in-mind your long-term plans. The rest will be okay.

## 11

## Coffee, Notebooks and Calendars, Art-House Films, & Carpathian Mountain Vacations

Lena Kamynina, Growth Marketing Manager

I start my day with a cup of my favorite coffee, my notebook and a pen. I give myself 20 minutes of planning time to define the top 3 tasks that I need to do, and then I sort out all other tasks based on urgency and priority. I'd recommend a nice paper Moleskine notebook with a weekly view, where you can write all your priorities for the current week. I also recommend setting your Google Calendar to daily view, so you can see all your meetings and tasks.

When working on big projects, it's all about good planning; splitting the 'big cake' into milestones, allocating tasks, cultivating strong team alignment, and celebrating all of the small achievements along the way.



Photo Credits: [Shutterstock](#)

When it comes to switching off and relaxing, I really enjoy watching classic and art-house films. These films are a great way to follow a story and dive into another reality. People usually say this about books, but a great scene by a talented filmmaker works better for me 😊 However, I do also like to read, and I can recommend an excellent science fiction book about space travel, science and friendship: [Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir](#).

If I had to choose a favorite winter destination to visit when I want to relax, it would definitely be the Carpathian Mountains. It combines everything we love about winter: beautiful snowy weather, skiing for those who are interested in it, and hot wine! I highly recommend visiting the Carpathians and trying the amazing local food there.

## 12

## Coastal Walks in Odesa, Tuning Into Your Surroundings, & Walking Mountain Trails

Iuliia Nesterenko, Content Manager

Much of my sense of wellbeing is found in my love of walking by the sea. And because I live in the coastal city of Odesa, I am privileged to enjoy such walks every day. When I go for a walk, I leave my smartphone and earbuds at home, so that no outer info, even music, interferes with my thoughts. No concentrating on any particular idea, and looking for no solutions. I just let my thoughts flow without intentionally directing them, and simply observe my surroundings.

When I'm on vacation, walking along mountain trails is something I never get tired of.

13

## Creating A Balanced Life through Meditation, Breathing Exercises, & Practicing Yoga

Esmira Kovalchuk, Support Manager

This spring, I decided to come up with a set of specific activities that would have a positive effect on my physical and mental health. My goal was to start doing more sports or exercise, since I had a huge break from that due to the war. I also decided to start meditating, to reduce the level of stress in my life. To help with adopting new habits in my life, I created my own schedule:

- ❖ Morning routine & drink a glass of water
- ❖ Stomach vacuum exercise
- ❖ Kapalbhati breathing
- ❖ 10-minute meditation
- ❖ Yoga to warm up the body
- ❖ 2-minute plank

This set of exercises takes only 30 minutes per-day. Completing the set helps me to weather external stress and cope with challenges, so that I can engage better with the day ahead.

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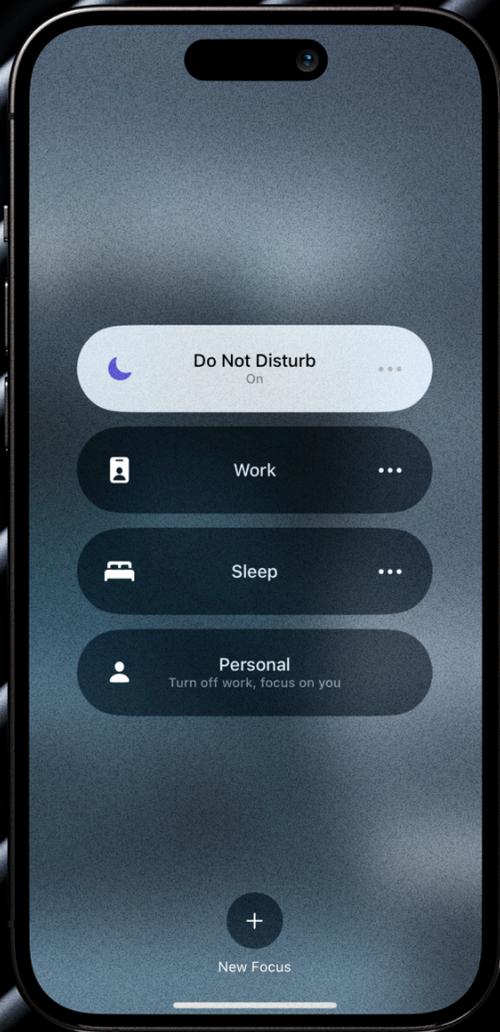
## Switching Off From Social Media, & Investing Your Time in What Matters Most in Your Life

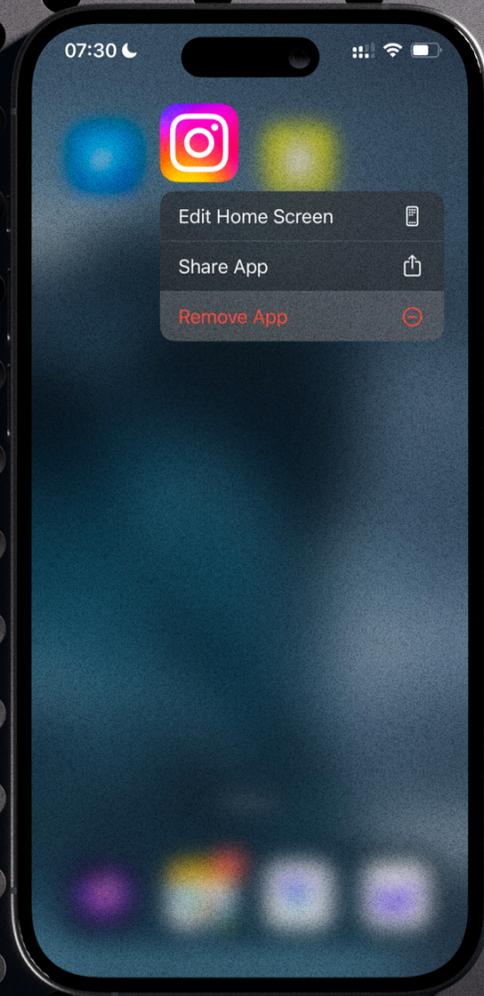
Dmitry Kovalenko, Head of Design

The most valuable commodity today is our attention. Every service, application, and social media platform fights for every second of our attention and time. In our lives, we have different and far more important priorities that we should devote our time and attention to - our families, our kids, our bodies, and our souls - so we should stay vigilant in managing this.

I've personally done the following for many years now, resulting in improved focus, reduced cognitive load, and less stress:

- 1 Turn off ALL notifications on devices, and only keep the ones that are absolutely crucial to have.
- 2 Turn off geolocation and all possible "recommendations" that the system forces you to use. Like Siri recommendations, if you are an iOS device user.
- 3 If possible, get rid of social networks.





- ❖ Delete all social network apps from your mobile devices, if possible. Log in on rare occasions when you really need to, making sure to close the tab afterwards. That small trick will prevent you from checking social media during every free minute of your time.
  - ❖ If you only use social media to check out someone else's life updates, or for general chats, consider deleting your accounts completely. It's better to spend time with your loved ones, read a book, or learn a new skill. Focus on the things you'd like to improve in your own life, and spend time doing that.
- 4 **Configure Sleep Mode.** On your mobile device, set up a dedicated mode for sleep time. Allow call notifications from the most important people only, and turn off the rest. All app notifications, all messaging apps, all recommendations, everything - turn them off, and sleep well. You can deal with everything in the morning.
  - 5 **Use a VPN** (e.g. Proton VPN) to block as much advertising as possible while surfing the web.

These simple preventive steps will help you to break any negative habits imposed on you by the world of social media, so that you can focus on the things that are most important in your own life.

15

## Organizing Tasks According To Your Mood, & Finding The Perfect Cup of Tea

Oleksandr Karpov, Front-end Team Lead

I find it useful to separate tasks by 'mood'. For example, I will never complete tasks that require deep concentration if I'm feeling easily distracted, so on those days I would rather choose "small win" tasks that I can keep working through. Lately, I'm trying not to stress over choosing deadlines, and instead I'll ask my teammates for an estimation of how long the task will take to complete. I think that approach makes everyone feel more confident about meeting deadlines, and returns the focus to the task that needs to be completed, rather than adding stress.

Another tip to get you through a busy day: TEA! I'm a big fan of tea, not that I know every tea in the world and how to make it, but I love tea and I have my favorite flavors. My special ones are: black with honey + lemon (it should be served warm), and raspberry + mint leaves (it brings me back to my childhood, when my Father made tea on the firepit with tea leaves, raspberry, and mint).

16

## Spending Time With Dogs, Celebrating The ‘Little Wins’, & Making Travel Less Stressful

Jen Butler, Customer Experience & Brand Manager

If I feel like I’ve hit a productivity barrier at work and need to re-focus, I’ll go for a short walk with my dogs. They’re always happy and carefree (and a little bit goofy!), so it’s really nice to spend time with them. When I get back home, I always feel energized and ready to return to whatever I was working on.

When large projects come around, it can be easy to get caught up in the sprint to complete them. Don’t forget to celebrate the ‘little wins’ - there are lots of milestone moments along the way!

A lot of my time outside of work is spent exploring new places. I’m a self-confessed aviation geek, and I love to travel. I’m happy to share two tips that might help you to have a stress-free airport and in-flight experience:



- 1 **Lounge Passes:** Some airport lounges honestly aren't worth the entrance fee, but many financial institutions and airline loyalty programmes offer free airport lounge access as a benefit for their customers. So, be sure to check - you might have a free lounge pass that you haven't used.
- 2 **Hydrate, but avoid caffeine:** Water is your bestie when it comes to staying hydrated and combatting jet lag. As tempting as it might be to chug coffee to help you to stay awake, it actually causes a delay in the body's daily metabolic rhythm, which can make jet lag much worse! Apps like Timeshifter can help you to manage your circadian rhythm and ease you into the timezone of your destination. This is a game changer for people with business meetings or activities planned from the moment they step off the plane.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

from all of us at Fluix!

In 2022, Fluix helped thousands of people in teams around the world to do their best work every day. We're thankful for each and every one of our customers, and we look forward to keeping the momentum going in 2023!

*Team Fluix*

