- Rest

The Seven TYPES OF REST

It's not just about sleep – there's more to rest than you know

In a world that glorifies productivity and hustle culture, rest often slips to the bottom of the to-do list. In reality, rest isn't a luxury; it's a necessity, and it's about more than just getting a good night's sleep.

"Whilst sleep is a form of physical rest and has important benefits for us, there are so many other ways to nurture our needs and pour back into the places where we feel depleted," explains psychologist Dr Tuesday Watts-Overall.

When we're exhausted or emotionally drained, an early night might help – but often it's not enough. That's where the revolutionary concept of the seven types of rest comes in. In a TedTalk which has racked up more than half a million views, Dr Saundra Dalton-Smith identities seven essential types of rest we all need. These reframe rest in a way that helps restore our energy levels and encourage us to live a balanced and fulfilling life.



1 Physical Rest

Not all physical rest is passive. "A 10-minute walk without your phone or some gentle stretching can be just as restorative," explains Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist Natalie Englander, known as The Perfectionism Therapist.

2 Mental Rest

Small breaks throughout the day can help restore clarity when our mind feels overwhelmed. "Try scheduling 'brain breaks' every 90 minutes to step away from decision-making and switch off briefly," suggests Natalie. Take this time to do something that brings you joy.

3 Sensory Rest

Our world is full of noise and stimulation, so sensory rest is essential. "This could look like logging off of devices, turning down the lights, lowering background noise or simply closing your eyes for a few moments," advises Dr Tuesday.

Know Your Needs

With research from Mental Health UK revealing that one in three adults experience high levels of stress 'always' or 'often', making time for rest has never been more important. By focusing on the different types of rest, it can help us to identify where we are lacking and understand why, even when we are sleeping well, we still feel exhausted or drained. "Giving language and structure to our needs in this way helps us name what is missing and take the first step to meeting that need," says Dr Tuesday. Rest is not one-size-fits-all, so it's important to tune into what you need and find activities that help you recharge.

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"Scrolling social media or watching Netflix isn't always restful if you're running on empty."

5 Emotional Rest

Taking time out of the emotional demands of life and allowing yourself to express your feelings in a healthy way is so important for wellbeing.

"This might look like speaking honestly with someone who you trust," suggests Dr Tuesday. It could also involve journaling your feelings or speaking with a therapist.

6 Social Rest

Not all social interactions are restorative. Social rest comes from spending time with people you feel safe and comfortable with. "This type of rest could also involve setting boundaries around draining commitments or simply allowing yourself to decline invitations when needed," says Dr Tuesday.

4 Creative Rest

Creative rest allows the mind to wander without any purpose, outcome or pressure to perform. "Whether it's watching clouds, listening to music or strolling through a gallery, give yourself permission to experience creativity without producing anything," says Natalie.

7 Spiritual Rest

You do not need to be spiritual or religious to embrace spiritual rest. This type of rest is about connecting with what really matters to you. "It's a sense of purpose or something bigger than yourself, whether that's nature, meditation, prayer or reflecting on your values," says Natalie.

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