

The Seven Types of Active Rest

"So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God..."

Hebrews 4:9

Active: You might need some physical rest if you lack the energy necessary to get through your day, struggle to fall asleep, have an immune system that struggles to fight off colds and illness, frequently experience muscle pain and soreness, and depend on substances to either give you more energy or help you to sleep. Physical rest can look like stretching and moving your body regularly, going for a walk, getting a massage, and practicing good sleep hygiene.

Social: You might need some social rest if you find yourself feeling alone, detached from loved ones or attracted to people who mistreat you, isolating yourself or finding it difficult to make or maintain friendships or even preferring online friendships over connecting in real life. For social rest, find a balance of time alone and time with loved ones. Seek to find a balance that leaves you feeling energized, not depleted.

Spiritual: You might need spiritual rest if you find yourself feeling apathetic or hopeless, lacking motivation and feeling distant from those you love. To rest spiritually, you might engage in spiritual practices like prayer and meditation, spend time in nature, or volunteer for causes you care about. Lean into relationships with those you love and trust and explore ways that you feel the presence of God.

Creative: You might need some creative rest if you are constantly focusing on the needs of others and don't consider your own self-care a priority, find yourself doing self-destructive things, feel that your contributions are not of value, or find it difficult to enjoy things in nature. Try taking breaks from your work or pursuing a hobby. Experiment with creative activities that you enjoy and incorporate time for them into your daily life.

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Emotional: You might need some emotional rest if you have a tendency to focus on your failures/flaws, are constantly apologizing or clarifying yourself out of insecurity or self-doubt or find yourself worrying excessively. To be more emotionally rested, it is important to become aware of how you emotionally respond to relationships and systems. Try talking to a trusted friend or journaling about your emotions. It is important to care for yourself, even spending time alone or in nature.

Sensory: You might need some sensory rest if you are experiencing sensitivity or adverse reaction to sounds, blurry vision or eye pressure/fatigue/strain, have difficulty receiving touch from others or are desensitized to aromas or other sensory-rich experiences. For social rest, consider unplugging from electronics like TV, computers or your phone or taking breaks from use. Closing your eyes for a short while or listening to calming music and practicing deep breathing can all help regulate the senses. Try to identify and eliminate sensory stressors like (uncomfortable clothing, constant background noise, etc.). Resting our senses is an important way to avoid overstimulation and reduce stress.

Mental: You might need some mental rest if you find yourself being more forgetful, stressed, easily distracted, or irritable. Physical symptoms could include trouble sleeping, physical aches, an upset stomach or unhealthy eating patterns which may be ways your body is indicating that your brain could use a break. Mental rest can look like taking breaks, writing down thoughts to clear your mind, decluttering your physical space, minimizing multitasking, practicing self-care like eating and sleeping enough, and surrounding yourself with supportive people.

The 7 types of active rest are developed by Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith in her book, *Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity*

See her Ted Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/sandra_dalton_smith_the_real_reason_why_we_are_tired_and_what_to_do_about_it