

How to Rest

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No matter how busy your schedule, everyone needs time to rest. The trouble is, sometimes you wake up from a good night's sleep feeling just as tired as before! If that's the case, it may be because you are not getting the type of rest you need. Both your body and mind need a variety of different types of rest to relax, unwind, and recharge.^[1] From 5-minute meditation breaks to mindfulness exercises to relaxing escapes to the wilderness (or even just your backyard), you need rest in all forms to really relax. Whether you're looking to relax your body, mind, or soul, this article is here to help provide tips on how to make rest a meaningful part of your schedule.

Method
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Method 1 of 11: Take breaks to relax as you work.



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1 No matter how much work you have to do, remember that you're only human. A break can bring you back to yourself for a moment. If you find your mind stuck on a particular homework problem or you just can't seem to focus on a project at work, take 5 minutes to step away and quiet your mind. Giving your mind a break helps you feel fresh and rejuvenated when you return to the task at hand.^[2]

- Try going outside for a few minutes of fresh air or take 10 minutes to walk around the block. If you can't go outside, step away from your desk and look at the view of the city through your window!

Method 2 of 11: Practice daily meditation.

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1 **Meditating is a great way to rest your mind and body.** ^[3] Though there are a variety of meditation practices you can try, mindful meditation is one of the most common.^[4] A primary focus of mindful meditation is living in the present moment. You do so by focusing on your breathing and letting your thoughts pass without attachment or worries. These practices help you rest, quiet your mind, and relax your body.

- To try meditating, find a calm space to sit alone. Next, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. If you run into distracting thoughts, acknowledge them but let them pass.
- If you are new to meditating, try it out for shorter spans of time. Even 5 minutes of meditation can provide benefits!^[5]

Method 3 of 11:
Focus on your senses.1
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1 **Engaging with your senses can ground your thoughts and rest your mind.** If you find your mind racing, focus instead on senses like sight, smell, and touch as a helpful distraction. Experiment with engaging different senses to see which ones are most useful in quieting your thoughts.

- For example, clear your thoughts by imagining a peaceful scene, or look out the window to the trees blowing in the wind. You may also try smelling the flowers outside your door or lighting a candle with a nice aroma. Engage with touch through petting your dog or cat if you have one or wrapping up in a fuzzy blanket.^[6]

Method 4 of 11: Try aromatherapy for its calming benefits.

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1 Aromatherapy uses essential oils to bring you peace, calm, and clarity. The process works through breathing in essential oils using a diffuser or humidifier. Smelling these aromas prompts your brain to produce hormones like serotonin that can improve your mood.^[7] Due to its calming benefits, aromatherapy can be used to reduce stress levels and help you relax.

- Commonly used essential oils include lemon, lavender, chamomile, and cedarwood.
- Due to the potent amount of plant material in essential oils, it's important to use them in moderation and with caution. To be safe, avoid direct contact with essential oils on your skin and cease using them if you develop an allergic reaction. If you're unsure of how to properly use essential oils, consider talking to a trained herbalist or doctor before trying out this method.^[8]

**Method 5 of 11:
Take deep breaths.**

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1 This is a simple and effective means to destress and unwind. Through engaging with your breaths, you can help your body calm down quickly, while also distracting your mind. The best part is that this method can be practiced anywhere, whether you're stressed during a particularly hectic work day or winding down for bed.^[9]

- With one hand on your chest and the other on your belly, take a deep breath through your nose. Once your belly is filled with air, exhale. Continue breathing in and out and feel as the hand on your belly rises and falls with your breaths. The hand on your chest should remain steady. Continue the practice until you begin to feel its calming benefits.^[10]

**Method 6 of 11:
Practice yoga.**1
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1 **Yoga is a great means to rest your mind and body simultaneously.** Though yoga is a great workout, it also provides many benefits to help you rest. Yoga encourages practicing mindfulness, meaning remaining in tune with your mind and body in the present moment. If there is a lot on your mind, this can be a great way to destress and give your mind some peace. Yoga also engages your body and breaths, which can be a great means to relax your body. Specific yoga poses can be especially helpful when looking to rest your body and mind. ^[11]

- Child's pose (Balasana) is a relaxing pose that is also a great option for beginners. ^[12]
- Corpse pose (Savasana) is another simple yet highly beneficial choice. ^[13]
- For helpful instruction, consider enrolling in a yoga class, working with a private instructor, or watching online yoga tutorials on websites like YouTube. ^[14]

Method 7 of 11: Keep a journal to quiet your mind.

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1 Writing down your thoughts is a great way to rest your mind. If you find yourself stressed or particularly anxious about anything, a journal functions as a safe space to express your feelings privately. Taking this time to decompress helps put your mind at ease, and quiets negative or stressful emotions so they may become more manageable.^[15]

- Journal consistently to experience the greatest benefits. Pick a certain time to journal each day. Consider journaling each morning to start the day with a clear head or right before bed to rest your mind and prepare for a good night's sleep.
- Feel free to be as creative as you would like when journaling. If you don't feel like writing down your thoughts sometimes, try drawing pictures or making playlists to express your feelings.

Method 8 of 11: Listen to calming music.



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1 Ambient, comforting music can relax your mind if you need to decompress.

Studies show that music releases hormones serotonin and oxytocin, which can improve your overall mood and even help you fall asleep at night.^[16] Try making a playlist of music that brings you peace or look for playlists online.

- You can also consider listening to ambient sounds, such as ocean waves, falling rain, and other sounds of nature to decompress and rest your mind.

Method 9 of 11: Take a social media break.



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1 Though a great way to stay connected, social media can also cause stress. You may find yourself comparing your lifestyle, fitness routine, or looks to the people you follow. Or maybe you frequently get sucked into scrolling sessions that seem to never end. Regardless, these activities can leave your mind feeling drained and exhausted! To give your mind some rest, consider taking a break or being more mindful of how often you use social media.^[17]

- Consider scheduling a set time to check social media if you don't want to take a break altogether. For example, pick a time each day to check social media sites and catch up with your friends. Limit that time to 5 to 10 minutes!^[18]

**Method 10 of 11:
Escape to nature.**0
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1 **Going outside can help you relax and live presently.** The outdoors offer a wealth of resources when it comes to relaxing your mind and body, and you don't need to retreat to the wilderness to experience its many benefits.^[19]

- If you're stressed during work, take a five-minute break to go outside and breathe in the fresh air. Rather than focusing on what's bothering you, take a moment to look at the trees swaying in the breeze and listen to the sounds of birds chirping and other wildlife.
- You may be too busy to go out during your workday. If that's the case, even adding a plant to your desk can offer an opportunity to appreciate nature. Water your plant and admire it in moments when you need some calm.^[20]
- When you've got more time on the weekend, walk to a nearby park, consider finding a hiking trail in your area, or take a day trip to a natural landmark.

Method 11 of 11: Develop a relaxing bedtime routine.



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1 **Establishing a healthy bedtime routine can help you get to sleep faster.** Try going to bed at the same time each night, and practice relaxing activities like drinking non-caffeinated tea, listening to soothing music, and dimming the lights in your room. For the best results, avoid snacking or drinking caffeinated beverages before bed. These can make you feel more alert as you drift to sleep.^[21] You should also avoid using electronics right before bed.^[22] Phones, computers, and other electronics all emit blue light from their screens, which decreases the production of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.^[23]

- Consider leaving your laptop and phone in the living room to charge overnight and ceasing your use of electronics a few hours before bed each night.^[24]
- If you must use electronics close to bed to study or work, switch to night mode so that the light from your screen is not as harsh.^[25]



Expert Q&A

Question

How can I rest fast?



Alex Dimitriu, MD
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Expert Answer

Try aromatherapy. One popular scent is lavender, which can help lower anxiety and improve your sleep by raising levels of GABA, a calming neurotransmitter.

Helpful 6 Not Helpful 1

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