

7 Types of Rest by Nicolle

	What it is	Why it matters	Tips
Physical Rest	Deep recovery for Nervous System, muscles, fascia + adrenals to achieve rest that supports true physiological downregulation.	Chronic tension, shallow breathing and overstimulation keep your sympathetic nervous system stuck in "on." Without physical rest, your tissues can't repair or detox properly. During deep sleep, your <i>glymphatic system</i> clears metabolic waste from the brain (it only happens in sleep!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise sleep quality. • Legs-up-the-wall before bed. • Diaphragmatic breathwork (3-5 minutes). • Daily stillness with no stimulation (no phone, no scroll).
Mental Rest	Relief from cognitive load=decision-making, multitasking, overthinking and background mental noise	The prefrontal cortex fatigues when over stimulated, affecting focus, memory and emotion regulation. Mental rest restores executive function and clarity. When your brain isn't actively "doing" you can also activate the DMN (Default Mode Network), which is a neutral system linked to self-reflection, emotional processing and creative insight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 5-minute silent breaks between tasks. • "Brain dump" looping thoughts on paper • Swap one podcast walk for a no-input walk • Showers!! (no stimulation and you can finally be with yourself!!)
Social Rest	A reset from either social overwhelm/social isolation. This isn't about being an introvert vs extrovert, it's about nervous system coherence and how you're impacted by others. We need connection and co-regulation, so it's key to build self-awareness.	Inauthentic connection can activate your stress response. Genuine, safe relationships support vagal tone and oxytocin release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit "performative" interactions. • Spend time with people who feel safe, not draining. • Let yourself cancel without guilt. • Time in nature, pets, animals, etc.
Sensory Rest	A break from sensory input overload, such as screens, lights, noise, scrolling, multitasking, visual stimulation, clutter, etc.	Sensory overload keeps your Reticular Activating System (RAS) hypervigilant. The RAS is the brainstem network responsible for filtering sensory input and deciding what to pay attention to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dim lights after 7pm (red bulbs are great for melatonin release!) • Turn off phone notifications at night) = airplane mode is life changing!) • Sit in stillness, eyes open, no visual stimulation (just 3 minutes). • Nature sounds and staring into trees, clouds, birds, waves, etc.
Spiritual Rest	A space to reconnect meaning, awe, values, or something greater than you, the world and your to-do list.	When life feels task-heavy and disconnected, it can lead to existential fatigue: a deeper layer of burnout that no nap will fix.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer. • Intentional gratitude. • Intentional moments of awe. (sunrises, nature, trees, etc). • Meditation, prayer, certain breathwork.
Emotional Rest	A pause from emotional labour performing, people-pleasing, masking emotions, carrying other's feelings.	Chronic emotional suppression dysregulates the insula amygdala, leading to burnout, disconnection and even immune dysregulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somatic Therapy • Parts work/ Internal Family Systems. • Accessing Healthy Aggression (therapeutic trauma informed container please) • Practising saying "No" or "I'm not okay" without explaining. • Journal without editing. • Let go of "being the strong one" for a moment. • Glimmers
Creative Rest	Time and space to receive inspiration; not produce or perform. Letting your mind wander, body soften and be nourished by beauty.	Your Default Mode Network (DMN) is activated when you're not focused on tasks, as previously mentioned. Stress, over-scheduling and outcome-based thinking suppress the DMN and keep your brain stuck in "doing" mode. Creativity often re-emerges when the Nervous System feels safe (Ventral Vagal) and a protective part steps back (Parts Work).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain sounds and frequencies. • Play with something that doesn't "matter". • Watch the clouds, waves, shadows, etc. • Do something purely for enjoyment (no outcome needed). • Painting, art, dance, move. • Spend time in beauty (art museum, nature etc).