

How to Stay Healthy, Part 1: REST

Staying Healthy Rhythms in Life

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When we get sick our body sends signals that it is time to rest. We don't have much energy, we can't do our usual activities, we need to sleep more. If we look at it from the outside—say if you were looking at another person who is “resting”—we might conclude that resting consists of *not doing anything*. This goes along with the saying “Rest is rust.” That outside view can make us think that stopping activity is bad, a loss or a waste, even make us feel guilty for slowing down.

But what about from the inside? Is resting just about being lazy? No. Consider sleep. Sleep provides the primary time for repair and recovery. Instead of our energy being directed to outside activity and outside impressions, during sleep (and intentional rest), our forces are redirected inward. If we don't get sufficient rest then we may lose track of how we are doing inside. We become disconnected from our inner state of wellness (or depletion). That sometimes builds a paradoxical pattern of actually not wanting to slow down, because if we do we may realize how tired or depleted we actually are. That's understandable, but physiologically not sustainable. An important sign that it is time to rest is if you catch yourself thinking: *well, if I got*

sick, then I could at least lay in bed, or not talk to people, or not go to work, or not take care of the kids...

Maybe a different and better definition of “rest” is intentionally reducing the amount of information-food-demand-activity we are taking in from the outside, and instead catch-up with everything we’ve already taken in. We shift in order to finish processing. That allows us to really make all that information-food-demand-activity our own. There’s potency there, because it opens up a creative space. If you think back to a time when something really new or creative came into your consciousness, it often relates to being freed from outside demands. You were able to be a little bit quiet, maybe in the shower, or on a walk. We slow, rest, wait, and something new arises.

Now take that observation one step further, and you will see that there are lots of spaces within an illness where we must pause, reorient, rest. We can’t be active, we don’t eat, we don’t check email, we just stay in bed so that we can inwardly change. We heal. Big inflammations and fever are particularly important times for making this inward, quieting shift.

So, the next time you get sick, wrung out, try switching the usual narrative and see it as a chance to work through something in a deep, internal way, without outside distractions. Or, if you are feeling on the edge of getting sick, have been exposed to something, or are feeling too

tired and grumpy, consciously decide to slow down. It's the right time of year to do that—less light outside, shorter days, less activity and growth in nature. A space for turning inward so that something new can come forward.

Wishing you good resting,
Dr. Blanning

Further consideration for RESTING:

In today's world, we are rarely given the time or permission to be sick. Fear of missing work or school, of inconveniencing other people, or interrupting our own busy schedules drives people to “get well” (usually the *de facto* suppression of symptoms) as soon as possible. Instead:

- **Slow down.** Try to listen to the message being sent. Your body needs time to inwardly catch up with all of the impressions, obligations, demands, food, and substances of the outside world
- Experiment with finding ways to rest quietly that **do not include a lot of outside stimulation**, like: avoiding a chaotic environment (often not easy with families at home during the pandemic); find quiet time without television, movies, smart phones, music, etc.
- Create more space and time for **deep, uninterrupted sleep**. Going to bed at night even 30 minutes earlier can make a difference.

- Ask yourself: when do I routinely **disconnect**? There should be a daily and weekly time when you can be slower and restful.

ImmunityRecoveryRestHealthResiliencySleep



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