

This Doctor Says Humans Actually Need 7 Kinds of Rest (and You're Probably Not Getting All of Them)

Getting a solid eight hours of sleep isn't enough.

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We're only a week into 2021 and we've already had a coup attempt, a rampaging new strain of Covid, a halting vaccine rollout, and [even attack squirrels](#) (murder hornets and meth alligators are so 2020). It does not appear we're in for a restful year. But even if the world makes it hard to relax, at least one doctor insists we all need to find a way to [reset and recharge](#) anyway.

And that's more complicated than just switching off your brain and switching on Netflix every once in a while.

In [a new TED Ideas](#) post, Sandra Dalton-Smith insists "we go through life thinking we've rested because we have gotten enough sleep -- but in reality we are missing out on the other types of rest we desperately need" and outlines the seven types of rest that are essential for human flourishing.

1. Physical rest

This is the usual definition of rest we're all familiar with. But while we know we need to spend a decent number of hours in bed to stay healthy, a steady drumbeat of studies shows a large proportion of us still [don't get enough physical rest](#).

2. Mental rest

Always have a tornado of thoughts swirling in your head from the moment you wake up to the moment you (finally) fall asleep? You need more mental

rest, and even if you sleep a solid eight hours a night, you're not going to feel fully recharged until you get it.

"The good news is you don't have to quit your job or go on vacation to fix this. Schedule short breaks to occur every two hours throughout your workday; these breaks can remind you to slow down. You might also keep a notepad by the bed to jot down any nagging thoughts that would keep you awake," suggests Dalton-Smith.

3. Sensory rest

Staring at screens all day and all night means your eyes never get a proper rest, but this isn't the only reason many of us never give our senses a break. Noisy cities, pinging notifications, and blaring music all contribute to constant sensory stimulation. Your brain needs a rest now and again.

Consciously close your eyes and [give yourself the gift of silence](#) for short periods throughout the day.

4. Creative rest

Inc.com and other sites are full of tips on how to be more creative, but just as important as striving to put out new ideas is remembering to [pause](#) and take in the building blocks out of which they're constructed -- awe, art, inspiring people, and time to [let it all marinate](#).

5. Emotional rest

This "means having the time and space to freely express your feelings and cut back on people pleasing," Dalton-Smith explains. "Emotional rest also requires the courage to be authentic. An emotionally rested person can answer the question 'How are you today?' with a truthful 'I'm not okay' -- and then go on to share some hard things that otherwise go unsaid."

In other words, we all need the space to stop pretending for ourselves and others and get real about our feelings sometimes.

6. Social rest

Some people energize you. Others drain you ([here's how to spot them](#)). If you spend too much time with the latter type, you're going to need some emotional rest.

7. Spiritual rest

All humans, no matter their religious affiliation or lack thereof, have a need to feel connected to something larger than themselves. That's sometimes not easy to maintain in the middle of the minutiae of everyday life. The good news is science shows [simple interventions can give you a quick dose of awe](#) that should lead to measurable increases in well-being.

So next time you think to yourself, "I'm tired," don't leave your complaint at that. Instead, dig a little deeper and try to identify just what sort of rest

you're lacking exactly. Once you know what you're missing, you'll be in a much better place to figure out how to recharge effectively.

Source: <https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/rest-mental-health-sandra-dalton-smith-ted.html>