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Women. Couples. Teens. Groups

What Kind of Rest Do I Need?

A practical reflection workbook
with a personal rest plan



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What Kind of Rest Do I Need?

A short workbook for making rest more useful in your actual life

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Sometimes you need sleep. Sometimes you need someone else to handle dinner, including all the questions that come with it. Start by looking at what has been wearing you out. These pages will help you name a demand and decide what might actually give you a break.

You may recognize yourself on several pages. Start with the one that sounds most like today. You can write, think through a question, or leave it blank. There is nothing to score and no correct rest type to discover.

Before you begin

Purpose: Notice what is wearing you out and plan one practical change.
Materials: This workbook on paper or a screen. If writing, use a pen or pencil with printed pages or a notebook, or a notes app. Printing is optional.
Time: About 10–15 minutes to start, or shorter pauses.

1. Choose a description below and go to that page. You can choose more than one.
2. Use one real situation for the prompts. Write, reflect quietly, or skip a question.
3. On page 6, choose one change, arrange support if needed, and decide when to look back.
4. After trying it, note what changed. Keep, adjust or set aside the plan.

What sounds familiar today

- **My body feels worn out.** Physical effort or missed rest is what I notice most. *Page 2*
- **My mind keeps working.** I am carrying decisions, reminders, or too much information. *Page 3*
- **I have little left emotionally.** A feeling or difficult interaction is taking up a lot of room. *Page 4*
- **Someone always needs me.** Even during a break, I am still answering or coordinating. *Page 5*

If I could put one demand down for a while, it would be

These are everyday descriptions that can overlap, not medical categories or a complete explanation of tiredness. This workbook is a reflection tool, not a diagnostic test or treatment plan.

If tiredness lasts for a few weeks without a clear reason, affects your daily life, or comes with other symptoms, talk with a healthcare professional. You do not have to finish this workbook before seeking care.

Health guidance: NHS, Tiredness and fatigue

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REFLECTION 01

When your body feels worn out

Think about what your body has been doing and what rest has actually been available. A long shift, lifting and carrying, or interrupted sleep may be part of the picture. What would let you do less physically for a while?

The kitchen can be partly done

> You get home tired and see the dishes. Usually, you clean everything before sitting down. Tonight, you put food away safely and leave the washing up. If another person is available, ask them to finish it. You settle somewhere comfortable without keeping half an eye on the sink.

Make the physical demand smaller

Choose one thing that fits your circumstances: sit for a task you usually do standing, ask someone else to carry the bags, or leave a nonessential chore for another day. If missed sleep is the issue, look at what is using the time you need for sleep. A quieter evening may require a practical change in who does what.

Keep your own health guidance in view, and do not push through symptoms. New or persistent exhaustion deserves attention even when life is busy.

Make it your own

What physical demand has been taking the most out of me?

What could I change, put down, or ask someone else to do?

Choose a change small enough to be possible today. You do not need to finish the chores first.

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REFLECTION 02

When your mind keeps working

You have stopped working, but you are still remembering the appointment, comparing options, and composing tomorrow's reply. Ask what your mind is trying to keep track of. More information may be the last thing you want right now.

Give the unfinished task a place to wait

> You keep remembering a school form while trying to watch a show. Instead of rehearsing it again, write: “School form is in the blue folder. I will check the missing date after breakfast.” The details are saved, along with the next step; you are no longer relying on remembering them.

Take one thing out of mental circulation

Write down the thought that keeps returning. Add the next action and when you will return to it, or name the person you are waiting on. Keep the note somewhere you will actually find it. Then choose a stretch of time without optional input: no extra research, comparison shopping, or checking three different versions of the same answer.

If writing a list turns into a whole new planning project, stop at one item. You can ask someone to help sort a decision that really does need another pair of eyes.

Make it your own

What am I repeatedly trying to remember or decide?

Where will I put it, and when will I return to it?

If the thought returns, you can remind yourself where the note is. You do not have to argue with your mind.

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REFLECTION 03

When you have little left emotionally

After a difficult conversation, a disappointment, or a day of holding things together, another cheerful interaction may feel like work. What would be welcome right now: being heard, some quiet, or ordinary company without a lot of questions?

Ask for the kind of company you want

> A family conversation has left you upset. A friend asks what is wrong, and you know a stream of advice will feel like more to manage. You might say, “Could you listen for a few minutes? I don't need help solving it yet.” Or, “I'd like some company, but I'd rather not go over the whole thing tonight.”

Choose how much conversation you want

Choose one person or setting where you do not have to pretend to be fine. You could share a meal or watch something together without retelling what happened. If company would be too much, give yourself a quieter interval before the next nonessential conversation. You might write a few honest sentences for yourself. Stop if writing draws you into a loop or makes you feel worse.

You do not have to revisit painful details to use this page. If feelings are persistent, distressing, or making daily life difficult, consider professional support.

Make it your own

What feeling or interaction is asking a lot of me? A few words are enough.

Would I welcome listening, quiet, or simple company? What could I ask for?

A useful break may leave the feeling unfinished. You can return to it with support when you are ready.

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REFLECTION 04

When someone always needs you

You finally sit down, and someone asks where something is. Then a message arrives. Then there is a decision only you seem to make. If you remain the person on call, a break may not feel like much of a break.

Hand over the decisions as well as the task

> Another capable adult offers to handle dinner, but keeps asking what to cook and where everything goes. Try a fuller request: “Could you choose and make dinner tonight, and handle the cleanup? Please check the food restrictions we already use. I'll be unavailable until seven unless something urgent comes up.” Agree on what counts as urgent before stepping away.

Make a break someone else can actually protect

Name the task, the time, and the decisions you are handing over. For children, dependent adults, or safety-sensitive work, arrange appropriate coverage first. Choose someone who can safely take responsibility. You may need a shorter break or a different arrangement than the one you first imagined.

If there is no backup, look for a nonessential extra you can leave out. If even basic responsibilities exceed what you can manage, bring that specific problem to someone who can help you explore support. Lack of childcare, staffing, or practical help cannot be solved by a better attitude.

Make it your own

During my last break, what was I still responsible for?

What exactly could be handed over, to whom, and for how long?

A request can be kind and specific. You do not need to explain every reason you are tired.

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KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY

My personal rest plan

Use one real situation from the next day or two. You can include more than one kind of tiredness, but choose just one change to try first.

Date _____ I will look back at this on _____

> Example: After tomorrow's appointment, I will come straight home rather than add errands. I will ask a friend today to collect the groceries. If they cannot, I will postpone the nonessential items.

What has been wearing me out

Start with one situation, such as the hour after work or the evening routine.

What I need less of for a while

Physical effort, decisions, emotional conversation, interruptions, or something else.

The change I will try

Be specific about what you will do differently and when.

What needs to be arranged

Who needs to know? Is care coverage or a clear handover needed?

If that is not possible

Write a smaller version or the next person to ask for practical support.

What I noticed afterward

What changed, if anything? What remained difficult? Would I repeat or adjust this?

> If it made little difference, look at what was still being asked of you. Reconsider the demand, the support available, or whether it is time to talk with a healthcare professional.

For general information about self-care and seeking support: NIMH, Caring for Your Mental Health

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