

naomi crain's

Your Simple Rest Roadmap



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Your Simple Rest Roadmap

Three quick steps to really finding rest.

In the world of life coaching there's a lot of talk about finding inner peace, that magical calmness that can help us face our worst days with grace and our best days with joy. But it can be a pretty elusive goal. One of my core beliefs is that the path to peace starts with rest. There's a lot of spiritual teaching that encourages us to believe that attaining spiritual goals, like deep inner peace, involves a distancing or disconnection from the body. But when you're exhausted, the body knows what it needs first, and it isn't peace - it's rest!. Once we are sufficiently rested, our peace-seeking actions, like meditations and self care, become way more effective. We may be spiritual beings having a physical experience, but that means the physical is important and is there for a reason - so let's begin to unpack the practice of seeking deep rest.

A quick word about resting

Before we begin, I want to explain a little of what I've come to understand about rest.. There are two types of rest: sleeping rest and waking rest. Both are important and must be given to the body, in the right measure, for health and well being to exist.

Sleeping rest is what we naturally think of when we hear the word rest - we know we need sleep and we know that without enough of it, we don't function well. Yet, we routinely de-value sleep, giving ourselves too little of it. Sleep science suggests that modern westerners are in a chronic state of sleep "debt" (being under-slept) and that historically, humans got more hours of sleep than even the eight hours that's considered necessary today. Interestingly, before electricity, humans seemed to have a normal pattern of two sleep periods a night, with a few hours of awakesness around 2am. This meant going to bed far earlier than we do today, but also supported a few hours of quiet Waking Rest, that is the focus of this Roadmap. Sleep is a necessary element to just about all health indicators and if you're under-slept, your body isn't going to do waking rest for long before putting you to sleep. So if you find yourself falling asleep during the waking rest exercise I'm about to describe, you need to go to bed for more hours each night. End of discussion. (note: if you're the parent of a young child, your under-slept condition may not be so easily fixed, but do your best. Allow yourself to sleep during the day, if you can). On average, you should be aiming for at least eight hours of sleep a night. For most of us, that means at least nine hours in bed, with the light off! If your lifestyle wont allow for this, seriously consider changing it. I can't stress this enough. Sleep is the #1 thing that, when you allow yourself to get the right amount, will transform your life.

If you're like me, and have trouble with falling sleep, staying asleep, falling back to sleep after waking in the night, or you feel like you sleep but it's not restful, it can help to see your doctor and get your sleep assessed. Health issues, weight and stress/anxiety, diet, exercise, screen use and other factors can all affect your sleep. Google "sleep hygiene" to find some of the basic elements to good sleep, that you can begin instituting today.

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Waking rest is time spent at rest, while awake and is the focus of **Your Simple Rest Roadmap**. In traditional lifestyles, before modern lifestyles and technology allowed us to live differently, humans had a natural rhythm to their days, which included waking rest. While the sun is up, people could work. When the sun went down, they had to stop because they could not see enough to do much in the way of useful work. People would sit around fires and enjoy each other's company, eat something together and relax. Seasonally, winter represented a time of greater rest, because the weather simply made it difficult to be outdoors doing things. Winter hibernation was a natural part of the annual human life cycle.

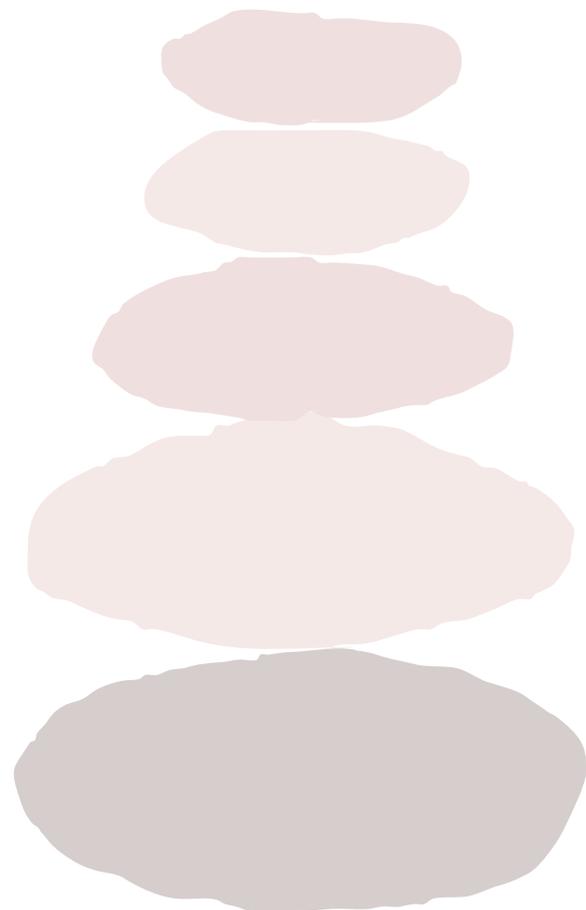
Waking rest allows our brains to calm and our bodies to be at rest. It allows us to relax, have fun, enjoy the company of others and to engage in activities that are enjoyable, like singing together or story telling or spiritual practices that add depth and meaning to life. In our busy, modern lifestyle, with the help of electricity and technology, we have eliminated this natural cycle of waking rest. Our non-work time is often still full of busy activity, many sports, hobbies, shopping....and even things that seem like they should be restful, such as watching tv, going to concerts and sporting matches, can actually be anything but restful. Much of our entertainment is built around high-stimulation, stress-response inducing situations, like crime dramas, loud stadiums and high-stimulation video games.

While none of these things is necessarily bad, none of them represent true waking rest. High-stimulation activity affects us because it first sets off our amygdala, the part of our brain which alerts us to danger. The amygdala then releases stimulating, stress hormones throughout the body., which can feel like a rush of excitement and energy, and that's why we enjoy it - like roller coasters or tension in movies. But constant triggering of this stress response wreaks havoc on the body - we were never meant to live with the levels of stress we do in modern times.

Conversely, rest involves a slowing of the pace of brain activity, a release of calming hormones, a lack of stimulation, a relaxed body and a safe and peaceful atmosphere that allows our nervous system, and poor, over-stimulated amygdala, so much-needed time off!

Getting enough sleeping and waking rest is vital to your overall ability to become deeply rested. You're going to need to make deliberate choices about your time and lifestyle, if you're serious about attaining this goal. I honestly believe it's the key to inner peace and joy, because no one enjoys much when they're exhausted, sleep-deprived and over-stressed.

Commit to making small changes and you will see significant improvement in your health and well being, as well as your enjoyment of life.



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Step One: Tune in to your body

While it may seem obvious, it certainly needs stating, right up front: The first step in resting the body is to tune in to the body. Most of us walk through our days doing our very best to avoid tuning in to our tired, sore or unhappy bodies. If that's you, the first step of **Your Simple Rest Roadmap** will be hard. But trust me, it's so worth it!

Tuning in to your body is a simple process, but if you're not used to it, you may not find it easy. It can be a strange and uneasy place to take your consciousness if you've not spent much time "in your body" lately.

The best place to start this process is with a simple body scan. This is a tool used in many meditation practices and can induce a lot of rest, in and of itself. I suggest implementing this at least once a day (more if you can), until you're able to identify how your body is feeling without using this process. But even then, it's good to go back to from time to time, to make sure you're not avoiding certain parts of the body that may be particularly difficult to tune in to. We store a lot of emotion in our bodies so if part of your body seems beyond your ability to connect with, take some deep breaths and go deeper - what are you avoiding feeling, remembering, acknowledging or seeing clearly?

A Simple Body Scan

1. Sit comfortably, on a chair or on the floor, in a way that doesn't cause any pain or stress to any part of your body. Avoid crossing your legs and arms. You should be comfortable but perhaps it will still feel a little odd, because it's not how you usually sit.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep, releasing breaths.
3. Starting with your toes, draw your attention to each part of your body, feeling how they/it feels. Stay with each part of the body until you can consciously tell how they/it feels. For instance, thinking of your toes, are they comfortable or squished into your shoes? Are they cold, sweaty, sore for any reason? How do your socks and shoes feel to them?

Next move to the soles of your feet. How do they feel? Are they sore from standing or walking or high heeled shoes? Are they relaxed and comfortable?

Next move on to the tops of your feet. Feel into that area and become conscious of how the bones, muscles and skin of that part of your body feels. Continue on up your legs, through your body, down your arms, along your shoulders, up your neck, over the back of your head and finally, down your face. As you get better at this, include internal organs like digestive system, heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, brain and also how body parts feel from the inside, like the inside of your feet, hands, joints etc.

NOTE: As mentioned above, the emotions we store in our bodies can be very strong and can be related to some of the most traumatic and scary events of our lives. Treat your self with great care if and when such emotions arise. Don't avoid feeling the feelings that arise, but neither should you get caught in spiralled thinking that won't let you put the memories and feelings down. If things do become problematic for you, or you begin to remember or experience things that feel overwhelming, a good therapist can be extremely helpful. Don't hesitate to seek help releasing these emotions from within your body and psyche.

Step Two: Find what needs rest

Now that you've given your entire body your attention and you know how it feels, the next step is to locate what parts are in particular need of rest. This may be obvious to you, following the body scan exercise, but it may not be. The need for rest can manifest in different ways.

Firstly, anything that feels tired definitely needs rest. Do you feel like you could fall asleep now, if you laid down? If so, your entire body needs sleeping rest, so you should just go do that, instead of working through the rest of **Your Simple Rest Roadmap**. Nothing is more important than sleep to your body, so listen to it and let it sleep. At the very least, make a plan to go to bed as early as possible.

Parts of your body may also feel tired from over work. If you've just done a hard session at the gym, or moved furniture, or spent an extended period of time doing a repetitive task, specific muscles and parts of the body may be particularly tired and in need of rest. Take your conscious attention back through your body to identify any area feeling this kind of need for rest.

If you're experiencing any kind of stress-related physical symptom, like cramping or pinching muscles, churning stomach, jaw tension, fidgeting muscles or shallow breathing, these parts of the body need rest. Our bodies are built for short periods of high stress. When we unconsciously tense up our muscles, we're often forcing them into high-tension useage for elongated periods, which quickly exhausts them. Do a further quick scan to find any area of the body experiencing this kind of tension.

Next, are there any parts of your body that are sick, in pain, in need of healing or manifesting any other kind of medical problem? These parts of your body also need to be treated with extra care and rest is one of the best ways of caring for the parts of our body that are struggling to perform at a normal level, whether it's our head being foggy from a cold, a cut on our finger, a chronic issue such as a problematic thyroid or high blood pressure, or simply a headache for no apparent reason. These kinds of issues create a heavy burden on those parts of our body. Do a scan again, and identify all the body parts that are carrying this kind of burden for you, right now.

Finally, one last scan, simply asking your body if there's any other part that needs rest. Wait and see if any part jumps into your attention.

Now write down the parts of the body you've identified that are in need of rest:

Step Three: Give rest to it

Allowing your body to rest begins with your own mental acceptance that rest is OK. Many people struggle with feeling like resting their body is a legitimate thing to do - they feel lazy or selfish or irresponsible. If any such feelings come up for you in the process of this step of **Your Simple Rest Roadmap**, make sure you acknowledge this internal struggle and journal about it. Rest is not lazy, selfish or irresponsible. It is being a good steward of a body that's been given to you to care for. Allowing yourself time and freedom to rest is paramount to your health and well being, not to mention your ongoing ability to do anything useful in the world or for others.

As you continue to sit comfortably or, if you prefer, lie down comfortably, think of each part of your body that you've identified as needing rest, one at a time, and repeat the following statement to it, either out loud or under your breath:

I give you rest. You may rest now. Be at rest.

Repeat this statement numerous times, gently, lovingly and soothingly. And notice how your body part changes as you do, if at all. Don't try to make it change, just notice. When each part of the body feels like it's resting well, move to the next one.

Finish the practice by saying the statement to your whole body, allowing it all to rest a while. Continue with this whole body resting for at least a few minutes.



You may or may not have experienced a great change in your body initially. But repeating this three step practice daily will create an atmosphere of care, love and rest within your body, which can have profound effects on your health and emotional well being. I know that when I feel a migraine coming on, lying down and repeating this resting statement to each of the parts of my body that are starting to feel tense, can avert the migraine developing. My hope for you is that, as you develop a more rested body and restful lifestyle, your enjoyment of life will flourish.

I hope you found this process helpful. If you'd like more help with connecting in to your body, learning to rest or developing the skills of resting mind, body and spirit in order to improve your health, emotional life, spiritual life and relationships, I'd love to work with you further. You can find my programs, packages and coaching options on my website, naomicraincoaching.com or you can email me at coaching@naomicrain.com.

For your convenience, there is now a free recorded meditation to lead you through the **Your Simple Rest Roadmap** process. To access the recording, click the link below.

[Access the Your Simple Rest Roadmap Meditation](#)

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