Find and Create Rest in the Body
by Daron Larson

Our attention is habitually drawn to problems. However, we can train ourselves to notice rest and relaxation hiding within our regular routine. Setting aside some time to get more acquainted with what rest feels like in the body can support this exploration.

Practice in Stillness

1. Decide how much time you’re able to commit to practice. The duration of the practice is not nearly as significant as the consistency.

2. Start the timer.

3. Check in. What does your body feel like right now? Is there any sense at all that your body should feel different than it does? If so, what happens when you consider that, in reality, your body should feel exactly as it does right now?

4. Restrict your attention to exploring restful states. Allow all other activity to operate in the background.

5. Every few seconds, aim your attention on a particular occurrence of rest in the body, then let your attention linger there for a few seconds or until it goes away. The optional label is FEEL REST.

6. Whenever you realize that something other than rest in the body has become the primary focus of your attention, gently reestablish the rhythm of clearly noticing and savoring rest.

7. Instead of making a problem out of an internal or external distraction, try to find any restfulness that has appeared in reaction to it. Be open to unexpectedly pleasant reactions even to unpleasant distractions.

8. Continue working in this way until the timer goes off.

Guided Exercise


Call the IMPACT EAP available 24/7
800-227-6007
www.myimpactsolution.com
Insight Timer App

Check out the free meditation timer app at www.insighttimer.com (more features for $3 version). You can use it to time your formal practice sessions and support your efforts to practice consistently. You can see how many others are using the app when you are which feels surprisingly supportive. The app also has a number of guided instruction sessions covering a variety of topics. If you download the app and create an account, please join the Attentional Fitness Training group.

Practice in Life

When you notice restfulness in the body, take a few seconds to enjoy it. See how many times you can find it occurring in the midst of your ordinary routine.

Let curiosity rather than perfectionism drive this exploration. There is no expectation that you spend more than a few seconds on this, but some situations will allow for a bit more practice time.

Waiting tends to be full of rest, but we miss the opportunity because we’re busy thinking and planning what comes next. Try to spend some fraction of your waiting time seeking and savoring rest.

See if you can find a situation where there is absolutely no restfulness present in the body at all. This is not the same as being completely relaxed. There could be plenty of other things going on — some of them even unpleasant — yet there could be subtle rest present.

Remember that you always have the option to intentionally create rest in the body. This counts the same as finding it. Either way, really focus for a few seconds on the available quality of rest in the body.

Related resources

- Online version of this handout http://bit.ly/find-and-create-rest
- Attentional Fitness on Facebook www.facebook.com/athomeinyourlife

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800-227-6007
www.myimpactsolution.com
Rest in the Unrest
by Daron Larson

A guided exercise disguised as a poem

Say to yourself, See rest...

Whisper it right into the ear of your mind.
Say it out loud softly if nobody is around,
or if your earbuds are in,
even though you aren't talking to anyone or listening to anything through them.

It's just a word to remind you to notice, but saying it can trigger the kind of micro exploration that we habitually forego.

So go for it.

For a handful of seconds, about the length of an exhale... give your eyes a break from sorting the world out.

If you can close them, gently steer your gaze into your own private darkness.

If you can't close them, or don't want to, notice how, even open, your eyes are willing to not make sense for a bit and to resist their trained impulse to decide what is beautiful and what is not.

Savor the relief of neutral indecision.

People might accuse you of zoning out. Let them.

The joke's on them. Keep it to yourself.

Give it to yourself for as long as you can. Refrain from explaining or suggesting they should give it a try.

Just drink up the available rest with your eyes. Let others in on it indirectly the next time you turn your eyes toward them. Let them not even notice the difference.

Say to yourself, Hear rest...

and listen closely to any or all of the available sounds playing outside the boundaries of your mind.

Don't try to turn off your thoughts. Give your full attention to hearing the world for three or four seconds instead. Set the stage for the words in your head to wind down without coercion.

Have you ever been able to force your mind to be quiet?
Give it something to listen to other than your story.

Say to yourself, *Feel rest...* and savor sensations you find in your body that aren’t begging for your attention.

If there is time, repeat this sequence.

If there is not time, find a bathroom to hide in and save yourself there.

Any space with a door will work. An office, a car — even a cubicle if you keep your eyes open and practice a few times.

Close the door, and let the world fix itself for a few minutes while you take a break from fixing yourself.

If you fall asleep, they might look for you, but they will find you rested.

They will probably not even ask what you were doing in the bathroom stall in the middle of the day for a few minutes longer than usual.

They probably will not look for you. Try not to read into this too much.

Try it at 2:00 in the morning when you’re wide awake and tired of insisting on unconsciousness as the only rest that counts.

Don’t wait for rest to force itself on you.

Get sneaky. Do it right now. Steal it while nobody’s looking.

When you do, be prepared to find it lurking everywhere, tangled up in the unrest waiting for someone to notice.

Don’t believe me?

Please don’t believe me.

See and hear and feel for yourself.


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