

# The Reclaiming of Rest

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The Well Workout's mission is to ignite a wellbeing revolution based on one simple belief: *that doing well – at work and in life – starts with being well.*

Using practices that are easy, effective and enjoyable, our one-of-a-kind wellbeing experiences are designed to increase energy, balance, connection, and joy – all in minutes a day and without breaking a sweat.

## Four Themes

The Well Workout's philosophy is rooted in two evidence-based premises:

- First, that the stressors of modern work and life have thrown our collective wellbeing out of balance – physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially
- Second, that wellbeing is a skill that can be learned and practiced just like playing an instrument or a sport.

The Well Workout helps people rebalance holistically and, when done with others, helps foster cultures of wellbeing. Participants achieve measurable results by engaging in interval-style workouts that leverages four practice pillars:

- **Play** – to rebalance from a focus on work as the core driver of identity and self-worth
- **Rest** – to rebalance from a life of perpetual motion and a culture that rewards busyness as a badge of honor
- **Reflection** – to rebalance from an addiction to action and the cycle of deciding and doing
- **Connection** – to rebalance from the heroes' journey of individual achievement

In this brief, we'll examine the value of **rest** (the second practice pillar) as a way to rebalance from time spent moving - both mentally and physically – from one activity to the next as we tackle our seemingly endless 'to do' lists.

## Rest vs. Sleep

For starters, you may be asking yourself – why does a Well Workout include the practice of rest when we already sleep every night? To answer this question, let's start by looking at a few recent statistics on The State of Our Sleep, in which:

- **35% of American adults don't sleep for the recommended minimum amount of 7 hours per day according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- **Among those who do get the recommended minimum amount, another 35% rate their sleep quality as "poor" or "fair" per the National Sleep Foundation's Health Index**

- **Lack of sleep costs the US over \$411 Billion annually in lost productivity as reported by Fortune Magazine**

- **Over 98,000 deaths each year are attributed to medical errors due to sleep deprivation, along with 20% of all serious car crashes and 50% of all work-related injuries - per the National Institutes of Health**

Simply put, the majority of us are not sleeping long enough or well enough and it is killing us, both literally and figuratively. Therefore, engaging in structured periods of rest during the day can be viewed as an essential practice to make up for what we are not getting at night.

In addition, research on circadian rhythms (a basic design element of all life on Earth) has shown that at least 98% of human genes operate according to a 24-hour pattern in which organisms are programmed to seek food, activity and both passive and active forms of rest. Sleep, as you would correctly guess, is passive rest. So is watching TV.

In his seminal 2010 book, *The Power of Rest – Why Sleep Alone is not Enough*, Dr. Matthew Edlund further defines four different types of active rest that humans require in order to fully restore and renew (and, as we would say, rebalance) at a cellular level. They are:

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- **Physical rest** – the directed way in which we use basic processes like breathing to calm and restore our bodies
- **Mental rest** – concentrating our attention on visual images, sounds or mental imagery to powerfully affect our nervous system and calm our minds
- **Spiritual rest** – asking questions about our origins, makeup, and ultimate purpose through reflection, meditation or prayer to shift our experience of reality
- **Social rest** – engaging in social networking, support, or touch to fortify, preserve amuse, and give us purpose

Not coincidentally, all four of these forms of active rest are accomplished during one Well Workout session. How, you ask? Let's go there next.

## How to Reclaim Rest

Practicing active rest during a Well Workout involves one or more of the following elements:

- **Belly breathing** – conscious, diaphragmatic breathing with an emphasis on lengthening the exhale is the most fundamental of all restorative exercises
- **Mindfulness** – ‘tuning in’ to our present moment experiences - such as thoughts, the breath, sounds or other sensations - helps calm the mind
- **Mind wandering** – conversely, ‘tuning out’ by intentionally letting the mind wander helps also helps alleviate cognitive stress while stimulating creativity
- **Restorative poses** – yoga postures such as mountain and corpse pose, seated forward folds, and inversions send a signal of safety to our nervous system
- **Music** – listening to songs that use sound therapy principles can stimulate the relaxation response; one of our favorites is “Weightless” by Marconi Union

## What Scientists Say

The science of rest is undisputed – we need to rest to live. Specifically, active rest influences the structure and function of the brain's Default Mode Network (DMN) which

### References

*Rest—Why You Get More Done When You Work Less* by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, Hachette Book Group, 2018

*The Power of Rest—Why Sleep Alone Is Not Enough* by Matthew Edlund, M.D., HarperCollins, 2011

is involved in nearly all significant cognitive and emotional activities, including:

- Creativity, intelligence and language ability
- Moral and emotional judgement
- Empathy and overall mental wellbeing

Furthermore, sequencing regular intervals for food, activity and rest (a technique which can be remembered through the acronym FAR) establishes a rhythm for daily work/life that has been shown to:

- Aid digestion and help control weight
- Enhance mental alertness and mood
- Decrease risk of some forms of cancer

## What Our Clients Say

Here is what some of our participants have said about The Well Workout's restorative impact:

*“I felt notably grounded and centered after each session.”*

*“I consistently walked away with a greater sense of calmness, balance and resilience to take on whatever lies ahead.”*

*“Before the workout, I felt tired and jittery, like I had too much coffee. After only 20 minutes, I felt like I had just taken a nap!”*

## In closing

- The need for active rest is hard-wired into the DNA of all living creatures, including humans
- Practicing rest is not a sign of weakness or laziness; rather, it is a biological imperative and an intelligent strategy to optimize health, happiness, and performance
- The Well Workout is a quick and enjoyable way to practice active rest and foster a cultural shift from activity (doing things) to productivity (doing the *right* things)

If you are ready join the wellbeing revolution and reclaim rest, please reach out and connect at [hello@thewellworkout.com](mailto:hello@thewellworkout.com).

To our wellth,

*Deb*