



Rest Smarter to Study Better

Students are advised to take regular breaks and rest during their studies. But how can you be certain that you're resting effectively to truly feel refreshed and recharged? [Dalton-Smith \(2021\)](#) suggests that rest involves seven different areas of life, and attending to all seven is essential for truly feeling refreshed. Maintaining your overall wellbeing alongside studying is essential to ensure you can reach your full academic potential. Check out the seven types of rest and some easy ways you can include them into your day.

Physical rest

This type of rest focuses on easing physical tension in the body. Activities like writing or typing for long periods can strain your back or wrists. Standing all day on placements or during creative practice can also lead to physical stress.

You could try:

- ✓ Having a nap
- ✓ Making sure you get enough sleep by having an early night or allowing yourself to have a lie in
- ✓ Doing gentle stretching
- ✓ Doing gentle exercises like Yoga or walking
- ✓ Having a warm bath to relax your muscles
- ✓ Allowing your eyes to have a break from screens
- ✓ Ensuring your study space is comfortable by using a supportive chair, positioning your computer at the right height, and using wrist supports if needed
- ✓ Ensuring you take regular sitting breaks if you spend a lot of time on your feet



Mental rest

Learning can require a lot of mental energy. It requires focus, retention of information and critical analysis. This may cause you to feel fatigued or overwhelmed if you don't manage your energy effectively. It is important to engage with activities that require less mental energy, and allow time for these alongside your studies.

You could try:

- ✓ Taking breaks away from your work
- ✓ Watching a TV or a film
- ✓ Listening to a podcast
- ✓ Reading a book
- ✓ Seeing friends or family
- ✓ Doing a hobby or special interest
- ✓ [Joining a sport or society](#)
- ✓ Paying attention to nature around you
- ✓ Writing down your thoughts in a journal
- ✓ Visualisation techniques

Sensory rest

We are constantly surrounded by noise, smells, textures and artificial light. As a student, you may have days full of listening, watching screens and being in busy environments. Taking sensory rest means stepping away from stimulation so your brain can recharge.

You could try:

- ✓ Wearing noise cancelling headphones
- ✓ Listening to calming music
- ✓ Adjusting the light in your space
- ✓ Allowing natural light into your space
- ✓ Dimming your screen or using a blue light screen filter
- ✓ Wearing sunglasses or reactive lenses
- ✓ Having screen breaks

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- ✓ Using essential oils or a diffuser with smells you like. Calming ones include lavender or chamomile
 - ✓ Opening windows to allow fresh air and ventilation
 - ✓ Having a walk in nature
 - ✓ Having fidget toys or comfort items
 - ✓ Wearing clothes that are comfortable and breathable

Emotional rest

This kind of rest gives you the space to express your true emotions. Sometimes, you may find yourself in situations where you feel pressured to stay positive, and you may ignore how you really feel. It's important to allow yourself time to acknowledge and process your feelings honestly, without judgment. You may also be dealing with sensitive topics or difficult situations on your course, which may further contribute to emotional strain.

You could try:

- ✓ Mindfulness or meditation
- ✓ Speaking to trusted friends and family
- ✓ Speaking to your tutor or another trusted university staff member
- ✓ Setting boundaries or expectations with people
- ✓ Writing your thoughts down in journal or expressing them through art
- ✓ Speaking to the [Wellbeing Team](#)
- ✓ Speaking to [Spectrum.Life](#), which offers a free, confidential counselling and wellbeing support service
- ✓ Exploring [self help resources](#)

Social rest

At university, you may be around lots of people in different scenarios, such as seminars, lectures, sports, societies or events. This rest encourages you to surround yourself with people who recharge you and require little social effort. This rest also encourages you to spend time alone to focus on yourself and your personal needs.

You could try:

- ✓ Taking a break from social media



- ✓ Spending time with close family and friends
- ✓ Limiting how many social activities you have in a week
- ✓ Scheduling a balance between individual time and group socialising
- ✓ Prioritising self care
- ✓ Taking yourself on a solo outing to a café or cinema

Creative rest

You may be busy with essays, presentations, reports and exams, but this requires analytical thinking. This rest encourages creativity amongst your studies, to help you feel inspired and joyful.

You could try:

- ✓ Visiting new places
- ✓ Watching live music or going to the theatre
- ✓ Doing a hobby or special interest
- ✓ Doing a craft
- ✓ Learning a new skill
- ✓ Talking to people with similar interests

Spiritual rest

This reminds you to look at the bigger picture and connect deeper with what matters. It's important to remind ourselves of our values, purpose and the things that give our lives meaning, especially during stressful times.

You could try:

- ✓ Spending time in nature, paying attention to animals or plants
- ✓ [Volunteering](#)
- ✓ Meditating or praying
- ✓ Mindful breathing
- ✓ Reflecting on what you are grateful for, and what you want to do in the future
- ✓ Taking part in events in the community or on campus
- ✓ Participating in activities that align with your values, goals and beliefs
- ✓ Exploring your [religion and spirituality at YSJ](#)