

**Ep #372: Reclaim Rest:  
How to Rest When It Feels Unsafe (Part 2)**



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

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## Ep #372: Reclaim Rest: How to Rest When It Feels Unsafe (Part 2)

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, somatics and nervous system nerd, and life coach B ea Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome, my love, let's get started.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. So, here's what I'm hearing from so many of you after last week's episode. Okay, Bea, I get it. I understand why rest feels dangerous. I understand that my nervous system learned to read stillness as a threat. But what am I supposed to actually do about it? And I love this question because it is, in fact, the right question. So, understanding why something is hard doesn't make it easier. Awareness is healing in and of itself, but knowing the science behind your anxiety doesn't suddenly make rest feel safe.

And I know that feeling. I remember when I was so deep in not resting that if one more wellness person told me, "Just take a bath," without acknowledging that getting in the bathtub might make you want to crawl out of your skin. Oof, man, we're all going to lose it, right? And I get it. I get that so much of that advice lands really flat because it's not situated in our real experience.

So, today we're going to get practical. We're going to be talking about the how. And I want to share a wee bona fide. Just to just say that I come by it honestly. I was definitely for so long, really struggled to rest. Resting and receiving care, no, no. Actually, so I know that the whole family is sitting down to watch a movie and that's really great and I hope you guys really enjoy that. And I'm going to be there. I really want to watch the show with you. I really want to be part of this. I really want to be part of the movie, but I was thinking, I just want to be efficient and kind of get ahead of it. So I'm going to start a load of laundry, but actually, oh man, there's that oil scrub stain on my scrubs and so I have to scrub that with some OxiClean, but then, you know what I should do? I haven't done a load of whites where I really brighten the white. So that whole baking soda and then the next load

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vinegar thing. So I should really get those started, but I've actually been, we've been going to the gym every day. So I should really soak all that.

You see where I'm going? Meanwhile, the movie's halfway done. Oh, but does everyone, do you need more popcorn? Does anyone need a different treat? Anyone want a drink? Can I get anyone a drink?

I get it. I have so been there. This podcast, my book, *How to End Emotional Outsourcing*, Anchored program, everything I do comes from my own lived experience of having been neck deep in emotional outsourcing for most of my life. So this thing about not resting, I get it. But I can rest now. I can rest like a champ. Just lie on the couch with a big duvet and stare at the cat. Stare at clouds going by in the big blue sky. Crochet for hours. God, and I crochet so poorly, but who cares? Who cares? Let's talk about how to rest when rest feels like an existential threat.

How do you slow down when your nervous system is screaming at you to keep moving? How do you choose stillness when your body believes that stopping means danger? Okay, great questions.

We're going to walk through it all together step-by-step. Not like the social media version of self-care, but like the real, messy, my body is freaking out and I don't know what to do version, which is the only version we do here on *Feminist Wellness*. Because also, here's what I know to be true. Knowing you need rest and knowing how to actually rest are two very completely different skills. And nobody, and I mean nobody, teaches us the second one, how to actually rest.

So if you're sitting there thinking, I know I need rest, but I have no idea where to start, or every time I try to rest, I just feel worse. This one's for you, cutie pie. Let's dive in. Let's get wicked practical. Oh, translation, that is hella practical for the West Coast. Cool.

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So first question, how do you even know which type of rest you need right now? Here's the good news, very, very, very good news. Your body already knows. It's been trying to tell you. We just have to learn how to listen. So here's what I want you to try. Take a moment, orient your nervous system by looking around, get quiet for a second and ask yourself, what feels most depleted or challenging right now? What part of me is running on fumes?

Like if your body feels heavy and achy and you're wading through thick mud just to get through the day and that's not your norm, that's your body asking for physical rest. Ooh, if everything feels too loud, too bright, too much coming at you all of the time, all of the time, then that's sensory rest. If your brain's doing that thing where it won't shut up, where it's spinning and ruminating and analyzing and catastrophizing on a loop, mental rest.

If you are so tired of managing everyone else's feelings, of faking fine, of holding it all together for other people, emotional rest, my love. If even the people you love feel like way too much right now, if every social interaction leaves you completely drained, social rest. If everything feels gray and flat and you can't remember the last time something actually moved you, creative rest. And if you feel disconnected from meaning, from purpose, from anything bigger than just surviving your own life, that's spiritual rest calling. And listen, you might need more than one of these. Most of us do, sometimes overlapping. You just start with whichever one makes you go, oh, wow, yeah, that one. Start there.

So let's walk through each type and I'll give you some actual things you can try so you can start to rest in your own life. Physical rest first. So, I'm going to talk about passive and active rest. Hold tight. Passive physical rest looks like taking a 20-minute nap or lying on the floor with your legs up the wall for five minutes. I do that before bed most nights. It's delightful. Getting in bed an hour earlier than usual, even if you just lie there staring at the ceiling or, ooh, you know what I like to do is get in bed and then do progressive muscle relaxation. I teach that in my emotional outsourcing 101

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course where you tense your muscles and relax and tense and relax. It is delightful.

It could be letting yourself sleep in on the weekend without listening to that voice screaming in your head about wasted time. Now, I didn't say it wasn't going to scream. Just don't listen to it. Don't believe it. Now, active physical rest, which I know sounds like a jumbo shrimp. Fine, bear with me. This is things like taking a really slow walk with nowhere to be, optimally in nature if possible, doing some gentle stretching while you're watching TV. Trying restorative yoga. You know the kind where you're basically just lying on bolsters and props and barely moving, like a guided nap? Getting a massage, using a foam roller on all those spots that are holding your entire life story.

Here's what to do when physical rest brings up anxiety. Start with just five minutes. Set a timer if you need to, because your nervous system needs to learn that rest has an endpoint, that you're not falling into some kind of void you will never climb out of. Set the timer, obey it, and then do it again later.

Sensory rest. Okay, so this one's about turning down the volume on literally everything coming at you. Turn off all the overhead lights for an evening. We never use the big light. Come on now. Just use lamps or candles. Eat one meal in complete silence. And I mean no phone even in the room, no TV, no podcast in your ear. Spend 10 minutes outside without your phone. Take a shower or bathe in the near dark. Be safe, please, with just a candle. That's what I like to do. Pop in some earplugs or noise canceling headphones for 30 minutes. Turn off all your notifications for an entire afternoon. And when this brings up anxiety because it might, notice what your system can actually handle and be with. Maybe total silence feels like way too much. Maybe you don't need a float tank, but dimmer lights, that you can do. Start there. Meet yourself where you are.

Mental rest. Woo, this is a big one for those of us who basically live from the neck up. So, mental rest looks like doing something with your hands,

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with those perfect paws that requires just enough focus so your brain can't spiral, but not so much that you're thinking hard. Washing dishes slowly, folding laundry carefully, knitting, coloring, gardening. I like the grandma activities, the handicrafts. Or take a walk and count your steps. I love that. This gives your brain something concrete to track instead of just running its greatest hits of every embarrassing thing you've ever done and everything you've ever regretted. Write down every single thought in your head for five minutes and close the notebook and walk away from it. Do a puzzle, preferably a real paper puzzle. Play something repetitive.

Or try the 4-7-8 breath. Okay, so you ready? We're going to breathe in for one, two, three, four. Hold for seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. Breathe out for eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. I love this one. So this literally interrupts the thinking loop. It's like hitting the reset button on your brain. It's a winner. I love to keep that one ready to go.

Here's what happens when all of this brings up anxiety. So your brain is going to try to fill that space with more thinking. The brain is a meaning making machine. It does what it does. That's completely normal. That's its job. Practice here isn't to stop your thoughts because good luck with that. It's to give your mind something else to pay attention to besides its own noise. I like to label it thinking and come back to the breath, thinking and come back to the breath.

Now, emotional rest. This is the one that tends to scare people the most and I get it. So emotional rest looks like letting yourself cry when you need to cry. Put on that sad song, watch the movie that wrecks you, whatever gets it moving. Journal without editing yourself. I'm so angry about, I'm sad about, I can't stand her. I hate him. I'm terrified of. Just let it come out raw. And I highly recommend if you do that practice, especially if you're holding a lot in your body or you're a person with chronic pain, a tool that comes from Dr. John Sarno's work and Nicole Sachs' incredible work, write it out

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and then rip it up. Tear it up, destroy it. Just let it be a, a release that is not permanent. Incredible.

Next practice is to say out loud to yourself or to someone else, it can be a pet, it can be a stuffed animal, it can be a plant, I'm not okay today. And that's it. No explanation, no fixing, just speaking the truth can be, oh, cancel the plans you've been dreading. Don't overexplain. Just cancel them. So give yourself five minutes to feel whatever you're feeling without trying to fix it, change it or make it more palatable for anyone else. Voice note a friend and tell them how you're actually doing. Not the I'm fine, how are you version, but the real one. I happen to be Latin American and I love to send 15-minute private podcasts to the people I love.

When all of this brings up anxiety because it will, remember this, emotions are temporary. They're information and they move through. When you can learn how to surf your emotions, wow, all sorts of rest and liberation and openness and possibility is yours. When you allow yourself to feel your emotions, set that five minute timer and let yourself feel whatever's there. When the timer goes off, you can put it down and come back to it later if you need to. You're not going to drown in it. Instead, have a plan.

When the five minutes are up, orient your nervous system, ground by finding your feet and finding the earth. Feel the chair or the bed or the seat or whatever's holding you. Feel yourself held and then shake those hands. Oh, shake your whole body. Breathe in and release a sigh and off you go. You're not going to drown in it. Make sure you have a plan to bookmark, to beginning, middle, and end the emotional rest.

Next is social rest. If you are a chronic yes, a chronic doer, a chronic people pleaser, if you chronically and habitually put yourself out, if you light yourself on fire, what is the saying? I said it recently, if you set yourself on fire to keep other people warm, say no to an invitation. Oh, darn, I can't make it is a complete sentence. Yeah, some of us need the other kind of social rest where we've been chronically saying no, no, no and we actually

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need social connection. But let's stick with the, I've had too much peopling and I need a break, but I don't usually give myself a break because that seems selfish or wrong or bad, right?

Spend an entire evening alone doing exactly what you want. Not what's productive, not what you should be doing, but what you actually want. And yeah, if you're a mom with small kids, it's going to take some wrangling. And maybe all you can do is 15 minutes, right? Or an hour, right? Maybe that's it, but take what you can get and maximize it by really breathing into it and really being present with it. Don't make that alone time doom scrolling. Make it really being present with yourself.

Social rest can be needed as a result of the social overwhelm from social media. I want to highly recommend that you unfollow or mute anyone on there who makes you feel like you have to perform or makes you judge yourself when looking at them. Just click the button. You don't owe anyone your attention. Sit with someone you deeply trust and don't fill the silence. Just exist next to each other. My beauty, learn to leave the party when you're done. Not when it's polite, but when you are done. And then make it a habit to turn your phone completely off for a few hours at least once a week.

When all of this brings up anxiety, remember, social rest doesn't mean you hate people. It doesn't mean you're becoming some kind of hermit who's going to end up alone with 473 cats, though I frankly don't see the problem with that. No, come on now. It means you're being intentional about choosing connection that actually fills you up instead of draining you dry. And that's not just allowed, it's freaking necessary.

Creative rest. Go to a museum or a gallery and just look. You're not there to learn anything, you're not there to sound smart. You're just receiving. Listen to music you love and do absolutely nothing else. Or if you're in the Neuromagical Club, ADHD, autism, and your brain needs something from the ADHD side, we often can actually rest more and have more creative

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rest when we're listening to music and mindlessly doodling or drawing or finger painting or watercoloring.

But listen to that music not as background noise, but like actually listen. Actually let yourself be present in the listening. Look out your window and watch the clouds, watch the sunset, watch the snow fall. Sit somewhere beautiful and notice colors, textures, shapes. Let it all wash over you. Read poetry or look at art without trying to understand what it means or what the artist was trying to say. Just let it impact you. Put fresh flowers somewhere you'll see them every day.

And when this kind of self-care and rest brings up anxiety, remember, you don't have to do anything with the beauty you're taking in. You're not trying to become more creative and you're definitely not trying to be more productive. You're not gathering inspiration for some big project and definitely not to monetize. You're just letting wonder back in the door and that's it.

Spiritual rest. Sit outside and really notice. You're breathing the same air, standing on the same earth, looking at the same sky as everything else that's alive. You're part of it all. Go to a service, a ceremony, a ritual, a gathering that connects you to something larger than yourself and create your own. Volunteer somewhere that reminds you we're all in this together, that your life is woven into others' lives. Light a candle and just sit with it. Learn about your people. Where are your people from, from, from? What were their rituals? What did they do to connect in with the earth, with the season, with the harvest, with the moon? Read something that reminds you of your values, of what actually matters to you. Stand under trees, really old ones if you can find them. Think about how long they've been here, how much they've witnessed.

And when taking a break from your regularly scheduled productivity to do this brings up anxiety, here's what I want you to know. Spiritual rest isn't about religion unless that's what you want it to be. It's about remembering

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you're connected to something so much bigger than your own small struggle, and that's vital. Sometimes that's nature, sometimes it's community, art, music, ritual, the absolute wild fact that you are made of stardust. Find what works for you. All right.

Now, let's talk about the thing nobody warns you about. What do you actually do when rest brings up panic or guilt or that awful crawling out of your skin anxiety? Because here's the truth. For most of us coming out of emotional outsourcing patterns, rest doesn't feel peaceful at all. It feels dangerous, it feels wrong, it feels bad. It's like there's some moral judgment against it. And also feels like something bad is about to happen, like we're going to get called out or told we're wrong or like, why are you lying down, right?

So let's talk about what to do with that. When that panicky shows up, well, your nervous system has been in motion for so long that when you stop, it may genuinely think something is wrong per se. It's like, wait, why aren't we running? What's happening? Did the lion finally catch us and we're dying? Try this. Put both hands on your heart or your belly and say out loud. I mean, actually say it out loud, "I am safe. I'm just resting. Nothing bad is happening right now." Look around slowly and keep your hands there until you feel your breathing start to slow down. This is called co-regulation and you're doing it with yourself. You're helping your nervous system remember what safety feels like.

When guilt shows up, oh, that old chestnut. Right, that voice that says you're lazy, you should be doing more, that everyone else is working harder than you and you don't deserve rest. All right, Puritans. Let's try this. Talk back to it out loud if you can. Hey, I know you're trying to keep me safe by keeping me useful. I get it. But I don't need to earn rest. That's your story. My worth is not measured in productivity. I'm allowed to stop. And you're not going to believe it when you first say it, and that's okay. That's okay.

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This is how we build neuroplasticity. Say it anyway. Your nervous system needs to hear it again from an oriented place.

So when the what if I never start again fear shows up? Well, this is the big one, right? That fear that if you rest, you'll lose your edge, you'll become useless, you'll just dissolve into the couch and never get up again. Okay, set a timer. Rest for a specific amount of time, 10, 30 minutes, an hour. When that timer goes off, notice. You're still here. You didn't disappear. You have volition and willpower and you can still move. Rest didn't erase you or make you inútil. You're okay.

When you feel selfish for resting, when that voice kicks in that says other people need you, you don't have time for this, your rest is somehow taking something away from someone else. All right, try this. Ask yourself, really ask yourself, if I don't rest, what happens to the people who need me? If you burn out completely, if you collapse, if you can't show up anymore because you've run yourself into the ground, who does that actually serve? Rest is not selfish, my love. Rest is how you stay in the game long enough to actually help the people you care about. More remedies, more ways to actually rest in just a moment.

Now, if everything I just said feels completely overwhelming, let me give you something simple. Something you can actually start doing tomorrow. In the morning before you reach for your phone, and I know that can feel really hard, try anyway. Take three slow breaths. And if you're a parent and the second you get out of bed, you will be covered in child, do this in bed with your eyes closed so no one knows you're awake. Take three slow breaths and feel your actual body in the bed. Feel your weight, feel the pillow, feel the weight of your comforter, your blanket, or whatever and notice one thing you can hear. That's it. Sneaky, but that's sensory and mental rest and it was 20 to 30 seconds.

At midday, step outside for two minutes. Leave your phone inside. Just look at something green or if you don't live where there's green anymore, watch

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the sky or notice the air on your skin. That's creative and spiritual rest. Two minutes.

In the evening, dim the lights or switch to red light bulbs about an hour, an hour and a half before bed. This is a tough one and we're all working towards this. Put your phone in a different room all the way on airplane, not on your nightstand, not anywhere near you actively talking to the satellites all night and pinging and making noises, actually in a different room. And I get it. Some of us are on call some nights. I'm not talking about those nights. If you are a trauma surgeon, don't turn your phone off overnight if you're on call. But when you can, make that distance between you and the phone and then do one thing slowly, one thing. Make tea, stretch. Sit in a chair and literally stare at nothing. That's physical and sensory rest, 8 to 10 minutes. Total time less than 15 minutes in your entire day. Do this for a week. Just give me the one, give you the one week and notice what changes. You might be surprised. Then if you want to add more, add more, but start here.

Okay. Let's talk about how to talk to yourself when that lazy voice shows up and is trying to beat you up because it will show up. That voice that says you're wasting time, you should be doing something productive. Rest is for other people who've somehow earned it, but not you. Here's what you say back. Lazy isn't real. It's a story that capitalism sold me to keep me producing. Or, my body is asking for something it needs. That's information, not a character flaw. Or, rest is not a reward for productivity. Rest is a biological human requirement for being alive. Or, I'm allowed to stop moving. The world will keep turning without me holding it up. Man, that's a gift of not being important, right? Stillness is not the same as stagnation. Or, I don't have to earn the right to exist in my own body. Write these down, say them out loud, stick them on your bathroom mirror. Your nervous system needs to hear them over and over and over until they start to sink in and feel even a little bit true.

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Here's what starts to happen when you practice rest, even just tiny moments of it. You start to learn that you can stop without disappearing, that you're not that important in the best of ways. You learn that other people's feelings are not your emergency to manage. You learn that the world does not actually collapse when you take your hands off of the wheel. You learn that your worth is not welded to your usefulness. You learn that you can trust your body to tell you what it needs. You learn that stillness is not the same thing as being stuck. And eventually, not right away, probably not next week, but eventually, you learn that rest isn't something you have to grit your teeth and white knuckle your way through. With time and being gentle and compassionate and curious, it becomes a place you can actually land, a place that feels safe, a place you can return to.

Listen, you don't have to do all of this. You don't even have to do half of it. Pick one practice. Just one. Try it today. Notice what happens in your body. That's literally it. Because rest is not a performance. You don't have to get it right. You don't have to do it perfectly. You just have to let yourself try. And if it brings up anxiety or panic or guilt or that awful feeling like you're doing something wrong, oh my sweet darling, that's not a sign you're messing it up or messing anything up. It's a sign your nervous system is processing something old and learning something new and learning is uncomfortable. Be gentle and compassionate and sweet with yourself while your tender body figures this out. You've spent years, probably decades, running. Your body is allowed to need some time to remember how to slow down, to remember what safety actually feels like, to remember that rest, in fact, won't kill you. You're doing this, my love, one breath at a time.

Thank you for joining me. It has been an absolute honor, as always, to be here with you, my darling, and to support you in your growth. If you want more support, more time with me, one-on-one coaching with me, you know where to get it. Join us in Anchored, [BeatrizAlbia.com/anchored](https://BeatrizAlbia.com/anchored) to learn more and apply today. Let's do what we do. Gentle hand on your heart should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You

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are loved. And when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. Ciao. I'll talk to you soon. Ciao.