

I CAN'T RELAX!

7 tips to help you chill out

Does it feel impossible to relax these days? We're bombarded with ways to rest, but figuring out *how* to do it can prove challenging. There are limitless ways to add restorative time into your life, yet not all methods work for everyone, and sometimes relaxation skills need to be developed. Recuperating from stress is worth the time and effort for our physical and mental health, so let us help you figure out how to chill out.



FIND OUT WHAT RELAXES YOU It's not always apparent to everyone. A massage sounds great until you realize strangers touching your back makes you cringe. Painting a scene at the park sounds restful until you feel budget-stressed about buying supplies. Be discerning about what will work for you without inflicting more stress when you need downtime. One person's scrolling through social media is another's bubble bath with a glass of wine. One technique or activity does not fit all.



RELAX RITUAL Sometimes, we blur the lines between rushed living and relaxing. For those who work from home, it can be tough to unplug. That's why having an end-of-the-workday ritual is important. It helps tell our brains that work is done and it's time to unwind. It can be as simple as closing your laptop and lighting a candle. For our commuting friends, jamming your favorite playlist on the ride home can intentionally become the close of the business day. Try to set boundaries—like no work email after dinner—to help you rest and recharge for the demands of tomorrow.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF We heap a mountain of emotions on ourselves, and it can get in the way of relaxing. From swirling anxiety to guilt for past actions, brushing up on coping skills can help put us in a mindset of ease. If it's hard to turn off negative self-talk, leaving you angry, distressed or sad, talking to a professional about how you feel can help you learn how to think positively about yourself to tackle what the day may bring.



TINY POCKETS OF TIME Perhaps you don't have the time in your life to spend every Saturday at the yoga studio and Sundays having brunch after strolling through art museums. It doesn't have to be a rush through the week to relax only on weekends. Stressful days with no breaks lead to burnout. Add activities during the week—for minutes or hours—that allow you to find some zen-like moments in small amounts of time rather than escaping from your weekday life on weekends.



DON'T FORCE IT Adult relaxation isn't like bribing a sleepy toddler to take a nap. If your mind swirls with unfinished obligations and there's no way you can settle your brain to rest, you're not alone. Our to-do lists are never entirely finished, and that can be a struggle to understand when we really need a break but feel undeserving. We can never "earn" time off. Think of it as a necessity for bodies to recharge, not a reward for good work.

SET INTENTIONAL TIME It's easy to put off relaxing when it feels like a luxury. When we are drained of energy and joy, we cannot be our best selves. Schedule time and set an intention for rest. Whether you're soothing yourself from anxious thoughts or escaping the world for a little while by doing something you love, make it happen.



ASK FOR HELP Relaxing can be complicated. That's why turning to someone who can help you take inventory of what's going on that's blocking you from rest can help. Talking with your doctor or a therapist can help you figure out how to relax. When you understand the barriers to rest and self-care, you can dig into solutions that work for you. Our Franciscan Health team is here for you when you need someone to turn to.