

★
THE MUSE SPA

WEEK 2

INNER CALM

Active Resting

balancing activity with restorative rest

ACTIVE RESTING

Need a break? Could you use a holiday?

There's no denying that modern life can be busy and fast-paced. Despite our technology and advances and labour saving devices, we seem to be as active and over-stretched as ever.

Though there are glimmers of hope that this trend is softening, extreme busyness is a prevalent modern phenomenon. And whilst an energised creativity is one thing, non-stop hyperactivity is something much less worthwhile.

BUSYNESS AND THE MUSE

When we're tense, stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted, we don't operate at peak levels.

We're in survival mode and less able to access our intuition and creativity. The channel to our inspiration is blocked by rushing and overwork and endless commotion.

We may be physically able to keep going - but for how long? And what is the quality of life at this pace?

Overwork corrodes our wellbeing and our relationships, as well as our fragile creative spirits.

A frazzled nervous system, an overactive, spinning mind, and too much mental chatter to hear yourself think - these act as a mute button to your inner voice, your intuition.

Endless restlessness keeps the muse at bay. It dulls her spark and magic. It severs the connection to the genius aspect of you.

Operating on the brink of exhaustion is damaging to both our physical and creative health.

Not that we are meant to spend our days in a sloth of inertia - we do still need to be active. Our bodies are designed to move, our minds love to create and our spirit thrives on experience and adventure.

But in the western world in the 21st century, more action is not usually something that needs to be encouraged. We often have far too much on our To Do lists - far more than we can cope with or even possibly manage in a single lifetime.

To function optimally, what's needed is a balance between action and regenerative pause - and it's the rest part of the equation that's usually the one found lacking.

For a balanced life, we need to actively rest, i.e. carve out times in our routines for the essential restorative recuperation work, not just for our bodies, but our minds, our emotions and our spirits.

We recognise this need in infants and children. We know that after a busy spell, they'll need some quiet time or rest to recover. Adults may be more resilient, needing less sleep and fewer rest-times, but we are the same species.

*“Remember the entrance door
to the sanctuary is inside you.”*

~ RUMI

We are not robots. Humans need rest in order to function optimally. Even our week has evolved to allow us one day of rest in every seven. And even if modern culture is eroding this practice, our physiology may take a while to adjust.

As creative beings, it can be tempting to feel that only activity leads to creative output. But activity without periods of rest can soon become overwhelming and unproductive busywork - action for the sake of action.

Like the farmers of old with their fallow fields, it is the rest periods that nourish and vitalise the creation and growth.

For the wellness of both body and creative spirit, life needs to be a mix of inspired, productive action and periods of respite. Both action and rest are needed. Both are essential for a healthy creative life.

THE POWER OF REST

Contrary to appearances, rest is far from passive torpor.

Rest is active nourishing.

In yoga, *shivasana* (corpse pose) is a vital part of the process, when all the chemical changes within the body are allowed to settle and work their magic.

In music, the silences between the notes can be as powerful as the sounds, if not more so.

In the creative process, inspiration is often to be found in the moments of quiet. In the rests between the dynamic activities. The muse can be at her most generous during your downtimes.

Have you ever noticed how you have some great ideas and insights and a fresher perspective when you take a break?

(For me, the spa is one place I know the muse loves to visit. I never go without a notebook.)

But the benefits go beyond opening up to the whisperings of your creative spirit.

During downtime, the body is able to recuperate and restore our healthful vitality. Our cells are able to perform the regenerative tasks that can only be carried out when we are still, resting or relaxing.

When we rest, our minds are given a chance to process the activity, to make sense of it, to give us much-needed perspective and awareness.

In the midst of chaos and incessant action, we can't see the best options or access our innate resources of wisdom and intelligence. But with time out, we can see the bigger picture and find more clarity about what to do next.

Quality R&R is both nourishing and enabling, keeping you healthy and well, so that you are ready and able to take creative action when it is time to get busy.

And regularly taking time out also helps us to recalibrate our direction and true purpose, enabling us to stay in touch with what we want and are hoping to create.



*“Not getting enough rest is
death to our vibes.”*

- Sonia Choquette

So, actively scheduling periods of rest and embracing the concept of regular time out - these are powerful steps towards increased inspiration, and a higher calibre of creative output.

Incorporating this vital element into your life is far from time wasted - it's an investment. One that can yield lucrative dividends for your health, your wellbeing, your access to inspiration and your creative work.

To completely switch off and relax is not always easy, it may take practice.

But when you view rest periods as a non-negotiable ingredient of your creative process (not to mention your health and quality of life), you give yourself that essential permission to carve out the time and space you need.

When you know how valuable this golden time is, as well as the benefits, it becomes easier to prioritise those productive rest periods.

Be aware, though, that crafting a life that values rest and relaxation runs contrary to the accepted norm of working hard, playing hard, keeping busy, etc... Looking after yourself at this level may not be fashionable or respected in our culture of go-faster and more more more.

But if you do experience objections or disapproval, take heart that this way of life is in tune with ancient wisdom, as well as our bodies, minds and souls.

Modern life tends to turn us into progress junkies - but progress to what?

Isn't the ultimate aim to enjoy life, to live well? Otherwise, what is all this busyness for?

And don't forget that being calm and relaxed and enjoying life is the most conducive state of allowing, renowned for attracting inspiration, ease and good fortune - and what could be more productive than that!

And if a discipline of rest eliminates the time-consuming and unproductive episodes of burnout, collapse or breakdown, it may actually be the more efficient and productive way after all.

WHERE CAN YOU EASE UP THE PACE IN YOUR LIFE?

If you're ready to embrace the gentle art of active resting, begin by giving some thought to what that would mean for you.

How can you create space for those nourishing, rejuvenating and fruitful fallow spells?

These need not be lengthy affairs; a candle-lit bubble-bath may suffice. A walk in nature. Baking a cake. A short trip with your camera or sketchpad.

And rest need not be motionless. Anything that soothes your soul, calms your mind and restores your spirit is restorative fuel.

The only criteria is that for this time-out, the workaday pressure is off, there is no agenda or urgency and you are free to just be, to breathe, to find calm.

You'll very likely find that these breaks are actually highly productive, in terms of your health, wellbeing and creative power. And as a bonus side-effect, you'll have ever-more opportunity to pause and enjoy the present, notice the moment.

They may even become loveliest moments of your day.

As the late, great Freddie Mercury so poignantly sang;

These are the days of our lives.

“Relaxing your body helps maintain good health, reduce stress and promote good sleep.

And if that isn't enough, it can help you look younger too!”

~ How to be Rich & Happy

THE PERKS

Health & Wellness

Rest restores both mind and body - both of which are good for holistic health and wellness.

Inner Calm

When you relax, you send a powerful message that all is well, that you have the time and space in your life to recharge. This reinforces your confidence in your ability to manage and cope.

Active Allowing

Spending less time in a frenzy of overwork, leads to more calm and less worry (a powerful state that leaves you more open to the flow of good things.) Desperation is a pretty impenetrable block to both the muse and the good life.

Improved Relationships

Human relationships can be challenging, even when we are in peak condition. But being over-tired can cause unnecessary emotional outbursts that lead to bad feelings all round. When we're well rested, we're able to cope more calmly and compassionately with the inevitable hiccups of life.



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The Muse Spa Recommendation:

Value rest.