

40 days of rest: a Lenten practice

One of the ways to prepare our hearts for the good news of Easter is to give something up or to take on a new practice. Inspired by Tricia Hersey's book *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto*, I invite you to give up grind culture (the hyperfocus on productivity) and to take on more opportunities for rest. This rest is a removal of barriers among people and between people and God and a pathway to our collective thriving. It includes but is not limited to sleeping, so I have listed below 40 simple ways beyond sleep to quiet your body and mind. Feel free to add your own ideas!

- Borrow a child's toy (or buy one for yourself!) and enjoy a few minutes of play.
- Starting with your toes, tightly clench and then release each part of your body.
- Video call a loved one, just because.
- Wrap yourself in a blanket that is weighted, very soft, or has deep meaning for you.
- Sit on the ground and look around you, letting your attention rest on something that seems more beautiful or inviting from this different angle.
- Settle in to watch a movie or show that never fails to comfort you.
- Ask a friend to recommend a (non-work) book that you might like.
- Take five deep breaths, reaching down into your torso as deeply as possible.
- Find a fun art supply and doodle or write random thoughts with it.
- Lay outside on your back and look for shapes in the clouds.
- Start a story in your head with, "Once upon a time..."
- Go on a walk with a child or a furry friend.
- Put an appointment on your calendar that is just for you, and use it as you see fit.
- Take social media off of your phone, at least for the weekend.
- Find the most comfortable seat in your office or house and - breath by breath - settle more deeply into it.
- Intentionally slow your movements, taking twice as long as you normally would.
- Lean back your head and rest your eyes for a few moments.
- Starting with your neck, stretch out each part of your body as far as it will go.
- Light a candle. Watch the flame dance.
- Curl up with a warm cup of tea.



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- Look out the window. Let your thoughts wander.
- Play a board game with one or more friends.
- Find a swing set. Rejoice in the butterflies in your stomach as you pump your legs up and down.
- Engage in a few minutes of centering prayer, not judging yourself when your mind wanders but simply greeting the thought and letting it go.
- Turn on your favorite music and move your body to it.
- Take a friend to lunch or coffee.
- Find a YouTube video that delights you or makes you laugh. Enjoy it.
- Take a bath instead of a shower. Don't hurry. Use a bath bomb or essential oils to make it even more relaxing.
- Leave work early. Don't fill the time with errands or work from home.
- Find a piece of art that speaks to you and sit with it. If you can't be in the same space as the original work, find a photo or snippet of it.
- Move your body in a way you normally wouldn't (e.g., skip, twirl). You can do this where no one is watching, or you can do it in plain view where others might be inspired to join in.
- Create a simple new ritual with your loved ones.
- Take off your shoes and socks and walk around inside and outside. Feel the textures beneath your feet.
- Look up at the night sky and identify the constellations. If you're feeling creative, make up some new ones.
- Get into bed fifteen minutes earlier or stay in bed fifteen minutes later than usual.
- Do something with your hands (e.g., sculpt with clay, knit, build with Lego, woodwork) that brings you joy and that does not engage your mind.
- Attend a comedy show. Alternatively, ask a child to tell you a joke.
- Play a musical instrument. If you don't know how to play an instrument or don't have an instrument, make a simple one (e.g., blow across the rims of glasses filled with differing levels of water).
- Put your phone on "do not disturb" for an hour.
- Sit or lay in a space - indoors or outdoors - where you feel close to God.

