

The Permission to Rest Deck

10 cards for when your worth is tied to doing

How the Deck Works

You already know, logically, that rest is a human need – not a reward for productivity. But on a Tuesday, with an unread inbox and a to-do list, that logic evaporates. That's what the deck is for: ten cards, each one matching a specific excuse your brain makes, each one a permission slip you can read out loud.

You don't need all ten. You need the one that matches the moment.

The 10 Permission Cards

Print the deck, cut the cards, keep them in a pocket, a wallet, or on the fridge. When an excuse shows up, pull the card that matches.

The 'But I Haven't Earned It' Card

Excuse: I need to do one more thing first

Permission: Rest isn't a paycheck. It's a need that doesn't care about my to-do list

Move: Do the 3-minute ladder now. Done counts

The 'Someone Has It Worse' Card

Excuse: Other people are doing more than me

Permission: Exhaustion is not a competition. My capacity is real regardless of anyone else's

Move: Sit down. That's the whole move

The 'I'll Rest When It's Done' Card

Excuse: The list is never done, so rest never happens

Permission: The list will recreate itself. Rest is the only thing that won't wait

Move: Close the list app. Rest now. List later

The 'Everyone Will Judge Me' Card

Excuse: If I rest, people will think I'm lazy

Permission: Other people's opinions are not my job to manage at the cost of my body

Move: Rest visibly. Judgment is a them problem

The 'Rest Feels Like Failure' Card

Excuse: Stopping means I gave up

Permission: Stopping to refuel is strategy, not surrender – even race cars pit

Move: Call it a pit stop out loud

The 'I Don't Know How to Rest' Card

Excuse: What does rest even look like?

Permission: Rest = any activity that doesn't serve a goal. Lying down counts. Staring counts

Move: Lie down with no phone for 3 minutes. That's it

The 'I'll Rest When the Kids Are Asleep' Card

Excuse: My rest always comes last

Permission: My needs don't have to wait for everyone else's bedtime.

Two minutes now counts

Move: Take 2 minutes. Not after.

Now

The 'I'm Not Tired Enough' Card

Excuse: I don't deserve rest until I collapse

Permission: Waiting for collapse is not a rule. Preventing collapse is the point

Move: Rest before the crash. That's the win

The 'Rest Is Selfish' Card

Excuse: Taking time for me means I'm neglecting others

Permission: I cannot pour from a cup that's never filled. Rest makes me present, not absent

Move: Refill one small cup today

The 'I'll Feel Worse Afterward' Card

Excuse: Resting will make the guilt unbearable

Permission: Guilt is a feeling, not a fact. I can rest and feel guilty at the same time

Move: Read the guilt-interrupt script, then rest anyway

You don't have to believe the card. You just have to read it out loud and do one move.

The 3-Minute Rest Ladder

- **RUNG 1 (15 seconds):** Close your eyes. One long exhale. That's it. That's a rest
- **RUNG 2 (1 minute):** Sit down – actually sit – and let your shoulders drop. No phone
- **RUNG 3 (3 minutes):** Lie down, cover your eyes, breathe at your own pace. Done counts
- **If even rung 1 feels impossible:** drink water and stand still for 30 seconds. That's the zero-rung

Guilt-Spiral Interrupt 1

"I am resting because I am a human being. Humans are allowed to rest without a reason, without a reward, and without an apology."

Guilt-Spiral Interrupt 2

"The part of me that says rest must be earned is the part that was taught my value equals my output. That lesson was wrong. I am unlearning it, one rest at a time."

Guilt-Spiral Interrupt 3

"If a friend said 'I'm exhausted and I'm going to lie down,' I would not call them lazy. I would say 'good.' I am allowed to be that friend to myself."

Rest type	It looks like	If you're skeptical
Still rest	Lying down, eyes closed, nothing else	Your body is the expert here. Three minutes. No goal.
Soft rest	Reading, coloring, a comfort show, a stuffie	Rest can include gentle things – it doesn't have to be blank time
Physical rest	Walking, stretching, a slow dance	If stillness feels unsafe, movement can be how you reset
Social rest	Doing nothing with someone you love	Being with a safe person, with zero expectations, is rest too
Sensory rest	Quiet, dim light, no screens	Your nervous system needs a break from input – not from effort

The Baseline, Not the Reward

You don't have to earn rest. You don't have to justify it, schedule it after the list, or wait until you collapse. Rest is not a reward for doing – it's the baseline you're allowed to exist at. Keep the deck. Use the cards. From The Unadulging Society · sfwagere.com