



HEALTH + WEALTH

POSTED ONLINE | JULY 2018

Rest, Sleep and Margin

Last month, we explored getting active and I'd like to take a moment to say thanks to Gregory who emailed to suggest that it might be helpful to take a look at the 'Couch to 5k', 'Active 10' or any of the other NHS Apps that can support us in becoming more active! You can find out more about these by visiting www.nhs.uk/oneyou/apps.

We appreciate we need to be physically active to place controlled stress on the body so it can adapt and cope appropriately with unexpected future stressful circumstances. We also appreciate that this is particularly important as we get older. However, did you know that these adaptations don't happen during exercise or times of stress? But they actually take place during times of rest!

We regularly rest through our daily sleep patterns. However, research alarmingly reveals that 1 in 2 of us get less sleep than we need. An adult sleeping only 6.75 hours per night would be predicted to live only to their early 60s without medical intervention. Adults aged 45 years or older who sleep less than 6 hours per night are 200% more likely to have a heart attack or stroke in their lifetime, as compared with those sleeping 7 or 8 hours per night. (You can read more in [Matthew Walker's book "Why we sleep"](#) ISBN 014198376 or click the link to Amazon).

In essence, the shorter your sleep, the shorter your life. But before we all head straight off to bed, we know it's not just our quantity of life that's important, it's the quality of life we have too!

You'll probably appreciate when talking about finances that having good healthy profit margins often brings peace of mind? Well, finding a healthy rhythm of rest can help create margin, which can bring us peace, too.

Margin helps us build energy reserves, makes us more resilient and enables us to cope with life's

unexpected surprises. Margin can also help us maintain a level of wellbeing that enables us to fully appreciate the blessings, pleasures and conveniences of our everyday life.

It is important to recognise that some of us find it easy to put in margins: to sit, stop and rest, but some find this more difficult. We can experience feelings of guilt when we rest, or when we don't rest. These can be self-inflicted, occur as a result of our upbringing or be influenced by others around us. Some of us have a bias for action, preferring to make progress or have a more active or creative style of rest, when sitting still can seem like a waste of time. Some of us have simply never learned how to rest.

The thing about rest, sleep and margin are that these can look very different for different people, and in different seasons.

I have also learned that there is a subtle difference in resting because I'm exhausted from work, or working out of my rest times. (And by work I'm not just referring to our paid employment, but also our daily chores and family or community responsibilities). I now notice that I get to be my best self when I get to work from a place of rest, but I still don't find it easy.

So as the summer months continue, why don't you join me in asking what drives our rest or lack of rest? What activities deplete or restore our energy levels? How might we create healthier rhythms of rest, sleep and margin?

Because once we figure those things out we can all be more intentional about increasing these into our daily rhythms, to ensure we live a healthy, happy life in all its fullness.

Niky Dix *Intentional Health*
niky@intentionalhealth.uk