



Resting helps in Sickness and in health

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Are we getting enough rest? Not sleep nor leisure, but actually taking time off to sit back and relax? For many people, taking regular periods of rest (from now on termed resting) is rather frowned on. It is seen as a sign of weakness, even a waste of precious time. “If you rest, you rust” seems to be a common mantra. Some link it to sloth, indecisiveness or inertia; others regard it as a luxury we can ill afford. Alas, our present-day Western way of life is highly stressful; physically, mentally and emotionally – and it’s getting worse.

The need for resting is getting more and more pressing. We are well aware that physical activity and exercise, together with a good diet, is a key factor in the drive for personal wellbeing. It has seized the lion’s share of publicity in both medical and lay media. However, the value of resting is very much understated. Let’s face it; most of us do not think that it contributes much, if anything, to our overall wellbeing.

However, the true value of resting in the healthcare scenario is now established. Tibb’s view is that resting contributes to better health and quality of life. Resting now has its proper place in three important areas – maintaining good health, helping to overcome disease, and supporting recuperation.

Resting should not be confused with not working or idleness. It does not mean just chilling out passively on the settee in front of the TV. It is a short period of protected time in which we can meditate, pray, assess our role in society, the challenges facing us, and explore the meaning of life. Resting here is active – it is “down time” which is put to good healthcare use. It can take the form of daily, but brief, cat-naps (not deep sleep), brief (10-minute max) closed-eye periods, or short, deep breathing sessions. In Tibb, resting is an important preliminary to meditation, especially if combined with breathing exercises.

From the therapeutic point of view, resting may be regarded as the daylight version of sleep, a time when Physis can operate better to restore harmony. Physis governs the infinitely complex workings of our bodies to maintain harmony. It is the source of inner healing, and for this reason it is often referred to as the “doctor within”. This process operates at all stages of life, depending on need, but especially during

illness and recuperation. Resting actively helps in maintaining good health. Tibb considers resting during illness and subsequent recuperation as a Physis response to the disharmony wreaked by the disorder endured. In the elderly, Physis begins to fade, as none of us are designed to live forever, so it takes longer to fulfil its role. This is why, as we grow older, we need more resting time to restore harmony.

Resting cools the body and provides it with much needed moistness to balance the dryness and heat built up during the course of our daily activities. Resting, coupled with breathing exercises and meditation, reduces stress, relieves anxiety, and rejuvenates body cells and tissues. This results in better physical and mental performance.

Tibb firmly advises against overdoing resting. Like too much exercise, it leads to a distortion of our bodies' humoral balance, which becomes too moist and too cold. These are qualities that, in excess, can lead to lethargy, fuzzy memory, poor recall, and maybe confusion.

Once the benefits of resting emerge, the ancient practice will again assume its rightful place in lifestyle options for stress relief. As the Roman poet Ovid said, "Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop."