

LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS

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The Official Guide to Bed-Rotting



How to Rest Without Feeling Guilty?



YOURLNM.COM

EDITOR'S LETTER

I almost wrote this editor's letter from bed.

In fact, a considerable part of this issue was planned, edited and overthought from there. For once, I do not think that makes the work any less serious. Somewhere along the way, rest became another thing we were expected to be good at. It acquired fresh sheets, matching pyjamas, elaborate skincare routines, scented candles and bedside tables arranged beautifully enough to photograph. We love all of that at L&M. Give us an everything shower and a vanilla candle any day. But what happens when rest does not look quite so lovely?

What about the days spent wearing the same oversized T-shirt, ignoring messages, eating from takeaway containers and watching a comfort show you can recite from memory? What about the afternoons when you are not completing a reset routine, becoming better or preparing to return as your most productive self? Sometimes, you are simply tired.

That is where this issue began: with the strangely complicated relationship we now have with doing nothing. We wanted to understand why rest makes us feel guilty, why we compare our quiet weekends with everybody else's adventures and how something as human as lying down became an aesthetic, an internet trend and eventually another thing with rules.



The contributors inside these pages approached that question in wonderfully different ways. They wrote about returning to themselves after performing for the world all week, finding comfort in reality television, competing over who spent the weekend “better” and watching the internet turn bed-rotting into something that can be perfected, performed and purchased. Their stories reminded me that we might all disappear into our beds, but we rarely arrive there for the same reason.

This issue has space for all types of girls.



While reading this issue, you may feel recognised a little too accurately.

You may laugh, pause, remember a weekend you spent feeling guilty for doing nothing or find a sentence that sounds like somebody opened your Notes app without permission. Read it slowly. Read it from the sofa, the floor or beneath a blanket with your phone resting dangerously close to your face.

More than anything, I hope these pages make resting feel a little less like something you need to explain.

Rest and avoidance can occasionally look identical from the outside. Only you know whether staying in bed is giving you something back or quietly taking more from you.

Some days, your body needs stillness. On others, it may need sunlight, food, a shower, a conversation or a change of scenery. There is no universal formula, because you are not a machine being prepared for another week of output.

You are allowed to rest before reaching your breaking point. You are allowed to stop while things remain unfinished. You are allowed to have an ordinary weekend that produces no stories, breakthroughs or evidence that you made the most of it.

Maybe rest does not need a makeover. Sometimes it simply needs permission. So consider this yours.

Get comfortable, cancel the imaginary performance review happening inside your head and stay with us for a while.

*Deepanshi
Srivastava*

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

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Shreya Pandey

A BITS Pilani graduate and Growth Specialist at MoveInSync, based in Bangalore. Her writing explores consumer behaviour, culture and the psychology behind everyday habits. Outside work, she enjoys fiction, music, journaling and internet rabbit holes that often become writing ideas. She writes on Substack at Shreyadipity Files, where she turns observations about people and culture into questions worth pausing over.



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In this edition

1 **Do I Actually Want to Bed-Rot?**

A quick diagnostic for finding what you actually need.

2 **Why We're Bad at Resting**

How productivity culture made rest feel earned.

5 **The Invisible Competition of Being Productive | Shreya Pandey**

When somebody else's weekend makes yours feel wasted.

10 **The Bed-Rotting Playlist**

Ten songs for going beautifully horizontal.

11 **The Weekend Uniform | Ria Khatoniar**

How the internet gave resting rules and an aesthetic.

14 **The Bed-Rot Bingo**

How many bed-rot habits can you tick?

15 **Get in Babe, we're bed-rotting today! | Mitalee Deshpande**

How the internet gave resting rules and an aesthetic.

18 **Which L&M Bed-Rot Girl are you?**

Meet the girl hiding beneath your blankets.

22 **When My Life Has No Plot, but Reality TV Has Plenty | Priyanshi Verma**

When My Life Has No Plot, but Reality TV Has Plenty

26 **Permission Granted? | Shreya Pandey**

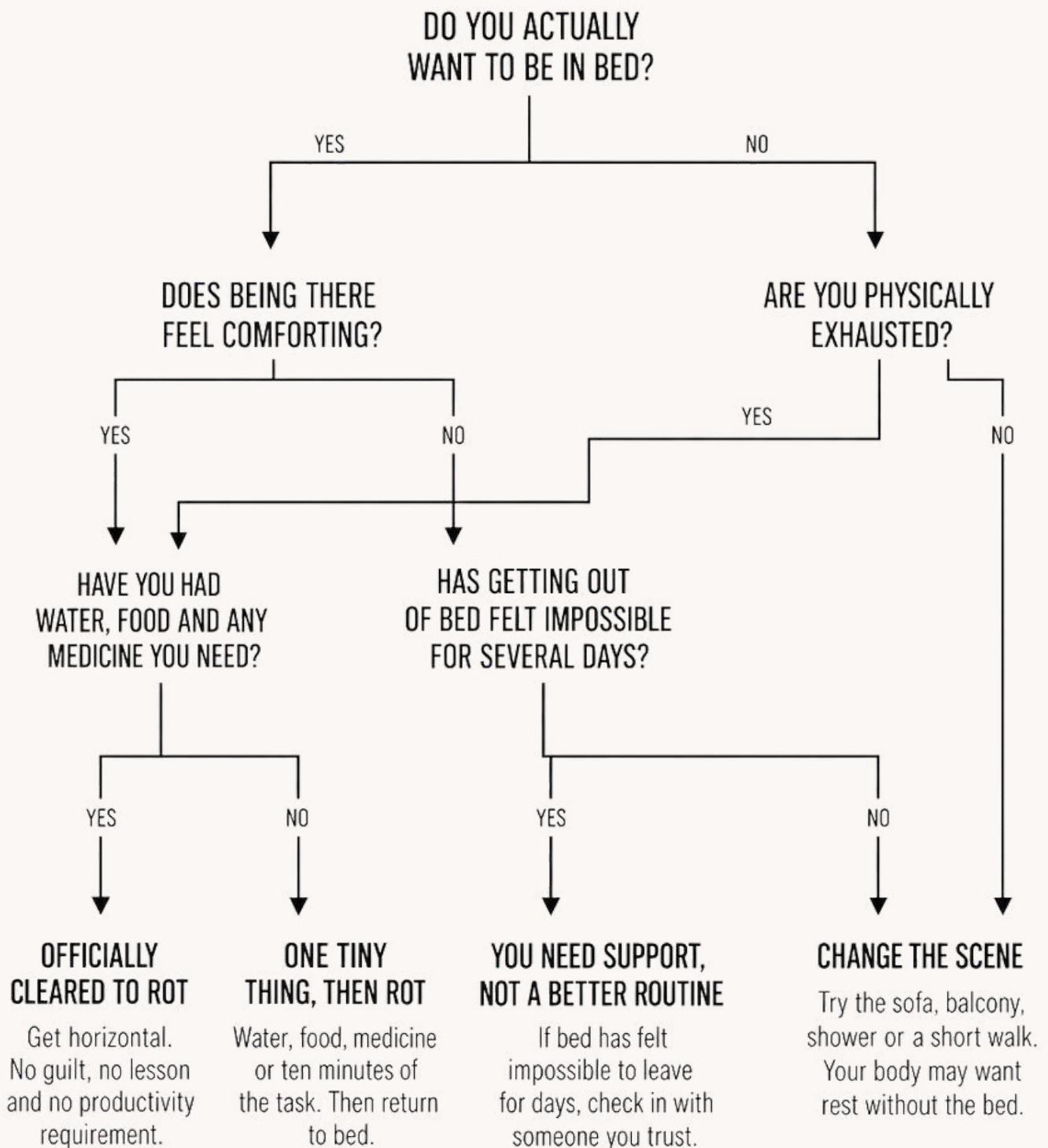
Why rest is a need rather than a reward.

31 **Closing Note**

One final permission slip to rest your way.

DO I ACTUALLY WANT TO BED-ROT?

A highly unofficial L&M diagnostic.



Why We're Bad at Resting

by Deepanshi Srivastava, Founder & Editor-in-Chief of Lipsticks & Martinis

Rest has changed shape. Sometimes it looks like bed-rotting. Sometimes it looks like a guilty pleasure we have to justify. And sometimes it becomes a full guilt-trip moment: you sleep in, wake up late and immediately wonder whether you should have been doing something better with your time.

We live in a world that moves so quickly, things can change shape overnight. **It's almost like we're constantly living in a state of jet lag**, trying to catch up with whatever happened while we were looking away.

Our phones feed us more information than we can properly take in. The people around us seem to be moving forward, making plans, reaching goals and having full social lives. And then there's the pressure to keep up with a market and an economy that never seem to pause.

Even the idea of a "good" weekend seems to have expanded. It's no longer enough to sleep in or stay home. Apparently, we should also have a social plan, a hobby, a workout, a little personal growth and a photo that proves we enjoyed ourselves. We compare our quiet Saturday to someone else's packed one and start wondering if we're wasting our time.



Rest has become something we do while keeping one eye on how everyone else is spending theirs.

Somewhere in all that, rest has started to feel like something we earn only after we've done enough. Or, more often, something we reach for only when we've consumed so much, so many reels, so many thoughts, so much noise, that our brains finally give out.

We scroll until we're too tired to scroll. We overthink until we can't keep our eyes open.

Then we pass out in bed and call it **rest**.

But the way we arrive at rest matters. Going to bed with a head full of doom-scrolling, comparison and unfinished thoughts can leave you exhausted without feeling restored. You might sleep for hours and still wake up groggy, unsure when you finally fell asleep, or carrying the same heavy thoughts into the next day. It's possible to have technically stopped working and still feel like your brain hasn't had a moment off. And if you do wake up late, the guilt is often waiting for you.

As teenagers, we might hear that we're not doing enough for our ambitions. There's always someone studying longer, building something sooner or getting ahead. Now we're also measuring our social lives: who went out, who made plans, who seems to be having the kind of weekend worth posting about.

As adults, the list changes, but the feeling doesn't. There are responsibilities, deadlines, messages to answer, people who need us. Rest starts to look like time taken away from everything we could, or should, be doing. We start calculating whether we've done enough to deserve a slow morning, a quiet evening or an afternoon with no plans.

Rest isn't productive or unproductive. It isn't a reward for having a successful week, and it doesn't need to make us better at anything. Sometimes it's just a few hours in which we get to cool down. Sometimes—

That's the strange thing about living in a productivity-maxing world: almost everything can be made productive. A walk can become a step goal. A hobby can become a side hustle. Even a reset can become a routine to perfect. We're encouraged to make the most of our time, and there's nothing wrong with wanting to get things done. The trouble begins when we start asking rest to prove its usefulness too.

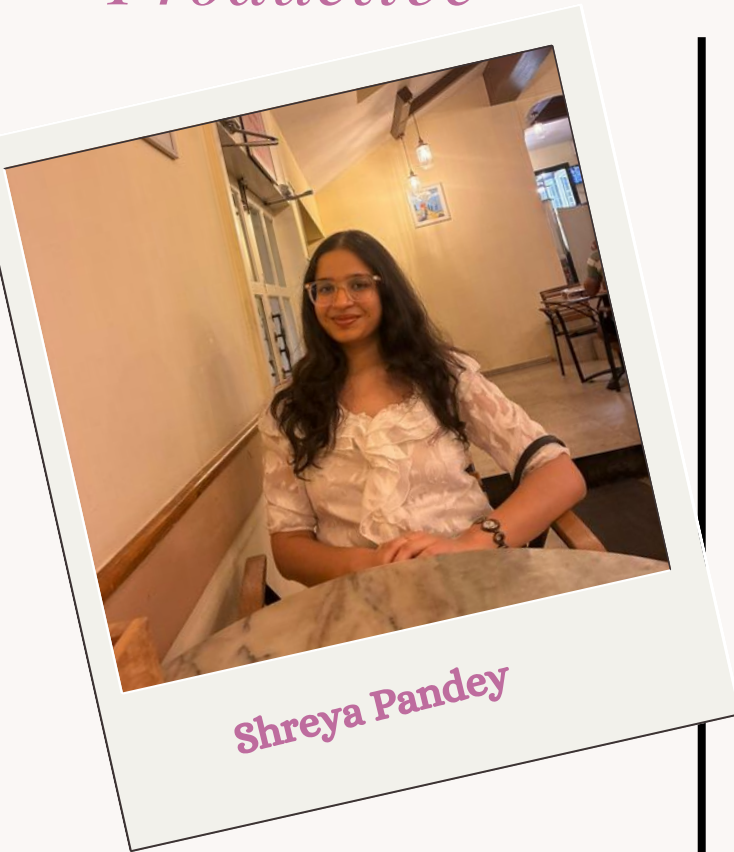
—that looks like fresh sheets and a skincare routine. Sometimes it looks like an old T-shirt, a comfort show and a pile of laundry you'll deal with later. Neither version has to be the “right” one.

Maybe we're bad at resting because we've learned to treat it as a task with the wrong timing, the wrong method and the wrong outcome. We scroll until we're numb, sleep until we feel behind, then wake up and blame ourselves for not having rested properly.

But rest doesn't have to be another thing we get right. The first step is noticing what we're calling rest, and asking whether it actually lets us come back to ourselves.



The Invisible Competition of Being Productive



Shreya Pandey

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On the weekends we spend recovering, and the guilt of watching everyone else live

Monday mornings have a special talent for making you question your life choices.

You're at your desk, nursing a coffee that is doing very little for your sleep-deprived brain, trying to convince yourself that the weekend was enough. You slept in. You watched three episodes of a show you'd been meaning to finish. You scrolled through Instagram until the reels started repeating themselves. Perhaps you ordered your favourite food and didn't leave the house at all. For two glorious days, you did absolutely nothing that could be added to a résumé, a fitness tracker or a conversation about personal growth.

Then you hear your coworker talk about their weekend.

They went rock climbing on Saturday, discovered a new café on Sunday, squeezed in a workout, met three friends they hadn't seen in months and somehow managed to meal-prep for the week. They tell you all this before you've even finished your coffee.



Suddenly, your weekend doesn't feel restful. It feels wasted.

You begin to wonder whether you should have done more. Whether watching television for six hours was an acceptable use of your time. **Whether everyone else has figured out the secret to living that you somehow missed.** And, perhaps most embarrassingly, what your coworker would think if you told them that your biggest accomplishment over the weekend was not getting out of bed until noon.

The weekend you spent recovering from the week has become a competition you didn't know you had entered.

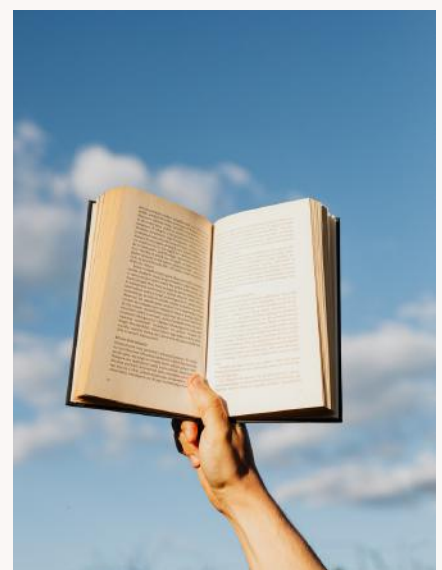
We rarely announce that we are competing with our friends, colleagues or acquaintances over how well we spend our free time. **There are no medals for having the most exciting Saturday, no performance reviews for how effectively we relax, no official ranking for the person who made the most of their weekend.**



Yet the scoreboard exists, quietly assembled through conversations, photographs, Instagram stories and casual Monday-morning updates.



Someone ran a half-marathon. Someone took a spontaneous road trip. Someone attended a pottery workshop, tried a new restaurant, read an entire book or woke up at six to watch the sunrise. These are all perfectly lovely things to do. The problem begins when their experiences become the measuring stick for ours.



We stop asking whether we enjoyed our weekend and start asking whether we used it well enough.

It is a peculiar way to approach leisure. **We spend most of our working week measuring ourselves against deadlines, targets and expectations.** We count hours, track output and celebrate achievements. Then, when we finally get time away from all that measurement, we find another way to quantify our lives.

Except this time, there is no job description to tell us what success looks like. We make the criteria up as we go.

A good weekend becomes one that is interesting enough to recount, productive enough to feel justified and aesthetically pleasing enough to photograph. A quiet weekend, meanwhile, becomes suspicious. If there is nothing exciting to report on Monday, did anything meaningful happen at all?

Perhaps the strangest part is that we don't even need someone to judge us. We have become remarkably efficient at doing it ourselves.

The tax of doing nothing

Let's call it the *resting tax*: the mental cost of spending your free time recovering, only to spend the rest of it wondering whether you should have been doing something else.

You lie in bed, but you aren't entirely at rest. A part of your mind is reviewing the things you could be doing.

You watch another episode, but you feel compelled to check your phone. **You decline an invitation because you're tired, then spend the evening wondering whether you should have gone anyway.**

Even a perfectly ordinary afternoon becomes a negotiation between what you want to do and what you think you ought to be doing.

The irony is that this guilt can follow us into the very activity we choose to recharge. We might enjoy the show, the nap or the quiet afternoon, but the enjoyment is interrupted by the feeling that we should be using our time better. We are physically still and mentally running a performance review. The weekend becomes another space in which we are expected to demonstrate that we are interesting, ambitious, sociable and sufficiently committed to making the most of our lives



There is no denying that experiences matter. Trying something new can make us feel alive. Spending time with people we love can restore a sense of connection. Exploring the world beyond our usual routines can remind us that life is bigger than our work.

But these experiences lose something when we pursue them primarily to keep up appearances, even appearances that exist only in our own heads.

A life well lived cannot be measured by how many activities fit into forty-eight hours. Nor can it be measured by how entertaining we are when someone asks, "So, what did you do this weekend?"

Sometimes the answer is that we had a wonderful time. Sometimes it is that we needed to sleep. Sometimes it is that we were tired, a little bored and perfectly content to let the weekend pass quietly.

All three answers are perfectly fine.

Perhaps the most difficult thing about stepping out of this invisible competition is accepting that our lives will occasionally look unremarkable from the outside.

We will miss events. We will spend Saturdays in old clothes. We will turn down plans, abandon hobbies halfway through and have weekends that produce neither exciting stories nor personal breakthroughs. We might even envy the people who seem to have endless energy for everything. That feeling does not make us ungrateful, and it does not mean we need to reorganise our lives around theirs. It simply means we are human, susceptible to comparison even when we understand how little it tells us.

The challenge is not to stop enjoying other people's adventures. It is to stop treating them as evidence against ourselves.

The next time a coworker describes an extraordinary weekend, perhaps we can let it be extraordinary without making our own weekend the opposite. We can ask them about the rock-climbing route, admire their photographs and genuinely enjoy their enthusiasm without mentally drafting a more impressive itinerary for ourselves.

And when someone asks what we did, we can answer honestly. We rested. We watched a show. We stayed in. We did very little, and perhaps that was exactly what we needed.



Or perhaps we didn't feel particularly rested at all. That is worth paying attention to, too. We can make different plans next weekend because we want to, not because we are trying to produce evidence that we have a life.

There is a quiet freedom in allowing leisure to be private, imperfect and occasionally boring. Not every experience needs to become a story. Not every Saturday needs to be memorable. Not every weekend needs to leave us feeling like a more accomplished person than we were on Friday.

After all, we already spend enough of our lives trying to keep up. We do not need to turn our days off into another race.

“

Maybe the best weekend is not the one that gives us the most to talk about on Monday. Maybe it is the one we can look back on without feeling that we owe anyone an explanation for how we spent it.

And if that weekend happens to involve rock climbing, a new café and a sunrise, wonderful.

But if it involves an unmade bed and the third episode of a show we've already watched twice, that is allowed to be wonderful, too.

L&M SONG RECEIPT

THE BED-ROTTING PLAYLIST

ORDER #005 FOR LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS.
ISSUE 05 • OCTOBER 2026

QTY	ITEM	AMT
01	July – Noah Cyrus	2:36
02	Mystery of Love – Stevens	4:08
03	Nothing's gonna hurt you	4:46
	baby – Cigarettes after sex	
04	Stay – Gracie Abrams	2:57
05	No. 1 Party Anthem – Arctic	4:03
	Monkeys	
06	less – Olivia Rodrigo	3:13
07	Resonance – Home	3:32
08	Friends – Chase Atlantic	3:50
09	August – Taylor Swift	4:21
10	Friday I'm in Love – The	3:34
	Cure	

ITEM COUNT: 10

TOTAL: 37:00

CARD #: **** * 1209

CODE: 120926

CARDHOLDER: THE L&M GIRL

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!



LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS

The Weekend Uniform



Ria Khatoniar

MEET THE WRITER

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By **Friday evening**, I had spent five days performing.

Not in the dramatic, **broadway** sense of the word. In the quieter ways adulthood asks of us.

I perform competence at work.
I perform attentiveness in meetings.
I perform discipline by showing up to every commitment I promised myself I would keep.

Every hour belongs somewhere. Every version of me belongs to someone.

Then the weekend arrives, and for two days, I get to perform for an audience of one.

People often talk about rest as if it comes in only **two forms**. There are the girls who set their beds, light candles, wash their hair twice, shave, exfoliate, moisturize and emerge in matching pajamas smelling faintly of vanilla. Then there are the girls who answer no messages, survive on leftovers and wear the same T-shirt until Monday morning.

I have always existed somewhere inconveniently in the middle.

By Saturday afternoon, I am still wearing the same oversized home clothes I changed into after work on Friday. The laundry basket knows it. The pile of dishes knows it. I know it. The fresh sheets can wait another weekend.

But so can guilt.



I still do the face mask. Maybe I won't spend too long on skincare. There is care, but there is no performance attached to it. Nobody is waiting to compliment my skin. Nobody will ask which serum I used. I do it because it feels like slowly returning to my own body after lending it to the week.

Late at night, when the world is quieter, I fall into cooking videos I have no intention of recreating. I watch someone fold dumplings with impossible precision or stir glossy bowls of ramen while convincing myself that one day I will become the kind of person who knows exactly how much soy sauce is enough. I probably won't. That isn't the point. Some nights, I trade the cooking videos for my guitar and play the same few chords until they stop sounding like practice and start sounding like company.



Sometimes I put on music and dance for an hour.

Umm...well certainly not like **Jackson**.

Not for Instagram. Not because I'm practising anything.

I dance because, in my head, I am suddenly on stage. There are lights, an audience and applause that exists entirely because I imagined it. It is probably the most honest performance I give all week because it asks nothing of me except joy.

Other weekends, at times, my friend and I wander into an unnecessarily pretty Asian restaurant. The kind where the lighting is softer than reality and every plate looks like it deserves a photograph before it deserves to be eaten. We talk about work until we don't. **We order dessert we don't need. We walk home slower than we came.**

Sometimes rest is just walking without trying to optimize the route.

Sometimes it is listening to the same song until it starts sounding like a memory instead of music.

Sometimes it is—

—teaching less privileged kids in the afternoon and realizing that giving your time can be restful too when **nobody is measuring your productivity by it.**



None of this would qualify as bed rotting in its purest internet definition. I am not horizontal for forty-eight hours. I am not binge-watching four seasons of the same comfort show.

But I think rest has always been less about stillness than about permission.

Permission to leave messages unanswered.
Permission to wear the same clothes.
Permission to postpone becoming a better version of yourself until Monday.
Permission to dance badly in a room that will never clap.

During the week, almost every version of me exists because someone else needs it to. An employee. A student. A colleague. A responsible adult who remembers deadlines and replies to emails.

The weekend asks for none of those people.

It only asks for me.

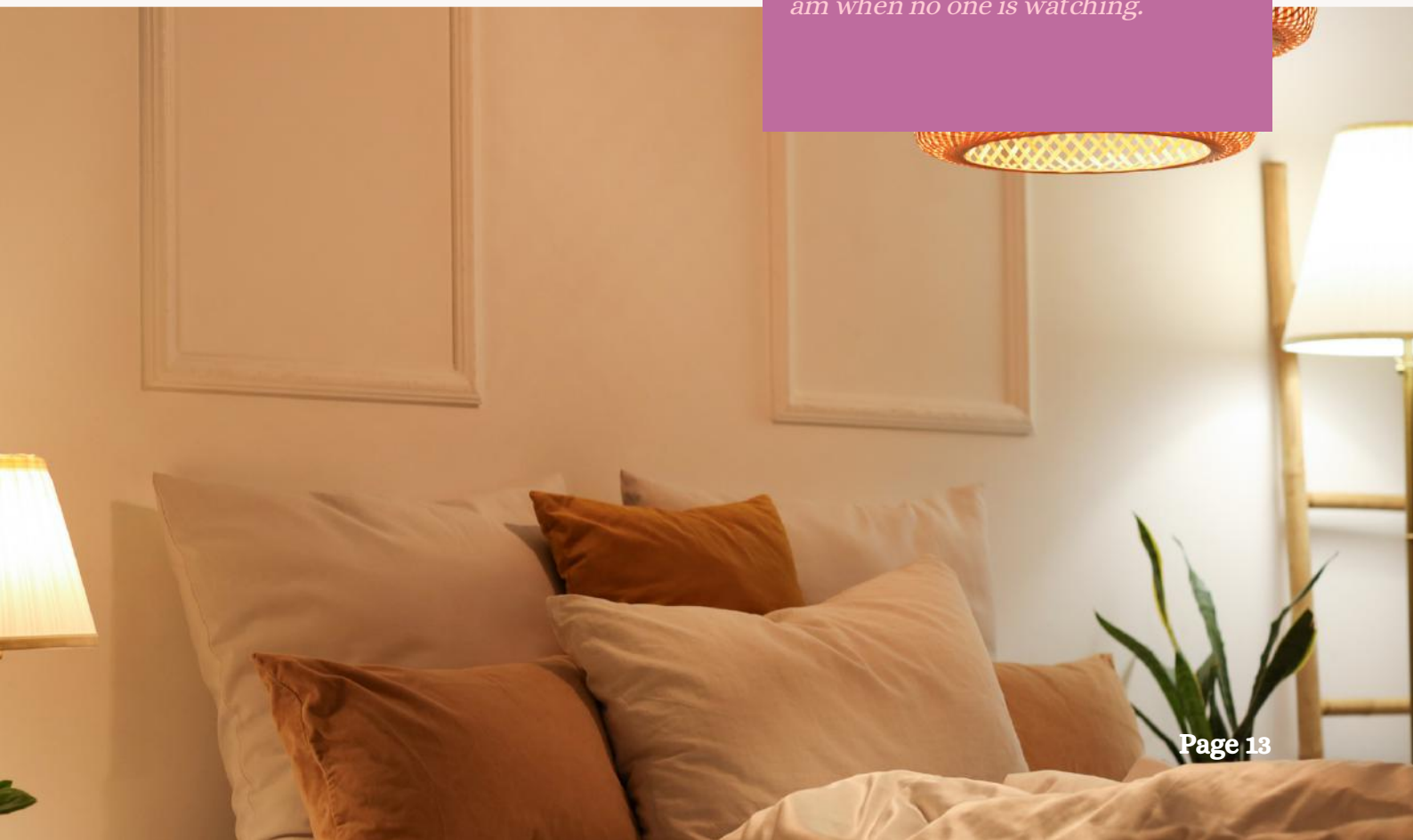


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And maybe that is what my version of bed rotting has always been. Not disappearing into the mattress, but disappearing from expectation.

Not doing nothing.

Just, for a little while, doing everything that reminds me who I am when no one is watching.



Bed Rot Bingo

TICK WHAT RESONATES. AWARENESS COUNTS.

Phone on 3%	Same T-shirt since Friday	"One more episode"	Snack crumbs in bed	Messages left unanswered
Opened the delivery app	Napped after waking up	Cancelled a plan	Lit a candle; room still messy	Scrolled until the reels repeated
Rewatched a comfort show	Thought about showering	FREE SPACE: *horizontal & unavailable*	Ordered comfort food	Lost charger under the blanket
Skincare + old pyjamas	Saved recipes you won't make	Checked the time; ignored it	Bed → sofa → bed	"I'll start at 6"
Had an existential thought	Built fake scenarios	Water just out of reach	Googled "Is this normal?"	Made it tomorrow's problem

No prizes. No productivity points. Just the honour of being extremely horizontal.

Get in babe, we're bedrotting today!

I've been known to spend entire evenings staring at my white, white walls, waiting for dinnertime to arrive. I would have no phone in hand and no half read books on my chest. Only white walls, changing colour with the dancing shadows. *If you'd asked what I was doing, I would have said I was **bed rotting**.*

For anyone who somehow managed to miss the term: ***it's staying in bed for far longer than necessary, either because you want to or because you can't do anything else.***

It used to be a Sunday afternoon thing for me. I'd be washed out from the weekend, and lying in bed like a Victorian maiden was the highlight of my day.

When I moved to Paris, it meant reruns, books, scrolling, watching the daylight fade from bright to dull, counting the shadows moving across the ceiling, and dozing off when everything became just too much to handle.

I can't pinpoint the moment it stopped being a treat, a splurge. Now it's a consequence of being overworked, overwhelmed and overtired.

That sounds like a grim existence, but trust me when I say it's not all that bad. **In my bed, nobody needs anything from me. I don't have to play a role or put on a "bed version" of myself. It's the one place where I'm the me-est me I've ever been.**



Mitalee Deshpande

MEET THE WRITER

Mitalee Deshpande is a Paris-based content strategist and writer with a background in fashion media and communications. She currently works as a Content and Creator Manager at a UGC and AI advertising platform and has previously written for Vogue India. She holds an MBA in Global Fashion Media from IFA Paris. Outside work, she performs poetry at open mics, knits, crochets and continues negotiating her complicated relationship with the internet—creating content for brands by day while carving out space for her own voice online.

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But on the internet, bed rotting has a “bed version” of you, and it comes with certain rules.

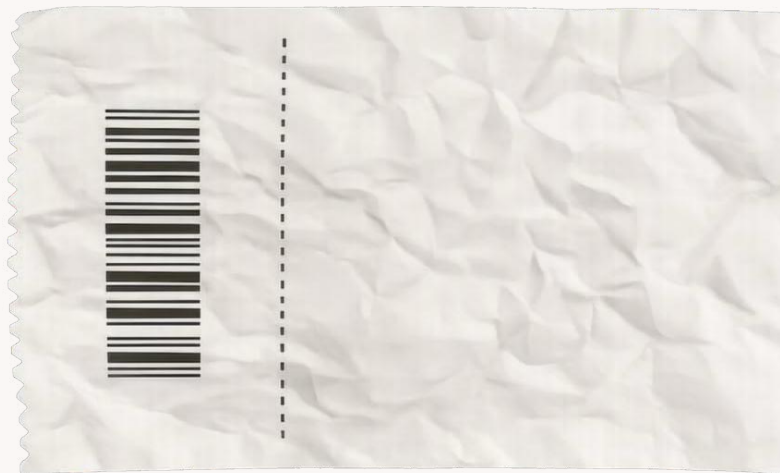
As a content manager, I have a front seat to the latest trends. **I’ve seen concepts like rest and hustling and analogue become social media formats before most people.** Scroll for five minutes and you’ll find dozens of bed rotting videos with precision cuts and edits, each one built to keep you watching.

It usually starts with one random person posting their routine, and suddenly every other creator is jumping on it, making their version a little more whimsical, quirky, cozy and cute than the last. Most people end up in bed because they’re wrecked and exhausted but this aspirational, internet version turns it into something you’d deliberately want to do.

Another interesting thing I’ve noticed is that when you take part in a trend, you feel validated. You’re not just lying in bed anymore, you’re part of this subculture, this genre of bed rotters. Like getting access to an elite club.

Do you know who decides what counts as correct rest? Nobody, and everybody. There’s no rulebook or committee. One person posts, a thousand people copy, and somewhere in all this copying a rule appears and sticks for some odd reason. Think of fresh sheets and soft moody lighting. Anyone who skips these basic building blocks starts to feel like they’re doing it wrong, despite the whole appeal of bed rotting being that there was no wrong way to do it.

It doesn’t stop with the creators either. Brands jump on bed rot maxxing too and, bam! Suddenly you own a silk pyjama set, a bedside tray, candles that smell different every season, a 20 step skin routine that you didn’t even know you needed, dozens of plushies waiting for you to plop down on the bed, and soft lighting that makes you look good from all angles. This is what rest is supposed to look like. **Bed rotting used to be a cheap hobby, since all you needed was a bed, and it’s something you’d already own. But bed rot maxxing on the other hand... girl bring out that shopping list!**



On the other end is the raw version: unanswered messages, takeaway boxes, the same comfort show on a loop, messy surroundings, negativity, and pessimism. We tend to scroll past it because it’s too close to what we’re all going through but when it does get noticed, it’s read as a sign that you’ve given up. **There’s just no safe way to lie down and rest any more.**



My version of bed rotting is complicated by my job. Being online eight hours a day, five days a week is enough to make anyone want to crawl into bed and do nothing, and be nothing. **But bed is also where I scroll for myself. All day I'm studying hooks, thumb stop rates and eligibility for paid ads.**



In bed I get dance videos, office memes, crochet ideas, book reviews, fashion projects, financial tips and everything in between. It's the same screen and the same thumb, **but it's a completely different vibe when it's me that I'm scrolling for.**

Does it feel like honest rest? Yes, because for a while I stop thinking about the latest horrors of the world and corporate life. Does it blur into work? Hell yes. I still notice good creative concepts and trending hooks when I'm supposed to be off.

It's still me, and when you do this job long enough, noticing becomes muscle memory.

I still think about those Sunday afternoon white-walls of my childhood bedroom. Without the pressure to do something more and be something more and be somewhere more. **I still catch myself staring at the walls in my new bedroom but somewhere around minute seven, a part of me starts framing the shot.** My mind now wonders if the light can be improved, if the shadows can be made darker, whether I need sound to accompany my text, and whether this hook will be catchy enough to perform.

I used to think the goal was to find the right way to bed rot, somewhere between the plushies and the takeaway boxes, but I don't think that place exists. **Every version is stamped with a verdict, usually from people who have never seen my bed. And I know how those verdicts get made, because I help make them for a living.**

I've stopped looking for a safe way to lie down. I just lie down. Sometimes with fresh sheets, sometimes with yesterday's T-shirt, and sometimes with a phone full of crochet ideas that are mine and not for work. I'm not even sure it counts as bed rotting anymore, since the internet has taken the term and given it new rules that keep changing every other week. **But yeah, that's my version of bed rotting where nobody needs anything from me, and for a few minutes I'm not noticing anything at all.**



bed rot



pick!!!



edition



WHICH L&M BED ROT

GIRL ARE YOU?



The Emotional Support Blanket

Soft, oversized and currently holding more responsibility than most people in her life.



Cinema, but horizontal

Popcorn tastes better when half of it disappears somewhere inside the sheets.



Comfort Show girl

One more episode, please

A phrase repeated until the birds begin participating in the soundtrack.



Remote Control Centre

Placed within arm's reach because standing up would destroy the ecosystem.



Remote Control Centre

Placed within arm's reach because standing up would destroy the ecosystem.



**Wash the week off**

An everything shower long enough to forget at least three minor inconveniences.

**Mask on, world off**

She will not be answering questions while her face is marinating.

**Set the mood**

The candle is lit. The laundry remains unfolded. Both truths can coexist peacefully.

**Glazed & Unavailable**

A thick layer of skincare protecting her from dehydration, responsibility and unnecessary conversation.

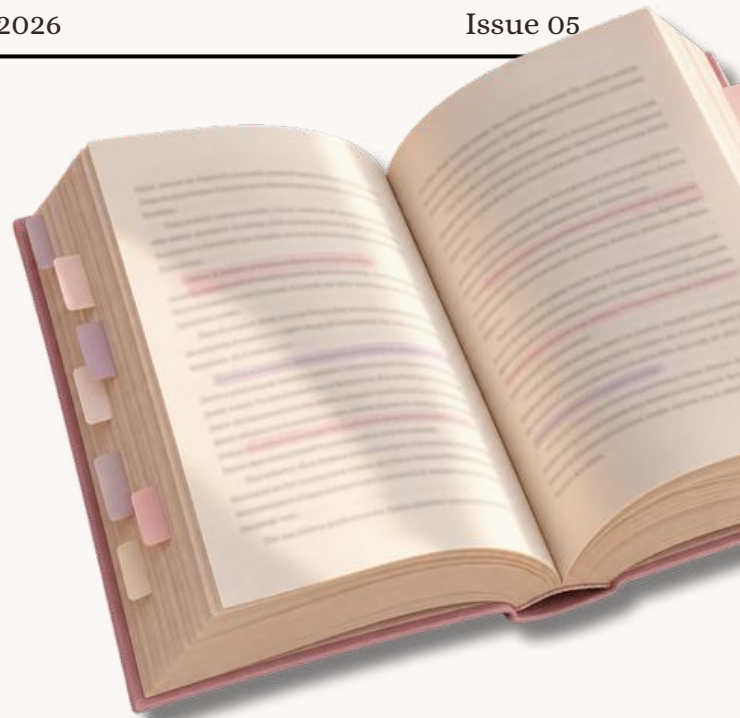
Soft-reset girl

**Silk Situation**

Matching pyjamas make staying in bed feel like an intentional lifestyle choice.

Set the mood

The candle is lit. The laundry remains unfolded. Both truths can coexist peacefully.



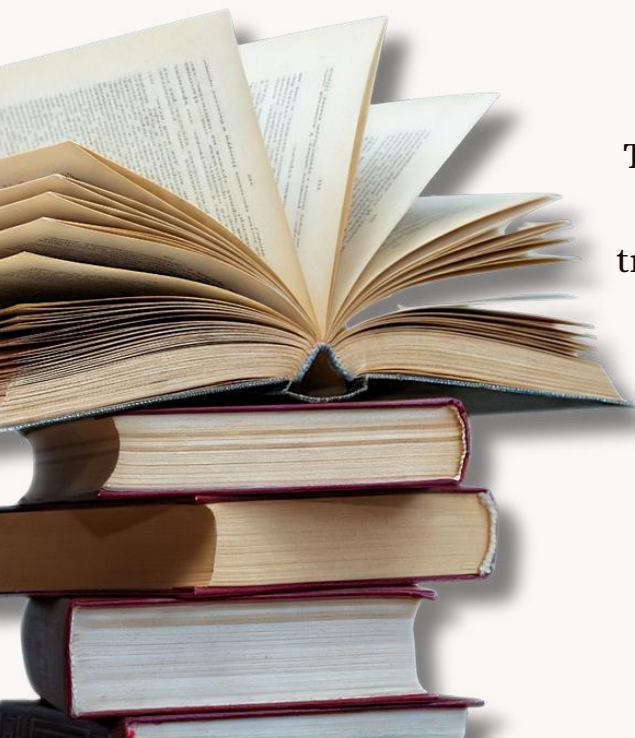
Set the mood

The candle is lit. The laundry remains unfolded. Both truths can coexist peacefully.

book-in-bed girl

Set the mood

The candle is lit. The laundry remains unfolded. Both truths can coexist peacefully.



Set the mood

The candle is lit. The laundry remains unfolded. Both truths can coexist peacefully.





Priyanshi Verma

MEET THE WRITER

Priyanshi is a creative strategist who helps emerging brands define their content, sharpen their voice and translate ideas into engaging digital experiences. Her Instagram theme page generates over two million monthly views, giving her a strong understanding of audience behaviour and platform-led storytelling. Beyond client strategy, she writes on Substack at Untrending, creates content for Instagram and LinkedIn, and is usually found capturing ideas in her Notes app or searching Pinterest for inspiration. When she steps away from strategy and Canva, she is most likely reading fiction in bed—or quietly analysing someone's Instagram feed.

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When My Life Has No Plot, but Reality TV Has Plenty

The Guilt of an algorithm

I have always carried a quiet guilt about not being productive enough, and I blame my feed.

On my ideal workdays, when reels are only a break activity, my feed reflects that. It becomes a "productive" scroll: self-development content, mindset quotes, startup culture, spiritual baddies. All of it nudges me to work harder.

The opposite is also true. Some days, the only item on my to-do list is to survive the day. I stay in bed. For some mysterious reason, I can't sleep during the day, so I turn to doomscrolling as a survival mechanism. It never works. I end up feeling groggy and heavy from all that content slop, and then I feel guilty for spending my time in a way that lowers the "quality" of my life.

I've become so aware of this cycle that I found a new companion for my bed-rotting ritual: reality TV.

Why Reality TV Works for Me

Reality TV keeps me rooted in something while detaching me from my own life. I don't have to make any decisions, and I can spend all my brainpower judging other people's questionable life choices.

I also have a defence ready for every occasion:

- The attention span argument. Everyone keeps citing studies that say we're losing our attention spans, and doomscrolling is usually named the main culprit. But a one-hour episode isn't doomscrolling. Sitting through it proves I can focus. So it's better for me, right?
- The insider advantage. Knowing all the online drama feels comforting. It's a kind of secret knowledge, and you have to reach a certain level of addiction to earn it.
- The celebrity alibi. Ananya Panday has also said she's addicted to reality TV. If a successful actor shares the habit, it can't be that bad.

Right. It's not that bad.



The Drama I Actually Need

On tough days, I have too much time to overthink. I pull out every situation in my life and start drafting a "worst-case scenario" list. Does that make me feel better? Obviously not. You know what does? A dramatic argument.

Yes, I was that girl in school who loved watching verbal fights. I never cheered, though. I was a good kid.

Now, whenever I feel that strange urge to stay in bed all day, I put on a reality

show immediately. It doesn't have to be the same one every time. With so many shows streaming and so many archived seasons, I have plenty to choose from. And yes, I have a whole process for choosing.



How to Choose a Reality Show for Bed-Rotting

- Listen to your gut. What are you craving right now? Task-based challenges? A love angle? Fights and arguments? Strategy and deception? Just a whole lot of drama?
- Check for recent news. I've started many shows because something from them went viral and I suddenly had to know everything.
- Look for the "it" factor. I once watched a finale because of some drama, then went back for earlier episodes because I liked the gameplay. I don't even like gaming. But watching teams strategise is oddly fun to me, and the fights kept me hooked.
- Run the fake-scenario test. This one matters most to me. I love creating fake scenarios in my head, so I want a show I can imagine myself in once the episode ends. You'll never catch me watching a stunt-based show while bed-rotting. I can't see myself being that brave. I can't swim, I'm scared of heights, I would 100% die if I saw a giant reptile, and closed spaces are a firm no.
- Mind the waiting period. I know I'm not alone in this: nobody likes being left hanging. Choose wisely, so you don't suffer through weeks of waiting for the next episode.



“

This might sound like a lot of work, but it's crucial. Life is "emotionally abusive" enough as it is. I don't need a TV show making me question my life choices or my taste in reality TV. A genuinely good show helps me forget every reason I didn't want to get out of bed. I can lock three thousand of my thoughts in a corner and spend the other three thousand judging and enjoying what's on screen.



Why It Feels Like Rest

Bed-rotting, for me, is meant to be a relaxing ritual. But with my undiagnosed ADHD brain, I can never fully switch off until I'm actually asleep. Binge-watching episodes of something I follow irregularly gives my mind just enough to hold onto. It's familiar, low-stakes, and comforting.

The Ugly Side

Now for the less glamorous part. It's escapism season right now, but this combination has been my escape all year. There are days I delay real tasks, like writing this very piece, to bed-rot instead. I avoid decisions, big and small. I've learnt to suppress my emotions with a dose of a few episodes. I can't literally pause time, but metaphorically, this does it for me. Obviously, that isn't good enough.

There's probably a psychology lesson behind my addiction to reality TV and bed-rotting, and I don't want to know it. I tend to overanalyse everything, and I'm afraid that understanding the habit would take the spark out of it. I'd like to keep this a passive ritual.



A Closing Thought

Some things are meant to stay simple forms of entertainment, enjoyment and, yes, escapism. Maybe I don't need to justify every hour I spend watching strangers fight on screen. But I'd also like to be honest that rest and avoidance can look identical from the outside. For now, I'll keep my comfort shows, my fake scenarios and my judgmental commentary. I'll just try to make sure the TV is something I choose, not somewhere I hide.



MEET THE WRITER

Shreya Pandey is a BITS Pilani graduate and Growth Specialist at MoveInSync, based in Bangalore. Her writing explores consumer behaviour, culture and the psychology behind everyday habits, with a particular interest in the contradictions that shape how we live and consume. Outside work, she enjoys fiction, music, journaling and internet rabbit holes that often become writing ideas. She writes on Substack at Shreyadipity Files, where she turns observations about people and culture into questions worth pausing over.
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Permission Granted?

On why we feel the need to earn the right to rest

Five days a week, you show up.

You meet the deadlines, attend the meetings, respond to the messages and do your best to keep everyone happy. You take on one more task when your plate is already full because the client needs it urgently. You push lunch back by an hour because you're almost done with something. You tell yourself you'll take a proper break after this deadline, this project, this particularly difficult week.

And then Friday arrives.

All you want to do is sleep. Perhaps order your favourite food, watch something mindless and spend an unreasonable amount of time in bed. You've been looking forward to this moment since Monday. Surely, after a week of giving so much of yourself to your work, you can afford to take a couple of days off from being productive.

Except a little voice in your head has other plans.



Have you actually done enough this week to deserve this? Shouldn't you be using your weekend to work on that personal project, read the book on your bedside table or learn the skill you've been putting off? Other people seem to manage their jobs, hobbies, social lives and fitness routines without collapsing into bed every Friday evening. Why can't you?

And just like that, your weekend begins with a question you thought you'd left behind at work.

Do I deserve this rest?



It is a strange thing to ask ourselves. We don't usually require proof that we deserve to eat when we're hungry or sleep when we're tired. Yet when it comes to doing absolutely nothing, many of us behave as though we need to submit an application, provide supporting documents and wait for approval.

For an overachiever, the problem with finishing a task is that another one is almost always waiting.

You submit the report,

and there is another report to prepare. You meet the deadline, and a new project appears on your calendar. You finally get through the week, only to remember the emails you haven't answered, the laundry you haven't done and the personal goals you promised yourself you would pursue this year.

There is always something you could be doing.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Having ambitions, caring about your work and wanting to improve are all perfectly reasonable desires. The trouble begins when we start treating every unfinished task as a reason we haven't earned a break.

If rest is permitted



only after everything is done, we may never get to rest at all.

The finish line keeps moving because life is not a checklist that eventually empties itself. There will always be another responsibility, another opportunity and another version of ourselves we think we could become if only we worked a little harder.

And so we postpone the things that make life enjoyable until some imaginary future in which we will finally have enough time, enough achievements and enough reasons to feel satisfied.

Who decides when we've done enough? How many deadlines must we meet, how many goals must we accomplish, how exhausted must we become before we are allowed to stop? Being ambitious can be wonderful. It gives us direction, helps us imagine possibilities beyond our current circumstances and encourages us to do things we might otherwise never attempt. **But ambition becomes exhausting when it leaves no room for the person who is doing all the achieving.**

Consider how easily we turn our free time into an extension of our working lives. We create reading goals, build elaborate morning routines, sign up for courses and make lists of hobbies we want to pursue. We download apps to track our habits and set reminders to exercise, journal, meditate and drink enough water.

Even our attempts to relax can become assignments.

We don't simply want to read; we want to finish twelve books this year. We don't simply want to exercise; we want to maintain a perfect routine. **We don't simply want to learn something new; we want to become good at it as quickly as possible.**

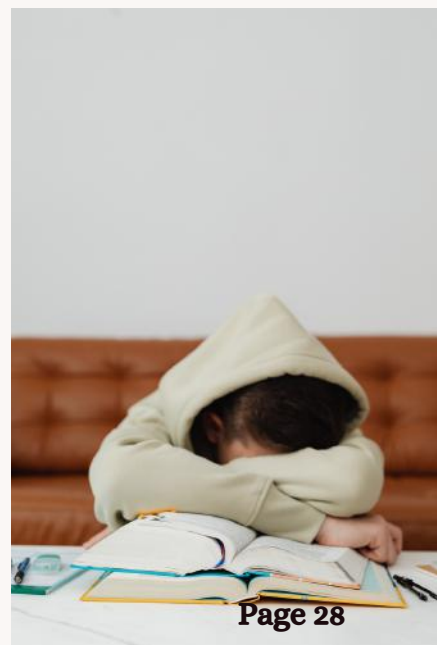
And when we finally find ourselves too tired to do any of these things,

we feel guilty about the time we've wasted.

The irony is difficult to miss. We spend the week trying to meet professional expectations, then spend the weekend trying to meet personal ones. There is no clear boundary between the time in which we are expected to perform and the time in which we are allowed to exist without performing.

For people who are used to being the responsible one, the reliable one or the person who gets things done, this can be particularly difficult. Doing nothing feels unfamiliar. It can even feel irresponsible.

We know how to respond to a deadline. We know how to make a plan. We know how to measure progress. But what are we supposed to do with an afternoon that has no objective?



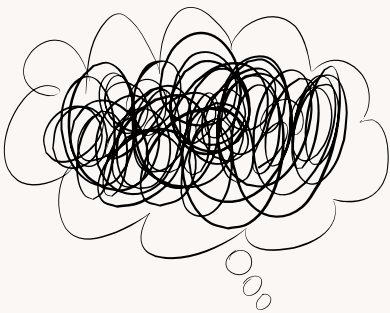
Perhaps the answer is to leave it alone. To allow a few hours to pass without needing to extract a lesson, a skill or a tangible outcome from them. That sounds simple until you've spent years learning that your time is valuable precisely because you can use it to accomplish something.

The weekend becomes an uncomfortable compromise. We want to rest, but we also want to prove that we are making progress. We want to switch off, but we feel compelled to keep one eye on everything we haven't accomplished.

We might spend the entire Saturday feeling guilty about not working, only to feel too mentally exhausted to enjoy Sunday.

And then Monday arrives, and we wonder why we never feel properly refreshed.

Rest is not a prize for exceptional behaviour



Somewhere along the way, we seem to have confused rest with reward.

A reward follows an accomplishment. You finish a difficult task and treat yourself to something nice. You achieve a goal and celebrate. You put in the effort and enjoy the result.

There is nothing wrong with that. The problem is when we extend the same logic to a basic human need.

Rest is not a prize we receive

for being particularly hardworking. It is not a bonus reserved for the people who have cleared their inboxes, impressed their managers or made the most of every available hour. You are allowed to be tired after an ordinary week. You are allowed to need a quiet Saturday even if nothing particularly stressful happened on Friday. **You are allowed to turn down plans because you would rather stay home.**

You do not have to reach a breaking point before your need for rest becomes valid.

Perhaps the most difficult part is accepting that

you can take a break even when there are things left undone. You can close your laptop while your to-do list still exists. You can spend an afternoon reading while your inbox contains unanswered messages. **You can sleep in even when you haven't completed every personal goal you set for yourself.**

Of course, there is a fair question hiding beneath all this guilt: what if we spend our entire weekend doing nothing and end up feeling worse?

Sometimes, a weekend of scrolling leaves us overstimulated rather than relaxed. Sometimes, we stay in because making plans feels difficult, only to realise that we miss being around people. Sometimes, we spend so much time postponing something that we feel more anxious about it by Sunday evening.

Rest is not a magical solution to every form of exhaustion, and inactivity does not automatically restore us.

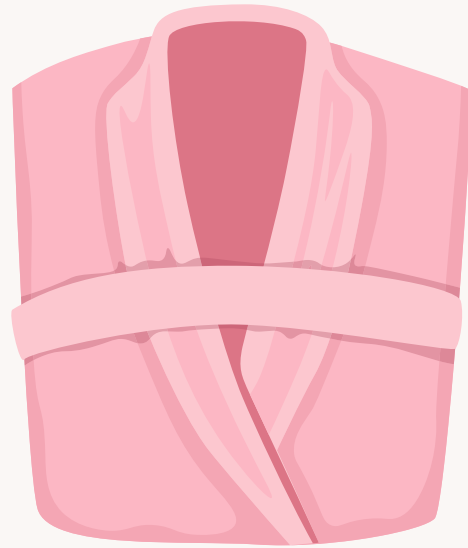
But this is where we need to distinguish between listening to ourselves and policing ourselves. The goal is not to romanticise doing nothing or turn bed-rotting into another rule we must follow. The goal is to make room for choice.

You should be able to spend Saturday in bed because you want to, get up and go somewhere because you feel like it, or change your plans halfway through without interpreting any of these decisions as evidence of your character.

Not every hour needs to be optimized. Not every decision needs to be the best possible use of your time. Sometimes, you are allowed to make a choice simply because it feels right at that moment.

A weekend that belongs to you. You do not need to earn your rest through productivity.

www.reallygreatsite.com



The weekend was not designed exclusively for recovering enough to return to work on Monday, nor does it need to become a second shift dedicated to improving every aspect of yourself. It can be a space in which you reconnect with people, pursue interests, discover new places or simply do very little.

So, this weekend, when you find yourself in bed wondering whether you've done enough to justify staying there, consider a different question.

What if rest is not something you have to deserve? What if it is simply something you are allowed to need?

Just tell yourself *'Permission granted'*.



Closing Note



We began this issue with a question: when did resting become something we needed to earn?

Across these pages, rest appeared in many forms: fresh sheets and elaborate routines, old pyjamas and unanswered messages, comfort shows, books, snacks, scrolling and simply staring at the ceiling. None of them offered a perfect formula, because there isn't one.

If this issue leaves you with anything, let it be permission. Permission to stop before everything is finished, to have an unremarkable weekend and to choose what you need without turning it into another performance.

Your bed does not need to become a productivity station, an aesthetic set or evidence that you have given up. Sometimes, it can simply be where you rest.

So close the laptop, silence the imaginary scoreboard and stay horizontal for a while.

Yours truly,
Lipsticks & Martinis



We'll return with another issue, another corner of womanhood to examine and more pages made for slowing down. Until then, let Martini Mondays find you every Monday morning with something to wear, try, read, think about and play. And, Most importantly, remember that a life still under construction is not a life falling behind. We'll be right here.

Bibliography



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