

BED ROTTING:
PRACTICING RADICAL
REST?

"Bed rotting" lying in bed for hours, scrolling, half-watching TV, doing nothing reframed as self-care or even an act of resistance. In a culture obsessed with hustle and productivity, refusing to get up or "maximize" your time feels almost political. But is it really, or are we just romanticizing burnout?

Hustle culture treats rest as indulgent. We're told to monetize our hobbies, optimize our downtime, and squeeze every last drop of productivity out of the day. To rot in bed is to reject this logic — to refuse to convert every waking moment into capital. In bed, time stops. You become useless in a beautiful way. Practicing radical rest is necessary. Rest doesn't need to be earned. Bed rotting, at its best, is a reset, a way to recover from overstimulation and constant demands. In a culture obsessed with productivity hacks and self-optimization, bed rotting is refreshingly unstructured.

Capitalism thrives on exhaustion, but it also thrives on escapism.

The same system that burns us out profits from our need to check out.

Streaming platforms, delivery apps, and social media are designed to keep you consuming.

If bed rotting is fueled by these industries, is it still a protest?

There's a fine line between recovery and retreat. Staying in bed to recharge is one thing; staying in bed to escape reality — work, anxiety, the news cycle — is another. Bed rotting isn't inherently healing. Sometimes it's just a symptom.

It's not glamorous. No ritual, no performance — just you, your bed, and the radical act of stopping.

But are you resting or hiding? Practicing radical rest or slipping into the capitalist system even deeper?

***Let yourself rot when you need to.**
***Linger under the covers.**

***Let your mind drift.**
***But don't mistake numbness for rest**
*** and don't let the thing meant to restore you become another way to disappear.**

No goals, no outcomes — and that's the point. But when does rest become avoidance?

It asks who is allowed to rest, whose exhaustion is normalized, and which forms of restoration are recognized as legitimate.

I often notice that I confuse rest with unproductivity. With stopping, withdrawing, lying still. Spending time in bed, scrolling on my phone, letting time pass and calling it rest. At the same time, I know that these moments rarely offer real regeneration for me. They do not necessarily restore my body, my attention, or calm my mind. Rest, I am learning, is not automatically quiet, still, or passive. In colonial and capitalist systems, rest has long been framed through productivity: as something that must be earned, justified, or optimized in order to function again. This produces feelings of shame and guilt around resting, especially when rest does not look "useful," efficient, or deserved. A decolonial understanding of rest questions these logics.

This text is an invitation that opens a space to reflect on rest beyond passivity. To consider rest as an individual maybe active, regenerative practice one that can involve movement, connection, care, or pleasure.

Writing a letter to yourself becomes a way to reclaim time, listen to your own needs, and imagine forms of rest that are not governed by performance or productivity. The questions that follow invite you to reflect on how rest feels in your body and mind, what prevents you from resting without guilt, and what kinds of rest truly sustain you.

What would it mean to rest without having to justify it?
Are there forms of movement that feel more restful than stillness?
When do I rest out of exhaustion rather than care?

How does collective rest differ from resting alone?
Can rest be playful, loud, or social?