



HOUSTON ANXIETY
& WELLNESS CENTER

Rest & Reset

A Self-Care Toolkit for Busy Parents



Expert Anxiety and OCD Care for Kids, Teens, and Adults.
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Parenting is a full-time, heart-centered job—and burnout is real.

We created this guide to help you find meaningful moments of rest, even in the middle of a busy, kid-filled life.

Inside you'll find:

- The difference between *real* rest and mindless downtime
- Small, actionable self-care practices that make a big impact
- Exercises to help you reconnect to yourself and reset your nervous system
- Permission to rest—without guilt





Self Care Isn't Selfish.

You can't pour from an empty cup—and yet, many parents keep trying. Intentional self-care isn't bubble baths and spa days (*although those are great too*).

It's about creating space for restoration, reflection, and regulation. When you care for yourself with intention, your children benefit too.

Let's Redefine Self Care

Not all rest is created equal. Scrolling on your phone for 45 minutes might give your brain a break—but does it actually help you feel restored?

Here are 4 types of rest your nervous system actually needs:



Physical:

Sleep, stretching, stillness



Mental:

Quiet, no decisions, no screens



Sensory:

Less noise, light, clutter



Emotional:

Time without managing others' feelings

Quick Reflection Exercise

Take 3 minutes to respond to these prompts:

What kind of rest am I most depleted in right now?

What's one small thing that helps me feel like me again?

What would it look like to rest on purpose this week?





5-Minute Self-Care Practices

You don't need a full day off—just a few minutes of intention can make a difference.

Try one of these each day:

1

Breath reset: Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 6. Repeat 3x.

2

Mental white space: Sit in silence for 5 minutes. Let your thoughts come and go without problem-solving

3

Micro-joy list: Jot down 3 tiny things that bring you joy—tea, sunlight, music. Make space for one today.

4

Boundary check-in: Say no to something that drains you. Replace with a yes to something that fills you.

5

Body scan: Lie down or sit. Gently bring attention to your body from head to toe, noticing tension and letting go.





Evening Reset Ritual

A 10-minute end-of-day practice to quiet your mind and reconnect with yourself.

Why it matters:

The transition from “parent mode” to rest is often rushed or skipped entirely. This simple nightly ritual creates a clear boundary between giving to others and refilling your own cup. Practiced consistently, it signals to your nervous system that it’s safe to relax.

What you’ll need:

- A quiet space
- A notebook or piece of paper
- Optional: candle, soft music, or cup of tea

Step-by-step:

1. **Set the tone:** Turn off overhead lights. Light a candle, play soft music, or do something small that feels like a signal to slow down
2. **Reflect:** What went well today? When did I feel most connected to myself or my child? What do I need to leave behind tonight? Write down just a few words or sentences. No pressure to journal in full paragraphs.
3. **Release:** Take a few deep breaths. Let your shoulders drop. Picture the mental clutter of the day dissolving.
4. **Restore:** Do one small act of rest before bed—stretching, reading, skincare, or simply lying down without your phone.

Goal:

Try this for 5 nights in a row. It’s not about doing it “perfectly”—it’s about showing up for yourself with kindness and intention.





Permission to Stop



You do not need to earn your rest.



You are allowed to pause.

(yes, even if the laundry isn't folded and the to-do list isn't done.)



Your nervous system matters.



Your well-being matters.

Remember:

When you show up for yourself with compassion, you model that same compassion to your children.





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Need More Support?

At Houston Anxiety and Wellness Center, we support parents as whole people—not just caregivers. If stress, anxiety, or burnout are weighing you down, we're here to help.

Get matched with a therapist today!



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Questions?

Email or call us to ask questions about therapy, group sessions, or our approach to decide if this is right for you.



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