

# Are You Optimising Your Weekends?

## 4 Ways To Reduce Stress

Do you sometimes wake up tired on a Monday morning, with the feeling that you didn't accomplish anything over the weekend? You're not alone.

Weekends are supposed to be for recharging, reconnecting with loved ones, and enjoying hobbies or activities. But that won't happen if you don't go in with a plan.

### 1. Start unplugging on Friday evening

Once your work is done, give your brain a chance to unplug from emails, screens and social media. Read a book, journal or listen to a podcast.

### 2. Set three achievable goals for your weekend

Find a balance between productivity and rest. If you want to declutter a room, do some cooking for the week ahead or clean up the garage, pick a time for each activity and do some prepping.

### 3. Get out into nature and move

Go for a short hike, take the dog to the park, or walk on the beach. Listen to the sounds of nature. Research forest bathing. Forest bathing, or Shinrin-yoku, is a Japanese form of nature therapy that involves immersing your senses in a forest environment, through sights, sounds, and scents, to promote well-being by reducing stress, boosting immunity, and lowering blood pressure. In a Japanese study, compared to walking in a city, a leisurely forest walk resulted in 12% lower levels of stress, a boosted immune system, and reduced blood pressure and heart rate. In children, it led to improved attention span and reduced ADHD symptoms, heightened creativity and problem-solving ability.

### 4. Connect with loved ones

Research shows that the happiest people are those who're connected to their families, friends and loved ones. Invite friends over for a braai, cook or watch a game together.

### Bottom line

Spend your weekends wisely, as they're usually over way too soon. By being more intentional, you'll wake up on Monday feeling refreshed, recharged, and ready to take on new challenges.



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