Listening to Your Body

Exercise Guilt
Exercise guilt is feeling guilty about skipping a workout or taking extra time off from your workout routine. Sometimes you’re just exhausted and need to take a day off. Maybe you have a nagging injury that’s keeping you out of the gym. Do you feel guilty about it?

The reality is that your body needs rest. It needs to recuperate from exercise sessions. Recovery is just as crucial as exercise itself. Overtraining is when you exercise without enough rest. The body breaks down and doesn’t heal. Sometimes you need to take an extra day to rest and recover. If you have an injury you may need to take more time.

Benefits of Rest Days
Rest days are just as important as exercise. A successful fitness regimen isn’t complete without rest days. Taking regular rest periods allows the body to replenish energy stores and rebuild damaged tissues. It’s a critical part of progress, regardless of your fitness level. Without adequate time to repair and replenish, the body will begin to break down from vigorous exercise. Skipping rest days can also lead to overtraining or burnout. For more information on the importance of a rest day, check out a great article from Healthline.

Find the Right Balance of Exercise for You.
Here are some things to think about:

- **Be Consistent:** Work at being consistent with your exercise. Over the course of a week, you want to make all your workouts. Over the course of a few months, skipping a workout here and there isn’t going to hinder your progress. Be consistent over the long run and your exercise will pay off. Check out EHW's Habit Tracking Fitness Sheet for an effective way to be consistent with your exercise habits and goals.

- **Be Well-Rounded:** It’s not just the exercise that’s important. Other aspects are critical to success such as nutrition, stretching, rest, sleep and stress.

- **Listen to Your Body:** Learn what your body needs. It takes time to learn about our bodies and understand what is needed to feel our best. We aren’t going to feel great all the time, but we can find a balance. If you feel overtired, take a day off. Or maybe even two. If you’re overdoing it, there’s no need for shame. Be mindful of how your body feels throughout the day.
• **Remember it’s a Journey:** It’s not just exercise. It’s a lifestyle. It’s how you think and feel about yourself and the positive things a healthy lifestyle brings. Remember long term proper rest and recuperation is essential to meeting your long-term goals. You’re committed to a wonderful journey of health and fitness and it’s not about getting it 100% right all the time.

**Self-Compassion and Exercise Guilt**
There is potential for self-compassion to help you self-regulate physical activity behavior with less fear of failure and emphasis on being perfect. Listen to your body by taking the time to assess how your body responds to things like exercise. It can be so easy to get caught up in our busy day-to-day lives that we often forget to pause and reflect on how we are actually feeling. It is important to remember to be kind to ourselves, to engage in self-care, and to have self-compassion for yourself and others. Reflect, de-stress and unwind after the workday with “Workplace Wind-Down” meditation recordings via [UD Capture](#).