



Feel Good Friday: Rest & Restore

As we wrap up this health challenge, we turn to a whole-body focus: the nervous system. Think of it like the operating system of your body — quietly running in the background, controlling everything from your heartbeat to your digestion to your mood. Just like a computer slows down or glitches when its operating system is overloaded, our bodies falter when the nervous system is out of balance. And as we close out the workweek, this is the perfect time to reset — letting the weekend ahead become **a space for rest and restoration**.

Why the Nervous System Matters

Your nervous system runs the show. Two key parts — the **sympathetic nervous system (SNS)** and the **parasympathetic nervous system (PNS)** — work in tandem. The SNS gears you up for action: tackling emails, fielding messages, juggling phone calls, and meeting the needs of coworkers or family. The PNS, often called the "rest and digest" system, brings you back into balance — slowing your heart rate, aiding digestion, and calming your mind. For true health, you need both systems to be strong and flexible.

Life at Work and at Home

Most of us spend much of our day in “go mode” — hyper-focused, multitasking, and responding to demands. That constant SNS activation without relief can leave you drained, anxious, and even physically unwell. The antidote is intentionally activating your PNS. Gratitude practice, journaling, talking with a trusted friend, therapy, meditation, or a simple body scan (like we practiced on Monday) are all powerful resets. Even something as small as a genuine smile **shifts your nervous system toward calm**.

Rest & Restore in Action

Research shows that practices like gratitude journaling can increase heart rate variability (HRV) — a key marker of nervous system resilience — and **lower stress hormone levels**. Positive emotions don’t just feel good; they literally strengthen the body’s ability to recover from stress (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Kok et al., 2013). As we head into the weekend, remember that **slowing down isn’t wasted time** — it’s essential fuel for your body and mind.

Today’s Challenge

Take a few minutes to **write down three things that made you smile** this week. Carry that sense of gratitude into the weekend. And as a fun ending, enjoy the **Chicken Alfredo Pizza** recipe — made to be shared with a friend or family member as a reminder that connection is as healing as nutrition.