# THE 7 DAY RESET FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE DONE RUNNING ON EMPTY



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# FROM ONE Healthcare Professional TO ANOTHER

If you're reading this... I already know something about you

You've spent your life taking care of other people

And somewhere along the way, you stopped feeling like yourself

I remember when I first started nursing

I was full of energy, purpose, and pride in the work I was doing

I truly believed I could make a difference...

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## And Then Reality Set In…

- ✘ Staffing shortages
- ✘ Long shifts
- ✘ Barely enough time to eat… or even use the restroom
- ✘ Families depending on you
- ✘ Physicians demanding more

And you just keep going

Because that's what we do!

But over time, something changes

You start running on empty

And when you finally get home…
there's nothing left to give the people you love most

After 40 years of full-time nursing, I thought retirement would finally be my time to rest

Long walks. Fresh air. Time with my animals

But life had other plans

My husband became seriously ill… and I stepped right back into caregiving

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## And I found myself right back where I had been before...

- ✘ Exhausted
- ✘ Overwhelmed
- ✘ Anxious
- ✘ Not sleeping
- ✘ Not feeling like myself

And I remember thinking

**“I cannot live like this for the rest of my life!”**

So I decided...I was going to figure it out

# WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY

Let me tell you something I wish someone had told us in nursing school...

**This is not a discipline problem**
**This is a physiology problem**

Your body has been under chronic stress for years

Shift work alone disrupts your natural rhythm

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Add in...

- ✘ Poor sleep
- ✘ High emotional load
- ✘ Irregular meals
- ✘ Constant stimulation

And your system becomes overwhelmed

## Here's what starts happening

- ➔ Your stress hormone (cortisol) stays elevated
- ➔ Your sleep becomes lighter and more broken
- ➔ Your hunger signals get confused
- ➔ Your body starts storing more fat (especially in the midsection)
- ➔ Your mood and patience get shorter

## And the hardest part?

**You start blaming yourself**

But this was never about willpower

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# THE SHIFT WORKER LOOP

This is the loop most healthcare professionals get stuck in...

Long shift →

Grab whatever food is available →

Energy crash →

Cravings →

Poor sleep →

Wake up exhausted →

Do it all over again

**Over time, this becomes your "normal"**

But it's not normal

It's a stress loop

And here's the truth...

**You cannot outwork or out discipline this loop**
**You have to interrupt it**

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# THE 3 ROOT CAUSES

After everything I've experienced

And everything I've learned...

It really comes down to three core areas :-

## 1. Nervous System Overload

You're constantly "on"

Even when you're home your body hasn't caught up

This leads to

- Anxious feelings
- Restlessness
- Poor sleep
- Emotional exhaustion

## 2. Gut-Brain Imbalance

Your gut is directly connected to your brain

When it's off, you feel it everywhere

- Mood swings
- Brain fog
- Cravings
- Inflammation

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### 3. Broken Fullness Signals

Your body has a natural way of telling you you've had enough

But chronic stress and poor sleep dull that signal

So you feel

- Hungry all the time
- Unsatisfied after eating
- Drawn to sugar and quick energy

## THE RESET FRAMEWORK (MOVE • EAT • SLEEP)

This is where things begin to shift...

Not with perfection

With simple, consistent support

### MOVE (5 minutes is enough)

You don't need a gym

You need circulation...

Even 5 minutes

- ✓ Walking

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- ✓ Stretching
- ✓ Bodyweight movement

Helps your body reset and improve energy

## EAT (Support don't restrict)

Start with:

- ✓ Protein first
- ✓ Whole foods when possible
- ✓ Reducing constant snacking

This helps stabilize blood sugar and reduce cravings

## SLEEP (Recovery, not just rest)

Your body repairs when you sleep.

Support that by:

- ✓ Creating a darker, cooler, quieter environment
- ✓ Limiting stimulation before sleep
- ✓ Giving your body signals that it's safe to rest

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# NATURAL SUPPORT THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR ME

This is where things truly changed for me

I stopped trying to push through…

And started supporting my body at the root level

I focused on

- ✓ Supporting my gut health
- ✓ Calming my nervous system
- ✓ Helping my body feel full and satisfied
- ✓ Improving my sleep quality

Using natural, targeted support made a noticeable difference

Not overnight

But steadily

I started to feel:

- ✓ More stable
- ✓ Less reactive
- ✓ Less exhausted
- ✓ More like myself again

And that's when I realized…

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**This wasn't about doing more**
**It was about supporting what my body was missing**

# YOUR 7-DAY RESET

You don't need to change everything

Just one small step at a time

## Day 1 : Add protein to your first meal

After a night shift or a long morning, your blood sugar is likely swinging. Anchoring your first meal with protein stabilizes your energy and reduces the crash-and-crave cycle that hits mid-afternoon

### Try one of these :

- ✓ 2 hard-boiled eggs + a slice of toast (prep them the night before your shift)
- ✓ Greek yogurt with a handful of nuts — eat it in the car or parking lot if needed
- ✓ A protein shake with milk or oat milk — takes 60 seconds to make
- ✓ Peanut butter on a banana if you're running out the door
- ✓ Leftover chicken or turkey eaten cold — no shame, nurses eat differently

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Tip: *If your "first meal" is at 2 AM post-shift this still counts. Protein before sleep actually helps muscle recovery and doesn't disrupt rest the way carbs alone can*

## Day 2 : Take a 5 minute walk

This isn't about fitness - it's about transitioning your nervous system out of high-alert mode. A deliberate walk away from the unit tells your body it's safe to come down

### Try one of these :

- ✓ Walk to your car a different, longer route after shift - leave your phone in your pocket
- ✓ A lap around the block before you go inside your home (creates a "buffer zone")
- ✓ Step outside during a lunch break even if only for 5 minutes of fresh air
- ✓ Walk without a destination - no podcasts, no calls, just notice what you see
- ✓ If the weather is rough a slow walk through a grocery store or mall with no shopping list

*Tip: You already walk miles per shift. This walk is intentionally purposeless - it resets your brain not your step count.*

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## Day 3: Hydrate intentionally

Nurses are notoriously dehydrated — no time for bathroom breaks means no time for water. Today pick one specific moment to drink water with real intention not just gulping between tasks

### Try one of these :

- ✓ Fill a 20 oz water bottle before your shift starts and commit to finishing it by lunch
- ✓ Drink a full glass of water before your coffee - just one, every morning
- ✓ Add something to make it appealing - cucumber, a lemon wedge, a splash of juice
- ✓ Set a single phone alarm labelled "water" for one time mid-shift
- ✓ Keep a water bottle in your car so you're drinking on the drive home

*Tip: Mild dehydration mimics burnout symptoms - fatigue, brain fog, irritability. One extra glass per shift may do more than you expect*

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## Day 4: Create a simple sleep routine

You don't need a perfect wind-down routine. You need a signal — one repeatable action that tells your brain: this is where work ends and rest begins.

### Try one of these :

- ✓ Change out of your scrubs immediately when you get home (don't sit down first)
- ✓ Make a specific tea or warm drink — the ritual matters more than the beverage
- ✓ 10 minutes of a comfort show (not the news, not medical dramas) before lights out
- ✓ Write 3 sentences in a notes app: one thing that was hard, one thing that went well, one thing tomorrow – only you need to know
- ✓ Put your phone on Do Not Disturb with a specific "sleep mode" start time

*Tip: Night shift nurses - blackout curtains + a consistent pre-sleep ritual (even at 9 AM) are more effective than any supplement for daytime sleep quality*

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## Day 5: Notice your cravings (no judgment)

Stress eating, caffeine cycling, sugar crashes - these aren't failures, they're information. Today simply notice what you reach for and ask yourself what you might actually need

### Try one of these :

- ✓ When you want something sweet post-shift, pause and ask “Am I hungry, tired or wound up?”
- ✓ Notice if you're reaching for caffeine to push through vs because you actually want it
- ✓ If you eat something "bad," notice without commentary - just observe like a curious researcher
- ✓ Ask “What would hit the spot right now if calories didn't exist?” (Often it reveals a real need)
- ✓ Keep a 3-word food mood log for one day: "tired/vending machine/regret" counts

*Tip: Many nurses skip meals for 8-12 hours, then face a break room full of donated donuts. Your cravings are a rational response to an irrational situation - not a character flaw*

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## Day 6: Take 3 slow breaths before meals

When you eat in fight-or-flight mode, digestion suffers and satisfaction doesn't register. Three slow breaths before eating isn't a wellness cliché — it's a physiological shift into rest-and-digest.

### Try one of these :

- ✓ Before opening your lunch container, set it down, close your eyes, and breathe in for 4 counts, out for 6 - three times
- ✓ Use "box breathing" (4 in/4 hold/4 out/4 hold) the same technique used in ICU crisis situations
- ✓ Pair it with physically sitting down, even if just for 2 minutes — don't eat standing at the nurses' station
- ✓ Before your first sip of coffee or tea in the morning, take 3 breaths first
- ✓ If you're eating in your car, put the seat back slightly — a small physical cue that this is rest time

*Tip: You teach patients about deep breathing. Give yourself the same prescription. Even 90 seconds of slow breathing measurably lowers cortisol*

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## Day 7: Reflect on how you feel

You've done something many nurses never find time for: you showed up for yourself for 7 days. This reflection isn't about measuring success — it's about deciding what's worth keeping.

### Try one of these :

- ✓ Write or voice-memo your answers to: What felt easiest? What felt impossible? What surprised me?
- ✓ Rate each day 1–3 on one word: drained / okay / good — no explanations needed
- ✓ Identify the ONE change from the week you want to carry into next week — just one
- ✓ Text a coworker or friend one thing you noticed about yourself this week
- ✓ Ask yourself: "If I kept doing just the thing that helped most, what would change in a month?"

*Tip: Burnout didn't build in a week and it won't fully lift in one either. But seven small acts of self-care create a new baseline and that baseline is evidence you can build on*

**Small shifts create real change**

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# RECONNECTING WITH YOUR LIFE

## This part matters more than anything

Because this isn't just about energy

It's about your life

I remember coming home and feeling like I had nothing left to give

And that's a painful place to be

**So let me ask you gently...**

*"When was the last time you felt present?"*

Not just physically there...

But actually there

This reset is about helping you find your way back

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# YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS FOREVER

## I want you to hear this clearly...

**You are not stuck!**

There are ways to

- ✓ Take care of your health
- ✓ Support your energy
- ✓ And begin creating more freedom

For me, that meant building something outside of the hospital

Something I could do from home

Something that allowed me to share what I had learned...

And help others at the same time

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# A DIFFERENT PATH FORWARD

It didn't happen overnight

But step by step...

- ✓ I improved my health
- ✓ I shared my story
- ✓ I connected with others
- ✓ I built something meaningful

And over time...

That became a source of income and purpose

**You don't need a second job...**
**You need a different path**

# YOUR NEXT STEP

If this felt like it was written for you...

It was...

You don't have to keep pushing through exhaustion

You don't have to figure this out alone

There is a way forward

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# HERE'S WHAT I RECOMMEND

- ☞ Start with the 7-Day Reset
- ☞ Pay attention to how you feel
- ☞ Reach out if you want support

If you want to have a chat get in touch

Send me an email : debbie@deborahhinnant.com

Text the word "Reset" to : +1 828 900 2797

**You've spent your life taking care of everyone else**

**Now it's time to take your life back**



*Debbie*

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