

Healthy & Resilient You

Prioritize Yourself.

The absence of self-care is self-neglect.



What do you think when you hear the term, self-care? Spa day? Bubble bath? Afternoon nap?

People often look down upon the idea of self-care and paint it with a reward-based, bubble-gummy brush like that. At best, it's trivial. At worst, it's selfish. In truth, it's misunderstood.

It's Not a Treat, It's a Necessity

Not taking proper care of ourselves—particularly in times of prolonged stress—can cause:



Heightened anxiety and anger



Increased relationship conflict



Reduced sleep quality and quantity



Persistent burnout and brain fog



Lowered self-esteem, empathy, and compassion



Decreased productivity, motivation, and energy



This seriously impacts our mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing and can lead to more severe consequences like depression and heart disease.

On the flip side, taking time for self-care comes with a host of benefits including:



Decreased stress and anxiety



Greater self-esteem, productivity, and life-satisfaction



Strengthened immune system



Heightened resilience



Improved mental and physical health

Obviously, it makes sense for us to take better care of ourselves, but how can we go about it?

Reclaiming Self-Care

For starters, let's re-define *self-care*.

What It Isn't

- Selfish
- Trivial
- Occasional one-and-done indulgences

What It Is

- Smart
- Crucial
- A series of life-long healthy habits

Another thing self-care isn't? Easy. It can be hard to pause our intensely packed lives and care for ourselves. Especially if we feel like we're putting our needs in front of someone else's.

Self-care is an ongoing process. One way to look at it is like a journey. Not everyone will take the same route, but we can all build a successful roadmap if we keep a few things in mind.

Minding Your Whole Self

We've talked about how the [brain-body connection](#) and [social bonds](#) affect our well-being before. So, it's not surprising that our guide to effective self-care leverages three benefit categories—brain, body, and social—for a holistic, sustainable approach. You can benefit most by routinely focusing on all three.

Here are some ideas to try. Many of them satisfy multiple benefit categories to make it easier to build a holistic routine that works for you.



Eat with Intention – Some people forget to eat when stressed, others overeat. Both can be harmful. Be mindful about eating by planning and prepping ahead. It may feel like there's no time, but it's worth the health-saving effort. For a bonus, try some foods that [boost health and mood](#).

Benefit Categories: Body, Brain



Mind Your Hygiene – Good grooming habits are often among the first things to go when we're overwhelmed. That's unfortunate because hygiene impacts our physical, emotional, and social health. Neglecting tooth brushing or bathing can lead to tooth decay, different types of infection, and even cardiovascular issues. Poor hygiene can also lower self-esteem and lead us (or others) to avoid social interactions. **Benefit Categories: Body, Brain, Social**



Prioritize Sleep – Make sure to [get enough sleep](#). Try to set and stick to a sleep schedule, because few things can degrade mental and physical health faster than prolonged sleep deprivation. **Benefit Categories: Body, Brain**



Move More – Regular exercise has many physical and mental benefits, and it doesn't require strenuous activities like running a marathon or lifting massive weights. Simple actions and a [move more mindset](#) can increase activity in small meaningful ways. **Benefit Categories: Body, Brain**



Be Social – Our social networks (virtual and real-world) can be a boon in times of stress. Social interaction can help boost our mood and take our minds off our worries. Friends and family are also a source for emotional or practical support—don't be afraid to ask! Friends and family can often tell when we're struggling, and they feel good when we let them help. **Benefit Categories: Brain, Social**



Set Boundaries – Helping others feels good, but saying yes to every work and personal demand can quickly overwhelm us both physically and emotionally. Set realistic priorities by determining what must be done now, what can wait, and say "no" accordingly. [Boundaries](#) help us protect our energy and build healthier relationships in the long run. **Benefit Categories: Body, Brain, Social**



Find Enjoyment – Even though self-care isn't just about indulgence, treating yourself to a happy, enjoyable activity can be a powerful rejuvenator. Casual leisure activities like taking a quiet bubble bath or watching funny cat videos can give a quick boost, and deeper leisure activities like making art or music, gardening, reading, or cooking can generate [longer-term benefits](#). **Benefit Categories: Body, Brain**

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