



WELL-BEING STARTS WITH SELF CARE

Most of us, in some form or fashion spend time taking care of others throughout the day. In order to keep up with all that life offers or demands of us, we also need to learn to take care of ourselves. Self-care is important for our bodies, mind and soul. In order to be the best version of ourselves, we need to nurture and take care of ourselves. We know self-care can help us become more effective and energetic and manage stress better. Below are several ways that we can take care of ourselves.

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1. PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Three to five times per week (with your doctor's permission).

All forms of exercise, including yoga and walking, can ease depression and anxiety by helping the brain release feel-good chemicals. You can go for a quick walk around the block, take the stairs up and down a few flights, or do some stretching exercises like head rolls and shoulder shrugs. – hiking, running, bowling, walking, etc. can help reduce stress

2. LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Meditate mindfulness.

- **Deep breathing** - While sitting, lying down or standing, close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of 5-10 seconds. Take ten of these super-relaxers any time you feel tense.
- **Meditate**- Start by breathing in and out slowly. One cycle should last for approximately 6 seconds. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body. Let go of your thoughts for a minute. Let go of things you have to do later today or pending projects that need your attention. Simply let yourself be still.
- **Mindfulness** - Focus on the here and now. Be present.
- **Stretching** - Practice simple stretches such as the “neck stretch”: stretch your neck by gently rolling your head in a half-circle, starting at one side, then dropping your chin to your chest, then to the other side.
- **Create** a playlist of songs or nature sounds that sound relaxing to you. Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety

3. EAT HEALTHY

Eating healthy is not about strict limitations.

Nor is it about staying unrealistically thin or depriving yourself of the foods you love. Rather, it's about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health, and boosting your mood. We all need a balance of fruits, vegetables, protein, fat, carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, and minerals in our diets to sustain a healthy body. Find out if your diet is well-balanced and take steps to eat healthily to help reduce stress. Reduce caffeine (in coffee, black tea, chocolate) and alcohol intake.

4. DEVELOP BETTER TIME MANAGEMENT HABITS

Plan your time.

Make your "to-do" list. Prioritize. If you don't take the time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over? Set time limits and goals for meetings and projects. Review your goals and change them as necessary

5. PLAY. HAVE FUN. RECHARGE.

Do something you love.

When you enjoy yourself, whether it's gardening, going to the beach or seeing friends, you relax your emotions.

6. GET PLENTY OF SLEEP

Uplug.

Reduce long daytime naps to sleep better at night. Monitor the temperature, noise, external lights and furniture arrangements in your room for a better night's sleep. Relax and clear your mind.

7. SMILE MORE.

Laugh.

Use humor to lighten your emotional load. - Go to a comedy club, see a funny movie, or spend time with a funny friend.

7. CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Take time to talk with a friend, partner, or child.

Express feelings you might be holding in. Listen carefully to your partner. Feeling a part of a larger community can also help us manage our stress better because we do not feel as alone.



8. COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Daily.

Make thankfulness a habit. Keep a gratitude journal or several (one by your bed, one in your purse, and one at work) to help you remember all the things that are good in your life. By focusing on your blessings or the positive things that are happening in your life, you spend less time focusing on the negative thoughts or things in your life. Use these journals to savor good experiences like a child's smile, a sunshine-filled day, and good health. Don't forget to celebrate accomplishments like mastering a new task at work or a new hobby. When you start feeling stressed, spend a few minutes looking through your notes to remind yourself what really matters

9. SIMPLIFY AND FORGIVE

Learn to let go of unnecessary things in your life.

It is OK to say No and set boundaries. Also, grudges are too heavy to carry around.

10. SET PERSONAL GOALS

Give yourself a sense of purpose.

11. PRACTICE OPTIMISM AND POSITIVE EXPECTANCY

Hope is a muscle - develop it.

SELF-CARE FOCUS POINTS:

Physical exercise, three to five times per week (with your doctor's permission).

Learn relaxation techniques. Meditate mindfulness

Eat healthy. cut down on caffeine

Develop better time management habits.

Play. Have fun. Recharge.

Get plenty of sleep.

Smile more. Laugh. Use humor to lighten your emotional load.

Count your blessings – daily. Make thankfulness a habit.

Connect with others.

Simplify.

Set personal goals. Give yourself a sense of purpose.

Forgive. Grudges are too heavy to carry around.

Practice optimism and positive expectancy. Hope is a muscle – develop it