

December 2023

Fill your tank with self-care practices



Self-care

December is often the time of giving, but you can't continue giving if your tank is running on empty. It's beneficial for your overall health and wellness to take time for yourself by engaging in self-care activities. Self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. It's easiest to break down self-care into four different areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Physical self-care

Nutrition, physical activity, and getting adequate amounts of sleep are a few aspects of physical self-care. Physical self-care can also include general hygiene, such as brushing your teeth, regularly bathing, and combing your hair. Make sure you get at least seven hours of sleep every night to reduce stress and allow your body to recharge. Being physically active is also a great way to reduce holiday stress. Finally, don't forget to fuel your body with fruits, vegetables, and lean protein for optimal health.

Emotional self-care

Emotional self-care includes activities that help you become more aware of your emotions and improve your ability to cope with them. It's important to experience joy and happiness every day. An emotional self-care activity can be as simple as dancing in the kitchen while singing your favorite song at the top of your lungs. For some people, it's talking about emotions with a counselor. Emotional self-care looks different for everyone, but it's always beneficial to pay attention to your emotional health before your tank is empty.

Intellectual self-care

The need to be intellectually challenged is necessary. People who feel intellectually challenged are often more fulfilled. Some people feel intellectually fulfilled through their career, but challenging hobbies can also do the trick. Consider learning a new skill, practicing brain games, solving puzzles, or reading an interesting book to challenge your brain.

Spiritual self-care

Spiritual self-care often revolves around finding your purpose in life. Many people have this need fulfilled through organized religion, deep friendships, parenting, volunteering, or through random acts of kindness. Spiritual self-care is unique for everyone, so you should do what makes you feel the most comfortable and happy.

Building small self-care activities into a routine throughout the week can help make this important aspect of your health more sustainable in the long run. Working on the above examples of self-care a little at a time will fuel your overall well-being.



Mental health tips

Are you struggling with the winter blues or the weight of holiday stress? Here are a few tips to take care of your mental health:

-  **Manage your time.** Be realistic with how much you can handle this season.
-  **Find ways to laugh.** Laughing relaxes the whole body, and it can relieve physical tension and stress.
-  **Take a break.** Take a nap, go for a short walk, read a book, or watch a funny movie.
-  **Plan spending.** Holiday spending can add to stress. Make a budget and stick to it.
-  **Say no.** It's OK to be selective about the commitments you add to your schedule.

Self-care

Myths about self-care

It's common practice to take your car to an auto shop for regular maintenance, so why isn't personal wellness approached in the same way? We often wait until our check engine light is on before realizing we haven't been taking care of ourselves. Setting up a self-care routine is essential for your overall health, but it isn't easy for everyone. It's understandable that consistently practicing self-care can feel impossible during the busy winter months. Consider the ways you can reframe these common negative thoughts about self-care to ensure you are taking time for yourself this month:

Putting myself first means that I am putting others last.

It's natural to think the opposite of selfless is selfish, but you don't have to sacrifice your own needs to care for others. You can show up as the best version of yourself if you are fulfilling your self-care needs. Self-care practices such as scheduling regular wellness visits, getting enough physical activity, or focusing on your mental health are not selfish acts; these are necessary parts of your life.

I can't afford to indulge in self-care activities.

Advertisers want you to believe that their products will make you feel better, but self-care does not have to be elaborate or expensive. Self-care is attainable through small acts or rituals throughout the week, many of which are free and quick. Engaging in five minutes of meditation, watching your favorite movie, or enjoying a hobby that makes you happy are cheap and easy options. Self-care also consists of maintaining a regular sleeping routine or eating healthy.



I don't have time.

Life can become busy, and the idea of taking time for yourself may seem unrealistic. You may need to adjust your expectations for what self-care is and the amount of time it takes. Self-care can be spending an hour exercising or five minutes savoring a favorite snack. If you are still struggling to find time for yourself, put it on a calendar. Schedule your self-care practices throughout the week, once a week, or even once a month. Once you have a reasonable plan for your personal needs, schedule everything else around them to ensure you are prioritizing your health and wellness.

Source: [Nami.org](https://www.nami.org)

Additional resources

Text, call, or chat online with the [NAMI HelpLine](#) if you need mental health support.

Here are [10 small ways](#) you can take care of yourself.

Allow yourself a few moments to relax with this guided meditation [video](#).

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Self-care checklist

Self-care applies to your personal life and your work life. Use this checklist to practice professional self-care during the work week:

- Take a short break during the workday.
- Chat with a coworker.
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding.
- Set limits with your clients and colleagues.
- Balance your workload so tasks do not become overwhelming.
- Organize your workspace so it's comfortable and comforting.