Commit to finding ‘me’ time

Carving out time for yourself is tough. But it’s worth it. If you’re trying to live more healthily, you want to dedicate some time to yourself. Not just to exercise or measure your foods on a scale – but time to chill out and unwind.

Activities that are meant to help you feel better physically, emotionally and mentally are sometimes known as self-care. It could mean exercising, spending time with your children, spending time in nature or even saying “no” to things that you feel pressured to do.

**Benefits of self-care**

When you take time for yourself, you have a lower chance of burnout, more resilience, better relationships, and improved self-esteem and confidence. How’s that for starters?

**Some examples**

- Sitting and meditating
- Working in your garden
- Volunteering in your community
- Going out for coffee with a friend
- Having a technology-free weekend
- Listening to music on your commute
- Reading a book or going to see a film
- Going for an early-morning walk or a run

**Finding the best self-care**

So what’s the right type of activity for you? If it makes you feel happier, more alive, more relaxed or less stressed, it
sounds like a good choice. By definition, self-care activities should be good for you. If your activity feels good in the short term but isn’t healthy in the long term, it’s not self-care.

**Three simple steps to find the right activity for you**

1. Pick two or three activities that you think might be right for you. Try them out one at a time and notice how you feel. It might be helpful to keep a list of self-care practices that you want to try. Make sure that your list has a wide range of choices to match your mood and energy level. Gather any supplies that you’ll need, such as music to listen to or magazines to read.

2. Schedule it! Make time for your self-care like any other appointment. Write it in your calendar and set a reminder for yourself. This is only going to work for you if you do it regularly. Two or three times a week is ideal, if not more.

3. Stick with it! Don’t put it off or cancel. Really commit yourself to the activity. This can be tough, but it’s worth trying to make it work.

**Other types of self-care**

While most of the activities listed above can be put on your calendar, some types of self-care involve a different kind of commitment. Let’s say you’re having trouble saying “no” to people. You could journal about why you feel you do this and make a plan to change it.
25 ways to get moving

Working out at the gym isn’t the only way to get active. Opportunities for exercise are all around you. While a full workout at the gym may be ideal, it’s not the only way to get moving. Here are some ways to make it happen in a hurry.

1. Take a swing or ballroom dance class.
2. Wash your car by hand. Even scrubbing burns calories.
3. Find a way to add walking as part of your daily commute.
4. Purchase a stability exercise ball for quick and easy workouts at home.
5. Motivate with music. Wear headphones when exercising to get yourself moving.
6. Mow your own lawn. Skip the lawn tractor and use a hand-pushed mower instead.
7. Take a hike. Or if you’re feeling more adventurous, try mountain climbing.
8. Exercise at home. Designate a room and establish a training time that you can stick to.
9. Eat out at a location within walking distance. Burn calories getting there and getting back.
10. Try walking at a slight incline when walking on a treadmill for a more intense workout.
11. Walk and carry your clubs or use a pull cart when playing golf. Never pass up a long walk.
12. Squeeze a tennis or squash ball to help to strengthen the muscles in your hands and arms.
13. Ask your health club professional to design a travel exercise plan for you, if you travel a lot.
14. Make your breaks at work count. Take a walk or simply get up and do some simple stretches.
15. Hire a personal trainer to help you maximise your hard work at the gym and help you get started.
16. Exercise at the shopping centre. Walk laps with a friend and get a great cardio workout while window shopping.
17. Recruit a friend as a workout buddy. You’re more likely to keep up with an exercise programme if you have support.
18. Try cycling. It provides excellent aerobic exercise without the pressure on your knees associated with running.
19. Keep a diary to record your daily exercise, even down to the smallest activities. Build on your progress each week.
20. Volunteer to coach a youth team. You’ll be helping your community, and you’ll get some exercise yourself at practices.
21. Paddle for health. Canoes and kayaks can be great exercise and allow you to explore places not reachable by powerboats.
22. Subscribe to a health and fitness magazine. Always look out for new ideas that will help you stick to your fitness programme.
23. Wear a pedometer or fitness tracker to record your total mileage in a day. Challenge yourself to become more active each week.
24. Offer to shovel a neighbour’s driveway when it snows. It’s great exercise and a nice thing to do. The same goes for raking leaves.
25. Organise “fitness fun-days” in your neighbourhood. Walking or playing sport with neighbours will get you active and strengthen community ties.
Source:
World Health Organization: “Physical activity.”
https://www.who.int/health-topics/physical_activity#tab=overview
All about sleep

There’s nothing like a good night’s sleep. Unfortunately, many individuals don’t get enough of it. And that’s a real problem, because lack of sleep can cause some serious issues. And we’re not talking about under-eye shadows or non-stop yawns – not getting enough sleep can cause issues well beyond what you might think.

Just about every living creature sleeps. For humans, it’s a natural, physiological process controlled by hormones. There are two sleep cycles: REM sleep (this is when we dream) and non-REM sleep (“quiet sleep”). REM is thought to help keep our minds sharp, while non-REM supports physical functioning.

Are you getting enough sleep? Most adults should get between seven and nine hours. But the quality of your sleep is just as important as the quantity. And what happens if you don’t get enough? It could lead to diabetes, heart disease and other serious physical conditions. Lack of sleep can also affect you mentally and emotionally, and can even lead to depression or affect your productivity at work or your concentration while driving or using dangerous tools. If you have any concerns about your sleep, speak to your health care provider.

You can take charge, however, by practising good sleep habits. Make sleep a priority. You’ll rest easier knowing that it’s helping you stay healthy.

And speaking of rest: do you snore? If you rattle the roof every night, it could be the sign of a serious health problem. Talk to your doctor for more information about snoring when you snooze.

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