

# Mental Health Self-Care Tips

Maintaining good mental health can take many different forms. While support and treatment are one of them, an important part is also practicing self-care. Self-care can be different from person to person, but overall practicing self-care is everything that you do to take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Self-care can help you maintain good mental health, while also preventing some problems from developing or worsening. But, making time for self-care isn't always easy, especially when we aren't feeling our best. Some days you may only have a few minutes here and there, but even those few minutes can be helpful.

## Practicing Self-Care

Some activities are so important for mental health and wellness that they form the foundation of taking care of yourself. These includes:

- **Get enough sleep:** Feeling well-rested is critical to your overall well-being. Try to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night so your body and brain can reset and be ready for the next day.
- **Eat healthy food:** What we do throughout the day requires energy and eating the right kinds of foods can improve your mood and ability to function.
- **Stay hydrated:** Getting enough to drink helps your body and brain work well and increases your energy. Focus on water or drinks without added sugar.
- **Move your body:** Exercise increased your energy levels and boosts your mood. Whether you take a walk, go on a hike, dance to music, or go to the gym, you'll feel better after getting active.
- **Take your medications:** If you have any physical or mental health conditions, follow your doctor's instructions to help prevent a crisis situation or other problems from developing.
- **Manage your time:** Try your best to avoid taking on more than you can handle. Know your limitations and be sure to build in time for the things that are most important to you. Reach out to family and friends for help and know that sometimes saying "no" can be a kind of self-care.
- **Connect with friends and family:** Social support is vital to good mental health. Keep in touch with friends, family members, and others in your community who will give you a boost of positivity or comfort.
- **Avoid alcohol or drugs:** The use of alcohol or drugs can make a mental health condition worse and increase the chances of a crisis developing. Work on reducing the amount you use and how often.



## Choose What Works for You

Everyone is different, so the self-care activities that work for one person may not be helpful to another. Find the things that help you relax and feel good. And remember, real self-care has very little to do with “treating yourself” and a whole lot to do with making choices for your long-term wellness every single day. Below are some ideas:

- Go outside to get some sunshine
- Listen to music
- Take a nap
- Meditate or practice mindfulness
- Take a walk
- Write in a journal
- Take a bath
- Watch a movie that makes you feel good
- Stretch
- Take a break from your screens
- Breathe in for 5 counts, hold for 5, breathe out for 5, hold for 5, and repeat
- Read a book
- Reach out to a friend or family member
- Connect with other people online
- Garden
- Do something creative like draw, write or play an instrument
- Cook your favorite meal
- Pray
- Make a list of 10 things you're grateful for
- Send a note to someone you care about




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## Subtract for Self-Care

With not enough time to do the things we need to get done in our job and our personal lives, how can we possibly add something else into the mix? Self-care isn't always adding something to our life. Sometimes subtracting something can be powerful, too. Pause and take a moment to think about what you might be able to “subtract.” What could you remove to help prevent burnout, reduce your overall stress, and help with focus and overall well-being?

For more information and resources visit [www.Wellness4US.org](http://www.Wellness4US.org). If you need help immediately, reach out to the Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline of the Central Coast 24/7 at **9-8-8**.



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