

SELF CARE

Why Self Care Matters

It's so important to make sure you take good care of your body, mind, and soul every day, not just when you get sick. Learning how to eat right, reduce stress, exercise regularly, and take a time-out when you need it are touchstones of self care and can help you stay healthy, happy, and resilient.

Why Do We Often Fail at Self-Care?

Practicing self care isn't always easy. Most of us are crazy busy, have stressful jobs, or are too consumed with technology to make time for ourselves. Me-time is usually last on the agenda. Worse, we can sometimes feel guilty about taking the time required to take care of ourselves. So getting started with self care can be challenging.

Stress is a natural feeling that is required when your body is preparing for a situation where focus, alertness and organisation are required. The body responds to stressful events by stimulating the nervous system, which releases specific hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones put your body in the 'fight or flight' response – your pupils dilate, your heart rate increases, you become tense, memory decreases, and you generally feel 'on edge'. Being in the 'fight or flight' response for too long can leave you feeling drained, emotional, and depleted of energy.

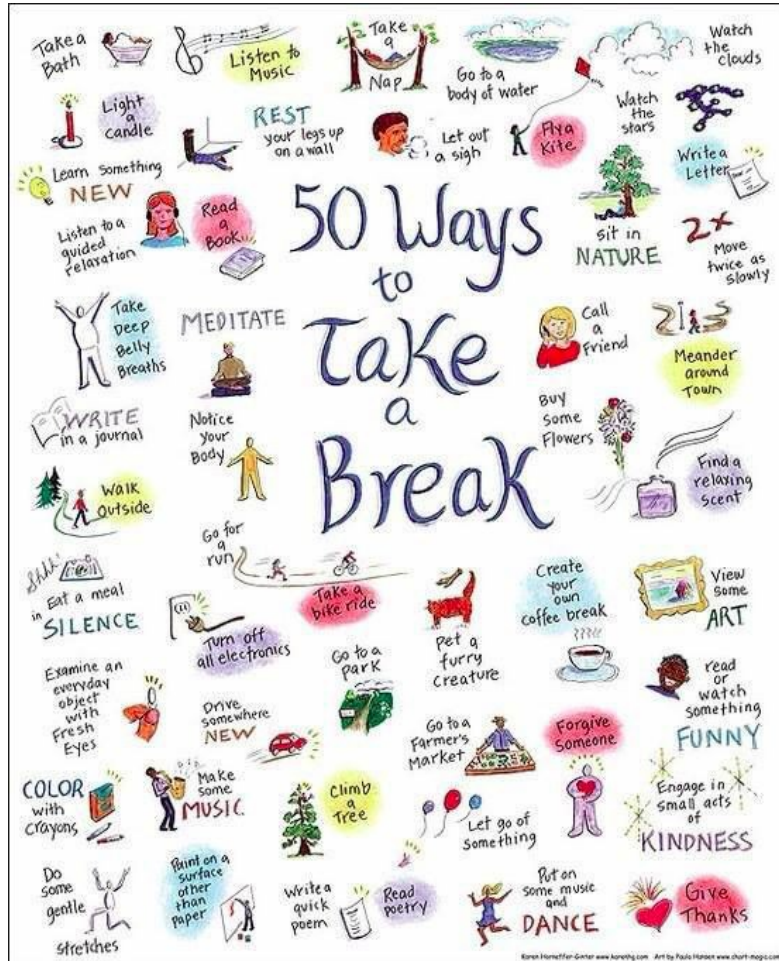


Additionally, long term stress can cause nutrient deficiencies, fatigue, hormone imbalances, and 'adrenal burnout/fatigue'. Therefore, stress management and self care techniques are an important part of your holistic health tool box, and will ensure you are able to respond better to stress.

Self Care Techniques

- Aim for 7-9 hours of good quality sleep per night
- Go for a walk by a river, in the park or around your neighbourhood (avoid high traffic areas)
- Spend time in nature ('biophilia' – the healing power of nature) – at the beach, a National park, or climbing a mountain
- Yoga – find a style and class that suits you and is calming on the nervous system - Vinyasa, Yin or Restorative
- Read a magazine or a book of your interest
- Creativity – artwork, craft activities, listening to/playing music
- Having a picnic in the park with someone you enjoy spending time with
- Mindfulness exercises and/or meditation – guided or self driven
- Mindfully sipping on a cup of tea
- Burning candles, incense or essential oils
- Deep and slow breathing – e.g. breathe in for four counts, breathe out for four counts
- Swimming in the ocean and soaking up a healthy dose of sunshine
- Booking in for a massage or a beauty treatment (go for toxin free places if you can)
- Exercise – team sports or a walk with a friend
- Journaling – reflecting on your day or using a gratitude journal
- Bath soak with Epsom salts
- Baking something new and healthy
- Be gentle with yourself – notice any negative self talk, and perhaps remind yourself of what you are doing well! Know that you are doing the best that you can.

Ask others for help when needed – life throws us unexpected curve balls, and we are not always going to handle it on our own. Ask friends and family who you trust for help (even when you think you are managing well).



Schedule your relaxation and self care activities. This will enable these practices to become more easily integrated into your lifestyle. Use a diary or a roster - for example:

	Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Night							