

Recharging Your Personal Battery: Mental Health **Self-Care Tips**



Life can be stressful, and your body and mind can't go nonstop without any breaks. You may focus on work or school, your family, or other commitments and forget you need to take care of yourself, too. This can weaken your mental health and lead to burnout.

You don't want your phone to run out of battery when you need to use it. Similarly, when your mental or physical energy runs low, you need to plug into your personal power sources. **By building self-care activities into your life, you give your mind and body the break they need to recharge—to help you be the best self you can be.**

Self-Care Basics

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

- **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:** Dealing with busy and stressful days 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 also increases your energy. Focus on water or drinks without added sugar.
- **Move your body:** Exercise increases your energy levels and boosts your mood. Whether you take a walk, go on a hike, join a dance class, 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 schedule:** Try 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. 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 and family members you enjoy being with, and who will give you a boost of positivity or comfort.
- **Avoid alcohol or drugs:** The use of alcohol and 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. You may need to cut them out of your life to care for your mental health.



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Pick Your Pick-Me-Ups

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.** Try different activities to see which ones you want to add to your personal go-to list when you need a boost.

Here are some ideas. **Check off the activities that you have tried and take opportunities to try new activities:**

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| ☐ Go outside to get some sunshine | ☐ Breathe in for 5 counts, hold for 5, breathe out for 5, hold for 5, and repeat | ☐ Cook your favorite dish |
| ☐ Listen to music and sing along | ☐ Plan a vacation | ☐ Pray |
| ☐ Take a power nap | ☐ Go to a museum and look at beautiful things | ☐ Light a candle or use aromatherapy scents |
| ☐ Meditate or use a mindfulness app | ☐ Read a book | ☐ Play a game |
| ☐ Eat a piece of dark chocolate | ☐ Connect with other people in an online support group | ☐ Get a massage or use a self-massage tool |
| ☐ Take a walk in nature | ☐ Work in the garden | ☐ Make a list of 10 things you're grateful for in your life |
| ☐ Write in a journal | ☐ Listen to nature sounds like ocean waves or a babbling brook | ☐ Take up an extreme sport activity |
| ☐ Join a community sports league or play a pick-up game at the park | ☐ Do something creative like art, writing or playing an instrument | ☐ Buy yourself fresh flowers |
| ☐ Take a long, warm bath | ☐ Go for a long drive | ☐ Order in dinner |
| ☐ Get your hair or nails done | ☐ Call a friend you haven't spoken with in a while | ☐ Watch the sunrise or sunset |
| ☐ Watch a TV show or movie that makes you feel good | ☐ Turn off your phone alerts | ☐ Take a mental health day |
| ☐ Have a dance party | ☐ Play with the kids in your life | ☐ Relax with a cup of tea or coffee |
| ☐ Stretch or do some yoga moves | ☐ Color in a coloring book or downloaded coloring sheets | ☐ Watch cute animal videos |
| ☐ Take a break from your screen | | ☐ Learn something new |
| | | ☐ Send a note to someone you care about |

What if I still need help?

Self-care activities are like keeping the battery charged so your phone will function throughout the day. If the battery runs low, you may not be able to use the device until you plug it in again. Sometimes, though, a phone may have a problem like a software glitch or a broken screen that needs professional attention.

For your mental health, self-care can keep you in good emotional shape and prevent small stresses from turning into big ones. But sometimes it's not enough. **If you start to feel overwhelmed, anxious or depressed, it may be time to seek help (takeaction4mh.com/learn-more-resources). Find out more about the different types of support available to you (takeaction4mh.com/find-help-now).**



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