



5 Tips to Optimize your Self-Care

Define what self-care means to you. Self-care is personal and different for everyone. Take time to think about what it means, in relation to your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. What nurtures you and helps you feel more grounded? What energizes and refuels you? Jot down any general thoughts or activities that come to mind. Remember that self-care doesn't have to be a big time commitment. It can be as simple as taking a walk, turning off your phone, or listening to a favorite song.

Shift your mindset. Do you have a tendency to put others' needs before your own? Does this ever lead you to feel stressed and depleted? If so, this is actually reaping negative effects on all those around you. Think about what it might feel like to prioritize yourself and put on your oxygen mask before helping others. When you feel nurtured and at your best, it positively impacts your home life and day to day interactions. Remember that taking time for yourself will help you become a better person for your loved ones and larger community.

Learn to say "no." Do you find yourself saying "yes" to everything then later having regrets, feeling overwhelmed, or getting sick and exhausted? If you have a full plate due to having a big heart, busy life, or overachieving mindset, it's time to reevaluate and put your health first. Establish some ground rules and boundaries for yourself and learn to say "no" to things that drain you. Write a "NOT to-do list" and reference it before committing to events or people.

Create a plan. Schedule weekly self-care events and enter them into your calendar. Make a commitment to yourself by not scheduling anything else during this time. It's helpful to be specific (such as "yoga class," "happy hour with best friend," etc.), but you can also keep it general (such as "downtime"). Remind yourself that these are important appointments to honor in order to be the best version of yourself for others throughout the week.

Start small. Create daily routines and rituals so that taking care of yourself becomes second nature. Start the day with one small act of self-care, such as enjoying a cup of coffee by yourself or meditating for five minutes. End the day with a simple wind-down routine, such as taking a hot bath or reading one chapter in a novel before drifting off to sleep. Soon enough you will see what a positive impact these small things can have on your life!