



Self-Care Strategies

Creative Wellbeing Workshops, LLC

Self-care is essential to our physical and mental health. Self-care gives us a leg up whether we are struggling with a stressful situation or we are generally doing well and want to keep it that way. Self-care helps us cope better with what life sends our way.

For example, when we are physically worn out, we tend to perceive the slope of a mountain as steeper than if we are well rested. The benefit to seeing the angle of the mountain as steep is that, in order to conserve our energy, we might not climb it. But as a result, we might also miss out on what we were trying to reach at the top by climbing it or just the satisfaction of having done so. Most importantly, if the “mountain” we are climbing is difficult but unavoidable (such as when we are recovering from a loss or trauma or we are trying to accomplish something that is particularly arduous), we want to equip ourselves as well as possible to meet that challenge.

We divide self-care into five different categories: physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and workplace/professional. The strategies we list in each category are not exhaustive. Get creative and think of other ones that would work best for *you*. Self-awareness will help you figure that out.

Strategies for Managing Stress and Increasing Wellbeing

1. Positive Relationships and Support
2. Self-Care and Self-Awareness
3. Express the Stress
4. Positive Experiences
5. Attend to the Good
6. Cultivate Optimism
7. Identify and Develop Your Strengths
8. Accomplish Something Everyday
9. Connect with Meaning and Purpose



Physical Self-Care:



- Get good quality sleep (if you're not sure whether you're sleeping well, find out!)
- Limit blue light from electronic devices before sleep
- Drink lots of water—it helps all of your systems work better
- Eat regularly (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Eat healthy foods (even if you also eat unhealthy foods)
- Exercise (for metabolism, elimination, strength, endorphins, flexibility)
- Move around (flex wrists, ankles, walk, stretch)
- Stretch/Build muscle (each are different and equally important)
- Engage in physical activity that is fun: dance, swim, walk, run, bike, play sports, play musical instruments
- Get regular preventive medical and dental care
- Get massage or healing body work
- Wear clothes in which you feel comfortable

Emotional Self-Care:

- Spend time with others with whom you feel safe and enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Take credit for accomplishments
- Give yourself meaningful affirmations
- Identify comforting activities, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- Allow yourself to feel anger, sadness, frustration, anger but don't dwell there
- Find things that make you laugh
- Play with animals and children
- Read/re-read favorite books, watch your favorite movies
- Wear clothes that make you feel confident

Spiritual Self-Care:

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time with nature



- Find a spiritual connection or community
 - Be open to inspiration
 - Nurture optimism and hope
 - Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
 - Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
 - Spend time with children
 - Cultivate experiences of awe through looking at the starry skies, the ocean, mountains, broad vistas, and listening to moving music
 - Contribute to causes in which you believe
- Read/listen to inspirational literature/lectures/music/sermons
 - Be Creative
 - Meditate
 - Pray
 - Sing/Dance

Psychological Self-Care:

- Make time for self-reflection
- Use psychotherapy or support groups for commiseration and help
- Write or draw in a journal
- Try at times not to be ‘in charge’ or ‘the expert’
- Be open to not knowing and be curious
- Decrease stress in your life
- Let others know different parts of yourself
- Notice your inner experience—listen to thoughts, judgments, beliefs, feelings
- Notice your environment—observe others and what’s around you
- Engage your intelligence through attending cultural events, sports, performances
- Practice receiving from others
- Be curious
- Be experimental and creative
- Strive for a balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest that is conducive to your wellbeing



Workplace/Professional Self-Care:



- Take short breaks (even if only mental)
 - Eat lunch
 - Take time to connect with co-workers
 - Make quiet time to complete tasks
 - Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set boundaries with clients and colleagues which protect your energy
 - Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise, professional development, time)
 - Occasionally say “no” to extra responsibilities/overwork
 - Balance your workload so it’s not always “too much”
 - Differentiate between urgent tasks and important ones
 - Prioritize and plan accordingly
 - Arrange your work space so it is comfortable/comforting
 - Find a peer support group
 - Take day trips/mini-vacations

Resources

- American Psychological Association, Self-Care Assessment.
- Cheryl Richardson, Taking Time for Your Life, 1999.
- Jonathan Zadra and Gerald Clore, Emotion and Perception, 2011.