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A wellness newsletter from your local EFAP.

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Simplicity in Self-Care

This issue of *live.work.well.* explores the idea that taking care of yourself can be simple - you don't need to buy anything or spend inordinate amounts of time doing it.

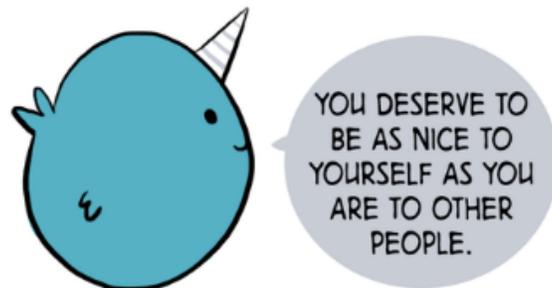
Self-care can be summed up as the intentional actions you take to nourish or maintain yourself, physically, mentally, and spiritually. While many people think of self-care as purely physical such as manicures and massages, it actually starts from within the mental and spiritual realms of our everyday lives too.

Your definition of self-care will be different than others' because we all live different lifestyles and have different priorities and challenges. The key is knowing what yours are and coming up with a toolkit to help you bounce back if you fall off the self-care wagon. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- saying no more often to after-work commitments
- investing in your future by starting a savings account
- putting your feet up after a long day
- making some popcorn and watching your favorite show tv
- talking on the phone or grabbing coffee with a good friend to catch up
- putting away distractions, like the phone, to just be

The key is looking inward, and taking inventory of what it is your body and mind deserves. Here's a hint: it's usually the simple things that cause us to slow down and recenter. It's very cool to see people prioritizing self-care now more than ever — there are 4.2 million posts associated with the hashtag #selfcare on Instagram!

Excerpts taken from <https://nutritionstripped.com/simple-self-care/>



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Minimalism Info

For more information about embracing a minimalist lifestyle, check out the following links:

<https://www.becomingminimalist.com/>

<https://www.theminimalists.com/>

<https://minimalismfilm.com/watch/>

<https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/seeking-simplicity-how-to-start-living-a-more-minimal-lifestyle-210936>

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/a20707568/what-is-minimalism/>

Minimalism: Having Less & Living More

“At its core, minimalism is the intentional promotion of the things we most value and the removal of everything that distracts us from it.” – Joshua Becker

Minimalism can be understood as a lifestyle that embraces simplicity, quality and intentionality. It is a way of life that has become increasingly popular over the last few years and provides an alternative to many of modernity’s most common trends, including voracious consumerism, near-constant distraction, obsession with image and status-symbols, high-paced living, and financial debt.

Many of us caught up – even to a limited extent – in the razzle-dazzle of the high-paced, consumerist lifestyle don’t often notice the toll that it can take on our mental, emotional and physical well-being. However, if we take a moment to consider all of the various choices, roles, purchases, concerns, habits and responsibilities in our daily lives and how they add up and impact us, we can see that the more “stuff” we have in our lives, the more stretched, stressed and exhausted we tend to feel.

The “stuff” we have in our lives includes everything from material possessions to relationships and from hobbies to obligations, and more. Each of these types of “stuff” can have elements that are necessary and valued. For instance, we all need homes and clothes, we all have relationships that we cherish, and we all have certain activities that we either need to do or enjoy doing. These are all fine things and there is nothing wrong with any of that.

The problem begins when we start accumulating more and more “stuff” that is neither necessary nor a source of real value in our lives. This is the juicer collecting dust in the kitchen cupboard. These are the racks of never-worn clothes in the closet, the “friendships” with people who bother us, the commitments to causes we’re not passionate about, and the habits of spending long hours on social media and Netflix. This is the stuff that detracts from our lives rather than adds to them. This is the stuff that minimalism urges us to purge from our lives.

To actually start the process of purging excess stuff and minimalizing our lives can be quite challenging. Much of modern, Western culture tells us that “more stuff is good” and that we’ll all finally be truly happy once we own a brand new, state-of-the-art [fill in the blank]. Furthermore, it is common for us to grow emotionally attached to our stuff, even if we don’t need it or derive value from it. And sometimes we hang onto stuff because having it in our lives is just a plain old habit.

But, there is another type of experience available to us when we start letting go of stuff. Have you ever had the experience of tidying and decluttering a messy room and then feeling a sense of peace and clarity afterward? Or have you ever gone through the process of trashing, recycling and donating all sorts of long-forgotten items when you move from one home to another and then felt as though a heavy weight was lifted from your shoulders? That is what minimalism feels like.

Just as with material items, the same principle holds true for purging unnecessary and unfulfilling relationships, obligations, and habits from our lives. When we do so, we tend to experience less stress and anxiety, and more peace and clarity. Being less encumbered with unnecessary stuff also allows us to focus more on the activities and relationships that do add value to our lives. So, there may actually be something to the old adage that says “less is more.”

By Graham Walker

Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens. If you have them, you have to take care of them! There is great freedom in simplicity of living. It is those who have enough but not too much who are the happiest.

- Peace Pilgrim



Self-Care Ideas for the Mind, Body & Soul

Self-care isn't something you do once and tick off the list. It's the constant repetition of many tiny habits, which together soothe you and make sure you're at your optimum—emotionally, physically, and mentally.

The best way to do this is to implement tiny self-care habits every day.

The following ideas are tiny self-care activities you can fit into a short amount of time, usually with little cost. Pick one from each category, and include them in your life this week.

For the Mind

1. Start a compliments file. Document the great things people say about you to read later.
2. Scratch off a *lurker* on your to-do list, something that's been there for ages and you'll never do.
3. Take another route to work. Mixing up your routine in small ways creates new neural pathways in the brain to keep it healthy.
4. Pay complete attention to something you usually do on autopilot, perhaps brushing your teeth, driving, eating, or performing your morning routine.
5. Fix a small annoyance at home that's been nagging you—a button lost, a drawer that's stuck, a light bulb that's gone.
6. Be selfish. Do one thing today just because it makes you happy.
7. Do a mini-declutter. Recycle three things from your wardrobe that you don't love or regularly wear.
8. Unplug for an hour. Switch everything to airplane mode and free yourself from the constant bings of social media and email.
9. Get out of your comfort zone, even if it's just talking to a stranger at the bus stop.
10. Edit your social media feeds, and take out any negative people. You can just “mute” them; you don't have to delete them.

For the Body

1. Give your body ten minutes of mindful attention. Use the [body scan technique](#)** to check in with each part of your body.
2. Oxygenate by taking three deep breaths. [Breathe into your abdomen](#)**, and let the air puff out your stomach and chest.
3. Get down and boogie. Put on your favorite upbeat record and shake your booty.
4. Stretch out the kinks. If you're at work, you can always head to the bathroom to avoid strange looks.
5. Narrow your food choices. Pick two healthy breakfasts, lunches, and dinners and rotate for the week.
6. Activate your self-soothing system. Stroke your own arm, or if that feels too weird, moisturize.

**link can be found in Online Resources list on the right

Online Resources

For more tips and information on self care:



<https://psychcentral.com/blog/what-self-care-is-and-what-it-isnt-2/>

https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care

<https://foundrybc.ca/stories/s-even-days-self-care/>

<http://isfglobal.org/what-is-self-care/a-brief-history-of-self-care/>

<https://mashable.com/article/international-self-care-day/>

[**Links from article](#)

<https://www.mindful.org/the-body-scan-practice/>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9445-diaphragmatic-breathing>

**July 24, 2019
International Self-Care Day**

Since 2011, self-care activities linked to International Self-Care Day (ISD) have been organized around the world, in countries as far apart as Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Iran, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, Tanzania, the United States and Vietnam.

The International Self-Care Day, 24 July, symbolises that the benefits of self-care are experienced 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In other words, the benefits of self-care are life-long and do not just relate to a single day.

Self-Care Ideas (cont'd)

7. Make one small change to your diet for the week. Drink an extra glass of water each day, or have an extra portion of veggies each meal.
8. Give your body a treat. Pick something from your wardrobe that feels great next to your skin.
9. Be still. Sit somewhere green, and be quiet for a few minutes.
10. Take a quick nap. Ten to twenty minutes can reduce your sleep debt and leave you ready for action.

For the Soul

1. Imagine you're your best friend. If you were, what would you tell yourself right now? Look in the mirror and say it.
2. Help someone. Carry a bag, open a door, or pick up an extra carton of milk for a neighbor.
3. Check in with your emotions. Sit quietly and just name without judgment what you're feeling.
4. Write out your thoughts. Go for fifteen minutes on anything bothering you. Then let it go as you burn or bin the paper.
5. Choose who you spend your time with today. Hang out with "Radiators" who emit enthusiasm and positivity, and not "Drains" whose pessimism and negativity robs energy.
6. Stroke a pet. If you don't have one, go to the park and find one. (Ask first!)
7. Use your commute for a "Beauty Scavenger Hunt." Find five unexpected beautiful things on your way to work.
8. Get positive feedback. Ask three good friends to tell you what they love about you.
9. Have a self-date. Spend an hour alone doing something that nourishes you (reading, your hobby, visiting a museum or gallery, etc.)
10. Ask for help—big or small, but reach out.

Little and Often Wins the Day

With a little bit of attention to your own self-care, the fog will lift. You'll feel more connected to yourself and the world around you. You'll delight in small pleasures, and nothing will seem quite as difficult as it did before.

Like that car, you must keep yourself tuned up to make sure that you don't need a complete overhaul. Incorporating a few of these tiny self-care ideas in your day will help keep you in tune.

Which one will you try first?

Condensed from Ellen Bard, *45 Simple Self-Care Practices for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul*

www.tinybuddha.com

| ARRIVALS | DEPARTURES |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Sanity Calm Free time Confidence Acceptance Leisure Nurturing | ... all that craziness |

