

50 Simple Self-Care Practices for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul

Modified from [Ellen Bard](#)

Self-Care Ideas 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. **Change up the way you make decisions.** Decide something with your heart if you usually use your head. Or if you tend to go with your heart, decide with your head.
4. **Go cloud-watching.** Lie on your back, relax, and watch the sky.
5. **Take another route to work.** Mixing up your routine in small ways creates new neural pathways in the brain to keep it healthy.
6. **Pay complete attention to something you usually do on autopilot**, perhaps brushing your teeth, driving, eating, or performing your morning routine.
7. **Goof around for a bit.** Schedule in [five minutes of "play"](#) (non-directed activity) several times throughout your day.
8. **Create a deliberate habit**, and routinize something small in your life by doing it in the same way each day—what you wear on Tuesdays, or picking up the dental floss before you brush.
9. **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.
10. **Punctuate your day with a mini-meditation** with one minute of awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations; one minute of focused attention on breathing; and one minute of awareness of the body as a whole.
11. **Be selfish.** Do one thing today just because it makes you happy.
12. **Do a mini-declutter.** Recycle three things from your wardrobe that you don't love or regularly wear.
13. **Unplug for an hour.** Switch everything to airplane mode and free yourself from the constant *binges* of social media and email.
14. **Get out of your comfort zone**, even if it's just talking to a stranger at the bus stop.
15. **Edit your social media feeds, and take out any negative people.** You can just "mute" them; you don't have to delete them.
16. **Put your puzzle skills to work.** Tackle a new puzzle or game on your phone.
17. **Get lost in your favorite positive-energy songs.**

Self-Care Ideas 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. Run (or walk, depending on your current physical health) for a few minutes.** Or go up and down the stairs three times.
- 6. Narrow your food choices.** Pick two healthy breakfasts, lunches, and dinners and rotate for the week.
- 7. Activate your self-soothing system.** Stroke your own arm, or if that feels too weird, moisturize.
- 8. Get to know yourself intimately.** Look lovingly and without judgment at yourself naked. (Use a mirror to make sure you get to know all of you!)
- 9. 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.
- 10. Give your body a treat.** Pick something from your wardrobe that feels great next to your skin.
- 11. Be still.** Sit somewhere green, and be quiet for a few minutes.
- 12. Get fifteen minutes of sun,** especially if you're in a cold climate. (Use sunscreen if appropriate.)
- 13. Inhale an upbeat smell.** Try peppermint to suppress food cravings and boost mood and motivation.
- 14. Have a good laugh.** Read a couple of comic strips that you enjoy. (For inspiration, try Calvin and Hobbes, Dilbert, or xkcd.)
- 15. Take a quick nap.** Ten to twenty minutes can reduce your sleep debt and leave you ready for action.
- 16. Take hot shower or bath.** Focus on the tactile sensations.

Self-Care Ideas 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. Use your commute for a "Beauty Scavenger Hunt."** Find five unexpected beautiful things on your way to work.
- 3. Help someone.** Carry a bag, open a door, or pick up an extra carton of milk for a neighbor.
- 4. Check in with your emotions.** Sit quietly and just name without judgment what you're feeling.
- 5. Write out your thoughts.** Go for fifteen minutes on anything bothering you. Then let it go as you burn or bin the paper.

- 6. 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.
- 7. Stroke a pet.** If you don’t have one, go to the park and find one. (Ask first!)
- 8. Get positive feedback.** Ask three good friends to tell you what they love about you.
- 9. Make a small connection.** Have a few sentences of conversation with someone in customer service such as a sales assistant or barista.
- 10. Splurge a little.** Buy a small luxury as a way of valuing yourself.
- 11. Have a self-date.** Spend an hour alone doing something that nourishes you (reading, your hobby, visiting a museum or gallery, etc.)
- 12. Exercise a signature strength.** Think about what you’re good at, and find an opportunity for it today.
- 13. Take a home spa.** Have a long bath or shower, sit around in your bathrobe, and read magazines.
- 14. Ask for help**—big or small, but reach out.
- 15. Plan a two-day holiday for next weekend.** Turn off your phone, tell people you’ll be away, and then do something new in your own town.
- 16. Try a cooking a favorite or new recipe.** The smells, repeated motions and tangible results are some pluses to cooking.
- 17. Go outside.** Get out of the office or home for a while and take some time to notice what’s around you, using your five senses.

What works best for you?

You can circle your go-to activities from above or jot some other ideas down here: