

Self-Care

Listed below are self care strategies. Self care is exactly what it sounds like - taking care of yourself in a healthy way. Some of these ideas are healthy and helpful to everyone. Some of them are options that work for some but not for everyone. The key to making these work is to find what is needed, and what works for you, and use it.

Four general areas: The basics (physical care) – don't overdo it – do things you enjoy – and have good boundaries!

The Basics - taking good care of your body will help you be at your best to take care of ALL of you:

Eat right - Eating healthy food in a healthy way is one of the basic ways of taking care of yourself. Learn about nutrition, eat balanced meals, and have fun with new recipes.

Exercise - Develop an exercise plan that fits your lifestyle, age and capabilities. Determine the right amount of exercise for you with your doctor.

Get enough sleep - Sometimes we underestimate the importance of getting enough sleep to be able to function at our best. This helps you both physically and mentally.

Know Your Limits - it is also important to know when you are overextending yourself and life is out of balance:

Take things slowly if you can
Tackle difficulties one at a time
Plan and organize your days to avoid getting overwhelmed
Every day, take time to do something you enjoy even if it is only for a few minutes

Things you enjoy - Take your pick from this list of self-care activities, healthy coping skills, or stress management skills. Choose items that appeal to you, that you think will be enjoyable, or that will help you feel good about yourself:

Practice deep breathing - in through your nose and out through your mouth
Draw, paint, or another creative activity you enjoy
Call a friend or family member who supports you
Plant a flower, do some gardening
Listen to music
Write in a journal
Take a walk
Ride a bike
Read a good book
Do something nice for someone else
Go see a funny or inspirational movie
Play with a pet
Go to church, or engage in a spiritual activity

Now let's get a little more creative and detailed - try one of these or maybe one of them will help you think of another item you can add to your own personal list:

Listen to a guided imagery recording, or create your own
Write a list of qualities you like about yourself
Dance to your favorite music
Do yoga
Sit in the sun and close your eyes
Cut pictures out of magazines and make a collage
Read the comics
Put on your favorite good smelling lotion
Do a puzzle
Put an inspirational quote up on your bathroom mirror

Draw with sidewalk chalk
Slowly eat one piece of your favorite candy or treat
Play a musical instrument
Draw random designs and color them in
Start a blog
Organize one part of your house - a room, a closet, a drawer...
Do a different kind of workout you've been wanting to try
Write a thank you card to someone you've been meaning to thank for something important
Play a computer or video game
Meditate
Pray
Read an inspirational book

Healthy Boundaries:

You may not think of having good boundaries as being a way of taking care of yourself but it sure is. Having healthy relationships in which both people feel respected and give respect, and take care of each other is extremely important to a person's well-being. Consider the following areas and whether you need to explore and establish boundaries in any of these areas:

- say no to things that make you uncomfortable, or don't have time to do, or ???
- limit how much time you spend with people who drag you down
- know and honor your own (and others') emotional needs in your relationships
- do you need boundaries with yourself? Do you need to limit how much time you spend working, or some other activity?

Some additional resources you may find helpful:

You can find many of our favorite books, videos, and websites on our resources page at <https://www.lifepathscounseling.com/self-care-resources/>.

Take care!