

Self-Care...because YOU matter!

What does self-care mean exactly? To each of us it may mean something different, so take a second to think about what self-care looks like to you. Is it a bath, reading a book, a walk, getting a massage or nails done, maybe just curling up with a good movie or having lunch with a friend.

Whatever self-care looks like to you, the most important thing is to try and implement a bit of it each day. It doesn't always have to be elaborate or cost money but it is important to give ourselves a bit of time everyday to just be grateful & show ourselves love & compassion; especially in a world that can be anything but at times.

So let's start with some basic self-care tips you can do, at work, at home, with the kids, driving or in line at the store.

1. **Self talk** - let's be honest we aren't always the kindest to ourselves in terms of what we think & say in our own heads. If you are the exception to the rule, I applaud you & stay going with it! For the rest of us a little shift in how we talk to ourselves is a great place to start. A few examples:

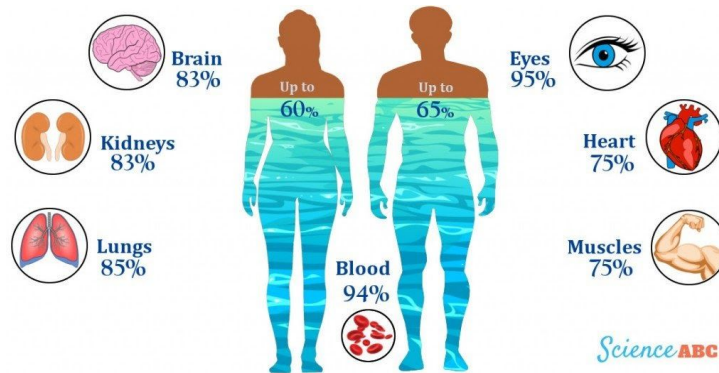
Negative	Positive
I can't do this (whatever IT is)	I can do this I just need more time at it
I'm too tired / I don't have the energy	I know I'll feel amazing after I get this done
I don't know enough to do this	I'm going to learn so much from this opportunity
I hate my body (for whatever false reason)	If I love my body a little more each day, it will get healthier & feel amazing
I've tried that & it never works	I am going to take a new approach & stay with it until I find what works for me, I never give up

2. **Time out** - whether you're single, married, kids, or pets, we all need a bit of ME time, time out from others where we can just focus on ourselves. This can be very hard, especially with kids but for your sake & theirs, finding 5-10 minutes each day just for you is almost essential. A few ways to find 5 & what to do with them:

5 to 10 min for you	Ways to make the most of them
Get up 15 minutes before anyone else	Do breathing exercises, stretch, meditate, enjoy a cup of coffee/tea in peace, write some intentions for the day or a to do list, take a quick walk or do a work out.
Driving (anywhere alone or not)	Spend 2 minutes acknowledging things you are grateful for, 2 minutes feeling genuine gratitude & love for people in your life, 1 minute listing all the amazing traits you possess...repeat if needed.
In work	Take your breaks & go for a walk, stand up & stretch, do breathing exercises at your desk, write down why you're grateful each day & read it.
Before bed	Drink herbal tea or use essential oils to help relax you, try a 10-15 min stretching/yoga routine for better sleep, write down all the good points in your day (when you look back it will show you an awesome life)
Get off your phone	Make the first & last 30-60 minutes of your days about you not FB, IG, Twitter etc. especially before bed!

3. **Hydrate** - with water, not juice, pop, coffee, tea, or anything else, just plain, already perfect water. Why you ask, well a few reasons:

Protects organs & tissues	Carries oxygen to our cells (making us feel more energized, motivated & alive)
Removes toxins from the body	Provided us with energy, quite literally
Helps to prevent constipation	Helps us to absorb & use nutrients
Regulates body temperature	Can help with weight management



4. **Get outside daily** - spending time in nature can reduce stress & anxiety, being active increases blood flow, improves energy, calms the nervous system & can help with weight management if exercising outdoors. The add benefit of Vitamin D can also help by:

Supporting immune function	Important for brain function, as insufficient amounts may play a role in depression & other mental health related illness.
Assisting in calcium absorption & health growth of bones	Provides essential maintenance for nervous system support

Sources of vitamin D also include: healthy fats, butter, egg yolks, milk (fortified), salmon, tuna, fish oil, & organ meats. Supplementing with 500 - 1000 IU in the winter can also be beneficial but it is advisable to check your levels with your GP before doing so.



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