

■ THE GRAY MATTERS COLLECTIVE

SELF-CARE TIPS

Self-care looks different for everyone. What's soothing to one person could be stressful to another. An extrovert may find that socializing with friends is an excellent form of self-care while an introvert would find this draining. However, there are some tips that work for the majority of people and will help you begin to picture your own answer to "What is self-care?"

SCHEDULE IT IN

We often make excuses for why we can't practice self-care: we don't have the time, we don't know what to do, we'd rather be marathoning Netflix or cleaning the house. If you're not used to taking care of yourself, it may be difficult at first to figure out what self-care tips work for you. If this is the case, you'll benefit from scheduling in "me time" on a daily or weekly basis.

GET PHYSICAL

Whether it's going for a run, swimming or attending a yoga class, changing your physical state from sedentary to active is a fulfilling way to take care of yourself. It can even be something as quick as going for a walk during your lunch hour. Whatever self-care tips you decide to incorporate, make sure they bring you at least some level of happiness. Forcing yourself to jog every morning if you're miserable the entire time is not self-care.

MEDITATE

There are many different types of meditation: mindfulness meditation focuses on being present, relaxation meditation physically relaxes your body and loving-kindness (or mantra) meditation focuses on self-love and love of others. You can find plenty of examples of these online, so learn about several types to see what fits for you. Like self-care, effective meditation is different for everyone.

EAT NUTRITIOUS FOODS

Eating a healthy diet is not just one of the best self-care tips you can incorporate, but it can also mean the difference between an active, fulfilling life and one plagued by sickness and limitations.

SAY "NO"

By taking the necessary time needed to recharge, you'll bolster your energy and be able to return to your regular schedule with increased energy and gusto. Carefully choose when you say "yes" and make sure you are only agreeing to activities or requests that align with your values or bring you happiness. When following your passion is one of your self-care activities, you seamlessly create a business and life you love.

PRACTICE FOCUS AND GRATITUDE

Creating a morning routine can help you to stay on track and centered throughout the day. It can also help you deal with challenges as you learn that even the biggest roadblocks can be reframed into an advantageous opportunity.

DO SOMETHING FUN

When we're stressed, it's easy to forget that self-care means doing things that bring us joy. With many of our go-to fun activities no longer available to us or shifted online in a socially distanced world, it's hard to get in the mindset of having fun for its own sake. So step away from the computer. Don't check your email this weekend. Forget what the world wants you to be concerned about. Go do something fun!

Never forget that self-care is personal and highly individualized. What's important is incorporating the self-care tips that resonate with you and bring you inner peace. Find hobbies and activities you enjoy and make the time to luxuriate in them. Whether you find yourself reading a good book in a bubble bath or going on a 10-mile run, know that the way you engage in self-care is yours alone.