

By Carlene Murray

# MAKING Self-Care a Priority in the New Year

Ensuring we're at the top of our health and wellness game this New Year undoubtedly will enhance our professional game as well. It's the key to preventing burnout, feeling balanced, and leading a fulfilling, purposeful, and productive life. Focusing on the seven types of self-care can positively impact all areas of life.

### Emotional Self-Care

Our ability to regulate our emotions and cope with difficult feelings is vital to our happiness and overall quality of life. That's why emotional self-care — the actions we take to connect with our emotions and process them in a healthy way — is so important. Examples include:

- Utilizing affirmations or mantras
- Meditation
- Practicing gratitude

The best way to start tending to your emotional health is to pay attention to the way you speak to yourself. Noticing if you're engaging in negative self-talk is an important preliminary step toward breaking an unhealthy habit. Then, replace that negative self-talk with words that are loving and kind. By regularly engaging in emotional self-care and learning to give yourself grace, you can develop healthy coping mechanisms that vastly increase your happiness and sense of well-being.



### Physical Self-Care

Physical self-care is probably what many of us typically think of when we hear the words self-care. This type of self-care refers to any activities you deliberately engage in to enhance your physical well-being. Examples include:

- Being active (going for a walk, bike ride, taking a fitness class)
- Taking a relaxing bubble bath
- Getting a massage

So give some thought to what types of physical activities make you feel calm, balanced, and happy, and schedule regular time to do them.

### Mental Self-Care

Mental self-care encompasses anything you do specifically to stimulate your mind and cultivate a healthy psyche. Some activities that fit under the mental self-care umbrella include:

- Listening to a podcast
- Trying a new hobby
- Reading a book

### Social Self-Care

Humans are social beings needing regular connection with others to thrive. That's why prioritizing social self-care — activities that nurture our relationships with others — is critical. Oftentimes, when our lives get hectic and overwhelming, we tend to cancel our plans and withdraw. While, of course, we all need to say "no" sometimes, it's also important to make time for social interaction. Examples include:

- Scheduling a regular phone call with a friend
- Going on a date with your significant other
- Cuddling with a furry friend

Along the same lines, give some thought to which relationships are no longer serving you in your life. Your relationships should uplift and fulfill you, not deflate and drain you.

### Spiritual Self-Care

This form of self-care applies to everyone — religious, atheist, agnostic, or otherwise. Spiritual self-care encompasses any activities you engage in to connect with and nurture your soul.

This practice is about connecting with your inner spirit, which, for some, may include activities that honor a belief in a higher power. Examples include:

- Spending time in nature
- Engaging in prayer or worship
- Volunteering

### Practical Self-Care

Yes, even mundane, everyday activities can be considered self-care. Any actions you take to fulfill your core needs and reduce stress can be catalogued as practical self-care. Examples include:

- Organizing your inbox
- Tidying your living space
- Meal prepping

These forms of self-care are admittedly less exciting than some of the others, but not to be underestimated. They can be huge sanity savers and help create a greater sense of calm and control in our busy lives.

### Professional Self-Care

Last, but not least, it's essential to make time for professional self-care. These are the activities and actions that support feeling balanced and fulfilled in your career. Examples include:

- Setting a calendar reminder to take a break
- Spending time with coworkers
- Setting your phone to DND at the end of your workday

### Establishing a Self-Care Routine That Works For You

Self-care doesn't have to take tons of time or cost lots of money to be beneficial. Incorporating just a few into your daily routine can help you to feel a greater sense of purpose, gratitude, satisfaction and rejuvenation in all areas of life.



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