

# SELF-CARE 101

Self-care is an important part of wellness. Take time and discover what helps you to feel good and recharge.



**EAT** We all need to refuel. But sometimes when we're stressed, our habits can change – maybe we eat junk food, or don't feel like eating at all. It is important to focus on eating foods that will provide you with the nutrients you need.

- \* **Tip:** Have a healthy snack nearby so you can refuel and avoid getting "hangry."

**HYDRATE** Try to increase your water intake and decrease your caffeine intake. Caffeine has been shown to create a stress reaction in your body and might cause you to feel nervous, irritable or restless.

- \* **Tip:** Drink a glass of water or milk before bed (but not too much!) rather than a caffeinated drink. This should also help you sleep.



**MOVE** Being physically active has many positive effects on your health. It increases your energy, enhances your immune system, reduces insomnia, stimulates brain growth and has been shown to decrease feelings of sadness.

- \* **Tip:** This doesn't need to take much time. You can get these benefits of being physically active from just a 30-minute walk. Stuck inside? Check out YouTube for brief yoga routines, at-home workouts or track your steps, and challenge a friend!

**ENJOY** Take time to discover things you enjoy. Do things that make you feel good as often as you can. It may not be what others find fun, and that's okay! We're all different.

- \* **Tip:** Maybe there's a book you want to read, a show or movie you've been meaning to watch, a skill you've been interested in, or something new!

**SLEEP** Getting a healthy number of hours each night helps you to better deal with the stresses of everyday life.

- \* **Tip:** While you're at home, try to set up a sleep routine that you can stick to. Plan to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. For some other helpful ideas check out: 'Up all night? Get a better sleep with these tips'

## WHY SELF-CARE?

Self-care is like saving up for a rainy day! It's about nurturing yourself so that when difficult situations happen, you will have the energy and strategies to help you get through it! It can feel hard to practice all of the self-care tips that we know are important, pick a few to focus on, congratulate yourself on what you're able to accomplish and continue to set goals for yourself.

- \* **TIP:** Try this quiz to find out if you're practising enough self-care

For more ideas to help you recharge, check out Kids Help Phone's self-care checklist!



**PAUSE** Make sure to take time for yourself during the day, to listen to music, take a few deep breaths, meditate, write in the gratitude journal.

- \* **Tip:** There are lots of different apps and sites out there for breathing exercises or check out: 'How to calm down when you're stressed'

**REFLECT** Take time to think about what's important to you. It can be easy to get caught up in the negative messages, instead look for kindness and positivity. This can come in different forms like people doing good things for others or positive posts on social media.

- \* **Tip:** Practicing gratitude on a regular basis can improve our sense of well-being and happiness! Journal about gratitude: every night, write down three good things about your day. They don't have to be major (i.e. a great lunch, talking to a friend, finishing a task).

**REPEAT** Did you know that trying a new skill, habit, or routine for 21 days in a row will increase the likelihood of maintaining this new practice?

- \* **Tip:** Try having a partner to hold you accountable during the first few weeks; this strategy has been shown to enhance your success rate of maintaining your new practice.

**CONNECT** Strong social connections are one of the most powerful influences on our mood and mental health. Spending time with friends and family help to increase your levels of happiness.

- \* **Tip:** Getting involved in something bigger than yourself or doing nice things for others can give you a mental health boost. If you can't see the people you care about every day, send them a text or make a phone call; it will make their day and yours!

**RECOGNIZE** Be mindful of your thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, as part of your self-care. Finding a healthy outlet to process your emotions and positive self-talk, although always important, is super important during stressful times.

- \* **Tip:** When thinking, ask yourself? Is this helpful/true? If not, challenge yourself to find a positive/true alternative. Remember to speak kindly to yourself, everyone has good and bad days. Don't be too hard on yourself!

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency department.

You can also reach out to Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or by texting CONNECT to 686868.

