

Nine Ideas for Self-Care When You Don't Even Know Where to Start

Mental Well-Being

When you're feeling tired, stressed, or burned out, taking care of yourself might be the last thing on your mind. Finding the mental energy to come up with ideas for self-care might feel like just another task on your to-do list. But during times like these, focusing on your own mental, physical, and emotional health is important.

Although it might not seem like it, taking time to recharge is actually one of your caregiving responsibilities. When you feel calm and energized, you can provide your loved one with even better care.

If the phrase "self-care" makes you think of deep breathing and reaching an impossible state of zen, you're probably not the only one. Many people assume that self-care isn't for them, because they're bad at meditating or because they think self-care is only for a certain kind of person.

In reality, everyone can benefit from paying more attention to their brains and bodies — and there's more than one way to do this. You don't have to sit still for an hour to focus on your well-being and happiness. There are all sorts of ways to make self-care a part of your routine.

Your well-being is just as important as your loved one's. See our Self-Care for Caregivers Guide to learn how you can stay healthy and provide the best care for your loved one.

[Read Our Self-Care Guide](#)

Self-Care Ideas

Here are nine self-care ideas to get you started.

- **Do a puzzle.** Sometimes when your brain is constantly moving, you just need something to slow it down. Whether you like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, playing sudoku, or solving a crossword, finding an activity that works out your brain is a great way to practice self-care.
- **Cook a new healthy recipe.** What you eat can play a big role in [staying healthy](#). Trying a new recipe can help you work different foods, including veggies, into your diet, but it can also be good for your brain. Trying a new recipe is also kind of like a puzzle. It encourages you to pay attention to what you're doing, and it can be very relaxing and rewarding when you get to try a new meal.
- **Take a break from social media.** If you spend a lot of time scrolling through social media, you might find you're feeling negative about the news, the world, or yourself. Your role as a caregiver can be tough. And it can be even harder if you're constantly looking at online posts of people's happiest moments. Taking a break from social media can be a good way to free up some time for you to refocus on yourself.
- **Start a gratitude journal.** One way to make self-care a habit is to start a gratitude journal. Taking time to identify and reflect on the positive things that happened in a day can help you take stock of what's important. You don't have to write a novel. Writing even just a few lines can be useful.
- **Get your body moving.** As a caregiver, you may feel tired and worn out and have no interest in working out. But there are many different options to help you get moving, and they don't have to be time-consuming or expensive. You can do an online workout at home or even take a walk around the block. Or just throw a one-person dance party and jam out to your favorite songs!
- **Call a friend or family member.** You might find your caregiving role to be a lonely one. When you're paying so much attention to your loved one, you might neglect friends and family and simply having fun. Calling a friend to chat or scheduling a coffee date isn't selfish. It can actually be a part of your self-care routine.
- **Spend some time outside.** Getting outdoors each day can be a helpful mental reset and can be a great self-care idea. From the fresh air to a change of scenery to getting some sun (and vitamin D) — there are many benefits to taking a short walk around your

neighborhood or even sitting on your front steps. For an added bonus, try using your phone to take pictures of cool or beautiful things you see while you're out. This can also help you slow down and refocus.

- **Actually breathe.** Self-care has gotten a reputation for being just about deep breathing and meditating. This can feel like too simple a solution for a big problem like [caregiver burnout](#). Sure, deep breathing won't immediately get rid of stress or caregiving challenges, but it might allow you to feel more present or like your brain is clearer. There are many breathing exercise videos available online — some as short as a few minutes — that you can try.
- **Do something — anything — that's just for you.** Self-care looks different for everyone. The big takeaway is that even as a caregiver, it's still important to do things for yourself. Whether you love getting your eyebrows done, need a nap, or want to spend some time with a friend, you need time just for you.

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