

Building Your Self-Care Action Plan

29th April 2021



Self-care is a term we are all becoming more familiar with, but what is it really? We may associate self-care with things like spa treatments or yoga. While these are healthy activities, self-care is so much more. Self-care involves any action taken to improve and maintain your physical and mental health. It's something we need to do to achieve overall improved wellbeing.

With busy schedules and the complications brought on by the pandemic, it's natural to think that there is no time for self-care. But now, more than ever, is the time to integrate self-care into your daily life. Just like any other goal you'd like to reach, creating a plan is a great way to start.

When building your self-care plan, consider the 7 Pillars of Self-Care defined by the [International Self-Care Foundation \(ISF\)](#):

Increase your health knowledge. The more you know, the better choices you'll make. The [World Health Organization](#) website is a great place to learn about many health topics such as addictive behaviour, food safety, oral health, sexually transmitted diseases, tobacco, and

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vaccines.

Mental Wellbeing. Make sure you take regular breaks from your workday, even just to get up from your desk for 10 minutes and stretch. Make time for you. Find an activity that you enjoy and schedule it into your calendar just as you would any other important appointment. Social interaction is vital to our mental wellbeing. Connect regularly with friends and loved ones by phone or video call.

Physical activity. Getting 150 minutes of moderate cardio activity per week may seem daunting. But finding an activity you enjoy—walking, dancing, riding a bike—will help the time pass easily. Normal jobs around the house, like Hoovering, can also count towards your activity. If you've been sedentary for a while, start off slowly and try to build some physical activity into your daily self-care plan and increase it over time.

Healthy eating. Aim for a balanced diet, including lots of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid saturated fat, trans-fat, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars. Start by meeting with your doctor or a nutritionist to discuss your dietary needs and develop a healthy eating plan.

Take precautions and avoid risks. Getting regular checkups as recommended by your doctor can help prevent illness. Stay informed about your risk factors for conditions such as heart disease and cancer so that you can take steps to mitigate them. Part of your self-care plan should include checking with your regular healthcare provider to see what routine checkups and blood tests they provide. If they are not on offer investigate local private facilities. Also get regular dental and vision screenings as well as taking precautions such as wearing sunscreen and driving safely.

Good hygiene. We've heard a lot about the importance of hygiene lately due to the pandemic. But, proper handwashing, covering our mouths when we cough or sneeze, and cleaning of surfaces. should be practised at all time to keeps us safe from bacteria and infections. Good hygiene is also about bathing, dental care, and food safety. All of these measures are a part of a robust self-care plan.

Rational and responsible use of self-care products and services. A spa treatment or a yoga session would be nice additions to your self-care plan, when they become available after

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restrictions lift. But it's important to include fundamental self-care factors in your plan – like making sure prescription medications are used as prescribed, and keeping fit. Your plan can include virtual fitness sessions, taking vitamins and supplements, and using home diagnostic tools such as a blood pressure monitor. Make sure the products and services meet quality and safety standards and are appropriate for your needs. If in doubt, check with your doctor.

Give yourself permission to take time out for yourself and start your self-care plan of action today.