



Self-Care: Mental guide - activity -

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Based on an article by Katherine Hurst 2018

*This **Self-Care: Mental guide** is one of six in this Self-Care series, the other five are: **Self Care: Physical & Sensory, Nature, Emotional, Social and Worldview guide.***

Self-Care: An Introduction

Most people benefit from at least some kind of self-care, although individuals may prefer different kinds. Not all kinds of self-care are for everyone.

Self-care is about cultivating personal resilience, knowing when an individual's inner resources are getting low and it's time to replenish. Self-care is also about the integration of compassion, in individuals and in groups, to prevent burnout. Individuals and groups can prioritise self-care in order to bring more good energy to anything they do, including group activities.

What Self-Care is Not

Self-care is not the same as anything that feels good. Modern societies offer many 'quick-fix' temptations based on unhealthy coping mechanisms that are potentially destructive or harmful long-term: things like drugs, alcohol, caffeine, overeating, gambling, or excessive risk-taking. These provide temporary relief at best, and are not long-term solutions, or foundations of self-care.

Avoiding Self-Care

Someone might avoid self-care for many reasons. Typically, these are based on a personal history where self-care was not encouraged. In addition, the cultural norms in most modern societies tend to favour attributes such as strength, youth, vitality and conversely care or rest can be seen as a form of weakness. This can result in beliefs such as:

- people in general do not deserve or need self-care, so neither does any specific individual.
- there will be bad consequences for self-care.
- my important relationships will be affected in a negative way.
- it involves too many difficult transactions, and isn't worth it.
- it may help other people, but it is not suitable for me.
- self-care has an 'expensive' cost in money or time, so it is best kept to a minimum.

Self-care practices are good for us! Exercise, creativity, rest, touch, social connection, time in nature (to name some examples) have long-term benefits on all levels: physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and for worldview.

Self-Care: Mental

Mental self-care includes activities that benefit the mind like learning, creativity, and reducing stress. Some of these practices can be added to regular daily or weekly routines to maintain optimum mental well-being.

Self-Care Benefits: Mental

- increased **self-awareness** – discerning between personal healthy habits & unhealthy coping strategies.
- increased **self-knowledge** – more ease in setting priorities & making choices.
- increased **productivity** - reducing distractions & achieving goals.

Mindfulness. There are many kinds of mindfulness to explore. This is a larger topic covered in two separate Inner Transition resources: [Mindfulness - Introduction & Resources](#) and [Activity - Mindfulness - Recentering](#).

Activities

8+ minutes to work on **solving a puzzle** you enjoy – sudoku, crossword, jigsaw, etc. Single-tasking can reduce stress and improve mood, as well as aiding problem-solving, visual-spatial reasoning, attention to detail, and memory.

10+ minutes to **take a quiz**. Trivia games aid fact recollection, memory function, and cognition, while reducing stress and providing small quantities of the hormone dopamine. Try a few online quizzes about topics you enjoy, or participate in a local pub quiz. Bonus challenge: write your own quiz.

10+ minutes to try **folding paper origami**. This Japanese tradition can reduce anxiety and depression, and increase hand-eye coordination. Bonus challenge: try using only natural materials, like leaves.

15+ minutes to **learn something new** that you've always been curious about. An attitude of lifelong learning yields many benefits. Try watching an educational video, a TED talk, or a documentary. Bonus: attend a 1-or-2-day workshop to learn a new craft or skill.

20+ minutes to use your imagination to sketch or **design a prototype** of something entirely new. Invention combines practicality and possibility, encouraging the mind to grow. Bonus challenge: use only recyclable materials.

20+ minutes to **clutter clear**. Clearing overcrowded spaces can be beneficial in many ways. Focus on personal spaces: your room, car, handbag, pockets, desk, workspace, etc. Or try some cleaning and **home-care**: refresh your bedding, remove dust, sweep the floor, etc. 'Clearing the cobwebs' can be both literal and mental.

4+ hours to **visit a museum, gallery, or historic site**. Research an aspect of local history, or learn about another culture. Learning how people in other times and places have done things can be inspiring and enlightening.

1 day to take a '**mental health day**' off work to reduce stress. Many workplaces already offer this, recognising that workers with good mental health are more efficient and productive. Engage in any self-care practices you find helpful.

Aim to **reframe negative self-talk** and reduce self-criticism. This is a larger topic covered in a separate Inner Transition resource - **Negative Self-Talk + Resources**. How you talk to yourself reflects your state of mind. Investigate to see if the word 'should' can transform into the word 'could' or 'might'. As Nancy Stark Smith has said, aim to 'replace ambition with curiosity.' Bonus challenge: upgrade your vocabulary by replacing the word 'but' with 'and.'



Related Inner Transition Resources

Self-Care: Physical and Sensory
Self-Care: Nature
Self-Care: Emotional
Self-Care: Social
Self-Care: Worldview

Mindfulness - Introduction & Resources
Activity - Mindfulness - Recentering
Negative Self-Talk + Resources

References Self-care: Mental

Hurst, Katherine. "[What Is Self-Care and Why Is Self-Care Important?](#)" 2018.

Claudat, Dana. "[9 Ways Your Life Will Improve When You Declutter.](#)"

Sparks, Dana. "[Overcoming Negative Self-Talk.](#)" 2019.

Origami Resource Center

<https://www.origami-resource-center.com/origami-organizations.html>

<https://www.origami-resource-center.com/health-benefits.html>