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Self-Care Activities

I've crafted an extensive list of possible self-care activities for you.

You definitely will not be able to do every item on the list and you certainly are not meant to. Everyone will have some limitations posed on them by a job, a role, a disability, financial means, phobias, anxieties, personality traits, preferences and resources. That is why I listed so many different activities. I'm hoping you can find at least a few in each category that work for you.

Each activity is merely a starting point. If the activity works in your self care routine try expanding it. For example, if you try out mindful walking and you like it consider developing it into a regular habit.

If the activity seems too challenging in this moment, make it smaller. If 5+ servings of fruits and veggies seems like too big of an ask...try 3 daily. Or try 5 servings for only a few days this week. Or research what a serving of veggies actually looks like.

Keep your self-care goals reasonable. Be forgiving to yourself. Take small steps with the end goal of forming a helpful self-care routine.

Physical Self-care

- Work on slowly increasing your daily step count using a fitness tracker or even an old school pedometer
- Set a bedtime and try to go to bed at the time each night
- Eat 5+ servings of fruits and veggies daily for a week
- Establish a skincare routine
- Make an appointment to see a doctor
- Log your food for a day or two
- Pay attention to your hydration throughout the day
- Check the suntan lotion in your cabinet and purchase a new bottle if needed
- Start a stretching routine.
- Start a yoga routine
- Increase the number of flights of stairs you do daily
- Take a walk
- Purchase new sneakers
- Plan a hike in a local park
- Make a list of healthy snacks you enjoy
- Look up some new healthy recipes
- Keep track of how much sleep you are getting
- Go to the gym
- Take up a slightly more physical hobby such as biking or even geocaching
- Find an exercise you can do at home such as jumping rope or weighted hula-hooping
- Check your blood pressure
- See a nutritionist
- Read a book on nutrition, exercise or sleep
- Do something relaxing before bed
- Cut back on soda
- Avoid fast-food restaurants for a month
- Assess your medicine cabinet- do you have everything you need? Does anything need to be replaced? Is anything expired?
- Make an appointment to see the dentist
- Replace your toothbrush/toothbrush heads
- Start a flossing habit
- Sign up for a physical class like swimming, self-defense or yoga
- Download a fitness app
- Research “sleep hygiene” to learn how you can get a better night’s rest
- Sign-up for a marathon and start training
- If you work at a desk for long periods of time make sure you are getting enough movement- add stretches or short walks to your day

Emotional Self-care

- Make an appointment to see a therapist or counselor
- Read a book on a therapy technique such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or Emotional Brain Training
- Try journaling
- Start a daily gratitude log
- Try mindful eating
- Try mindful walking
- Download a meditation app
- Learn about self-compassion
- Download a CBT app
- Watch a meditation video on YouTube
- Confide in a friend
- Listen to music
- Have a good cry
- Seek out someone who makes you laugh
- Scream into a pillow, or punch the pillow a few times (it needs a good fluffing anyway)
- Set some boundaries for yourself- learn when to say no
- Work on quieting your inner critic
- Watch a sad movie
- Call someone who makes you happy
- Make a list of things you are looking forward to
- Paint your mood
- Spend some time alone
- Don't apologize for putting your own needs first
- Sign-up for a class on meditation, mindfulness, reducing stress, etc...
- Join a support group
- Find a supportive forum online
- Ask for help
- Accept compliments from others
- Give compliments to yourself
- Foster positive self talk
- Accept your feelings as valid and admit them to yourself (and others, if you can)
- Take a day off from work
- Plan a vacation
- Do nothing for awhile
- Learn about emotional intelligence

Spiritual Self-care

- Visit a local museum
- Visit an art gallery
- Listen to music that inspires you
- Find a place to volunteer
- Participate in a beach cleanup
- Take a walk in nature
- Start a garden
- Plant a tree
- Visit the burial site of a loved one
- Visit a war memorial
- Read a book from a religion you aren't familiar with
- Study your own religion
- Travel to a foreign country
- Visit a national park
- Attend a church service
- Decorate for a holiday
- Donate to a charity
- Offer to help someone
- Be kind to others
- Vote in an election
- Research political candidates
- Learn about another culture
- Join a book club
- Learn to meditate (sorry for the repeat, but it helps with both!)
- Attend a festival
- Visit a historical site
- Stargaze
- Watch the clouds
- Read world news
- Join a movement
- Fundraise for a cause
- Participate in a march or protest
- Read the biography of someone who inspires you
- Practice forgiveness
- Make small changes to be more environmentally friendly

Mental Self-care

- Research ways to improve your critical thinking skills
- Read an article on something you know nothing about
- Consume (read/watch/play) a mystery (and try to solve it)
- Research more about your favorite animal
- Read a magazine
- Read a "how to" guide
- Watch an instructional video
- Play a resource management game
- Listen to a science podcast
- Find a podcast about your hobby
- Read a newspaper
- Find a new hobby
- Listen to NPR
- Read a nonfiction book
- Do a crossword
- Try to learn a new word each day
- Sign-up for a class at your local university or an online university (there are free ones)
- Watch a documentary
- Get a book of logical puzzles
- Read a book that was banned at some point in history
- Read several books written by authors in several different countries
- Start a blog, YouTube channel or podcast
- Go to a lecture
- Learn a new language
- Do a puzzle
- Read a scientific paper
- Ask questions and be curious
- Make a list of things you want to learn more about
- Log events during your day and reflect on your day before bed
- Take notes more often
- Offer to teach someone something
- Set some goals
- Do a reading challenge
- Learn to play chess
- Help a child with their homework

Social Self-care

- Make an effort to improve your relationship with a coworker
- Send a letter to a friend
- Send a greeting card
- Call a good friend
- Email a friend you haven't spoken to in years
- Search out a childhood friend on social media
- Text or DM a friend
- Arrange a game board day
- Plan a movie night with friends
- Join a club or organization
- Arrange a weekend trip with close friends
- Schedule a video call with a friend who lives far away
- Start a Slack channel or private Facebook group for your close friends
- Plan a vacation with friends
- Go out with some coworkers after work
- Give someone a compliment
- Ask for help
- Offer advice
- Try verbally greeting as many people as possible for a day
- Get a platonic friend matching app like Patook
- Get a penpal
- Join an online forum for something you are interested in
- Have lunch in a new place
- Learn how to use a different kind of social media
- Attend a work event
- Ask a coworker how their weekend was
- Send a surprise gift to someone
- Attend a party
- Host a gathering
- Start a fantasy league
- Run an online roleplaying game
- Plan to watch a movie or TV show the same time as a friend or two, exchange messages while you watch
- Comment on a blog post
- Invite someone over for dinner
- Go on a date

Environmental Self-care

- Light a candle
- Play some relaxing and soothing music
- Declutter and clean a shelf
- Decorate your work space
- Invest in a good desk chair
- Wash your sheets
- Vacuum
- Change the air filter in your home
- Get new glasses
- Replace your sneakers
- Give away clothes that no longer fit properly
- Buy a coat, gloves and a scarf
- Organize your desk at work
- Put up a pretty calendar
- Adjust the thermostat
- Invest in a programmable thermostat
- Bring a sweater to work
- Put a small fan on your desk
- Try wearing earbuds or headphones when you don't want to be distracted by others
- Open a window
- Spend 15 minutes decluttering your home
- Do the dishes
- Take out the trash and recycling
- Rub some lotion on your hands
- Take a moment to consider if there is anything you can do to increase your comfort level in this moment
- Place a folded blanket next to the couch
- Wash any extra blankets you have around
- Smell something delicious
- Dust your house
- Bathe your dog
- Improve your housekeeping habits
- Read a book on decluttering
- Read about ways to decrease allergens in your home
- Create a list of projects you can do to improve your living space
- Buy a plant

Pleasure (Play/Joy/Fun) Self-care

- Intentionally watch a TV show (don't flip around, watch something you really want to watch)
- Play a board game
- Add to a collection or organize a collection
- Don't collect anything? Start!
- Make a list of things that make you happy
- Go on a road trip
- Visit a bizarre roadside attraction
- Add something fun to your to do list
- Read a book
- Listen to playful music (like your favorite Disney soundtrack)
- Bonus points: sing along
- Plan a vacation to somewhere interesting
- Visit a local tourist attraction that you might find fun
- Wear some fun jewelry
- Paint your nails a bright color
- Listen to a fun podcast (there are plenty of amazing fiction choices)
- Listen to an audio book
- See a stand-up comic live
- Book concert tickets
- Think about the things you used to do for fun as a child
- Schedule some time for fun
- Plan a day trip for an upcoming weekend
- Make a list of your favorite activities
- Read some jokes online
- Watch one of your favorite movies
- Do something silly
- Go to a game store and purchase a board game
- Plan to watch a TV show or movie at the same time as a long distance friend, exchange text messages while watching
- Subscribe to a fun subscription box
- Start a new craft project
- Make a friendship bracelet
- Play a computer game
- Read something in a genre you typically don't read
- Go see a movie
- Go to an arcade and play a few games or go bowling

Relational Self-care

- Schedule a family game night
- Ask someone in your family how their day was
- Call a parental figure
- Create a family photo album
- Look into adopting a new pet
- Have a family member tell you about their interests
- Try out another family member's hobby
- Start researching your ancestry and make your family tree
- Read this article: <https://gretchenrubin.com/2015/12/5-habits-relationships>
- Get in touch with a distant relative (such as a cousin that lives in another part of the country)
- Host a holiday get together
- Attend or start a family reunion
- Come up with a new family tradition
- Send a letter to a family member
- Send a birthday card or gift to a family member you don't usually see on their birthday
- Have a family dinner
- Go to the movies as a family
- Spend a day taking family photos
- Offer help to a member of your family
- Make speaking more often to family members a new habit
- Give praise or encouragement to a family member
- Show a family member that they are valued
- Do something fun as a family
- Show trust in another family member
- Give love and appreciation to a family member
- Have a family meeting
- Do chores at the same time
- Figure out each family member's love language:
<https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/podcast-80-five-love-languages>
- Volunteer together
- Plan a family vacation together
- Randomly do some chores for another family member so they can have the night off
- Visit a relative
- Spend some time in your hometown
- Ask an older relative to look at their family photos with you
- Be more sincere and thoughtful when saying hello, good bye and goodnight.

Safety & Security Self-care

- Assess your personal finances
- Make a budget
- Pay off some debt
- Start saving money
- Listen to a financial podcast
- See if you can find something in your budget you can cut back on- your cable bill? Your auto insurance? The amount you spend on coffee?
- Figure out a way to make some more money
- Take a self-defense course
- Open a savings account
- Review your auto insurance, learn what the various parts mean
- Do you have enough smoke detectors? Do they need to be replaced?
- Make a list of important emergency numbers and place them on the fridge
- Take a first aid course
- Check your credit score
- Learn how to change a tire
- Review your health insurance situation
- Prepare for a home fire:
<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire/home-fire-preparedness.html>
- Learn how to cook
- Learn how to shut the water off in your home in case of a leak
- Learn how a breaker box works
- Learn what a GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) is, how they work, and where you should have them in your home
- Know how to check all the fluids in your car
- Know how to jump a car battery
- Learn how to check tires, both the wear and the air pressure
- Learn how to replace windshield wipers
- Learn how to remove a drain clog
- Learn how to retrieve something from the sink
- Check the ventilation hose on your dryer
- Determine the age of your water heater and if it needs to be replaced
- Assess your home for possible routine maintenance needs
- Create a space in your home to store manuals
- Learn how to replace your home air filter or the filter in a window air conditioning unit
- Check your fire extinguisher. Read instructions for how to use it.
- Learn how to protect your outside faucets from freezing
- Make sure you have an emergency kit and blankets in your car