

How to make self-care a family priority



This can help if:

- you want your family to get into the habit of self-care
- you're worried about time and money when it comes to self-care
- you're not managing to stick to a self-care routine

Why should self-care be a priority for families?

Practicing self-care can make you feel happier and more physically, mentally and emotionally able to deal with life's pressures and stresses. For busy, hectic families, ensuring self-care is a priority makes sense, as it helps parents be better caregivers. It also role models positive behavior for teens, which they'll adopt and benefit from into adulthood.

What self-care works for you?

Self-care is different for everyone – you might have to work together to figure out the best options for each of you. Ask everyone to think about these questions individually:

- What activities make you feel good and recharged?

- What would you like to do more of?
- Are there any activities that you look forward to during the week?
- What would your ideal day look like? What activities would you do?

If you're struggling to think of specific activities, think about:

- For parents (who may have forgotten!): What did you love doing before you had kids?
- For children: Remind them of the things you've seen them enjoying.

Think low budget or free. This is about filling hearts with joy, not emptying your bank account.

Take [this quiz](#) to find out what sort of self-care works for you. For some more examples, check out our [self-care fact sheet](#).

Carve out time for individual self-care

Self-care adds up like coins in a jar – every 5 or 10 minutes accumulates for good. If you think you're too busy for self-care, it's likely that self-care is exactly what you need. Here are some ways you can make time:

- If an idea is too time-consuming, see if it can be pared back or broken down. That national park hike can wait, but perhaps you can fit in 10 minutes a day at your local park.
- Use 'dead time'. For example, enjoy a podcast on the way to work; walk or cycle instead of driving locally; eat lunch outside instead of at your desk; or take a walk during your lunch break.
- Use 'free time' better. Social media scrolling and binge-watching TV can sap your soul. Free up a bit of that time for your happy stuff.
- Be realistic about how much time you need to feel benefits from your self-care. Some people need more time than others, so don't undercook what you need.

Commit to a routine

Put your individual self-care plans into the family planner and make it a priority:

- See this as an ongoing wellbeing plan, not an emergency response for when things get too much.
- Have the attitude that self-care activities are the last to be dropped from the schedule, not the first.

Get support

Back each other up! Tell each other what you're doing, and when, and encourage everyone to help and support each other. For example, you could:

- swap chores, so that someone can go and do the self-care they'd scheduled
- ask for help from other family, friends and neighbors
- use local services, such as after-school care, to make time for self-care.

Reflect and adapt

Schedule a time to see how everyone's doing. At the beginning when you're figuring things out, a more frequent check-in (like once a month) might be needed. Once you get your bearings, you can scale these check-ins back to suit you. Adapt what isn't working:

- Would a different time of day work better? Earlier in the day can be easier because it's hard to stop what you're doing as the day progresses.
- Would a different day be better? What feels great on Saturday morning might not work on Monday afternoon.
- Encourage your family to keep at it. Be clear that you value self-care and will always support them in being able to do it.