

# 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.