

# A Guide to Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

Parents and caregivers of young children are tasked with ensuring that their children's needs are met. While it can seem impossible to juggle both your needs and your family's everyday needs, make sure to prioritize your wellbeing as a parent or caregiver. This will not only benefit your health and wellbeing but will also benefit your family.

## Importance of Self Care

It's easy to confuse self care with self-indulgent behavior. This mentality might make you feel guilty for thinking you need to take a break from your life to do something that makes you feel better. The reality is that self care is the practice of taking good care of your body, your mind, and your soul every day.

Repeatedly putting the needs of others before your own can create stress, burnout, and resentment. Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. When you neglect yourself, you reduce your effectiveness in caring for others.

## Ways to Practice Self Care

When you're taking care of others, sometimes it seems like there isn't enough time to ensure that your needs are met. You can begin to take steps toward better self care by making small changes to your daily or weekly routine.

### Consider the following:

- **Practice healthy habits** - eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, make time to exercise regularly, and stay on top of your own medical appointments.
- **Talk to someone** - reach out to friends or family to build a sense of belonging. Consider joining a support group to make new friends.

- **Try to do something you enjoy every day** - dance to a song you enjoy, watch a TV show, paint, read, etc. even if it's just for 10 or 15 minutes.
- **Find ways to relax** - take a walk, meditate, practice deep breathing, get a massage, or take a bath.
- **Build a self care kit** - fill it with little things that you can use when you have a moment to yourself or if you need a pick-me-up—snacks, little gifts like socks or lotion, affirmations, jokes, or a gift card for when you have more time to do something.



A self-care checklist can serve as a guide to help you maintain your designated habits. It is meant to help you monitor yourself and see whether or not you are complying. It is also intended to help you track your progress and revise your plan accordingly if needed. Consider the following when filling out your checklist:

- Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) goals for taking care of yourself.
- Set aside some time each day to decompress. For example, download a meditation app and meditate for five minutes before you go to sleep.

- Disconnect from email, social media, and mindless scrolling. If you find yourself reaching for the phone when you’re trying to relax, try putting it in another room.

Quick bursts of indulgence are not a sustainable route to health and happiness, so self-care should not be a temporary practice. Make self care a long-lasting habit.

### Printable Daily Self Care Checklist

Week of:

Self Care Task	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

To learn more, visit: [tryingtogether.org/parenting-resources](https://tryingtogether.org/parenting-resources)

