

Take Better Care of Yourself



The following is an excerpt from www.brainmd.com:
<https://brainmd.com/blog/self-care-guide-how-to-put-yourself-first/>

1. Take Care of Number One

You've probably heard the expression "always take care of number one." Although that saying might not be the best advice in business, team sports, relationships or many other areas of life, it holds a great deal of significance to your personal health. In fact, how you treat your body, and brain may well determine your ability to function in an increasingly busy world.

Like it or not, stress is a normal and unavoidable part of living. From work or school to shopping and paying bills, the list of demands on our time can seem insurmountable.

If it feels like your stress levels are being pushed to the limit, you may be experiencing the kind of exhaustion that can lead to serious mood and sleep issues. Taking care of yourself may require that you seek out additional help. The good news is that there are many practical steps you can take to get the support you need.

2. Give Yourself a Time Out

You may feel pressure to be everything to everyone, but there's only so much one person can accomplish. Increase your energy and stamina by giving yourself a timeout. All of us need time to recharge our batteries and self-care is often the best thing you can do. Plus, others will benefit when your stress is reduced and your mood is improved.

3. Listen to Soothing Tunes

It's no surprise that listening to music can increase pleasurable feelings, improve mood, boost energy, raise dopamine levels and help with focus and concentration. Remaining in a relaxed state of mind is easier to accomplish when you have a happy tune running through your head. Listen to brain enhancing music specifically composed to enhance mood, gratitude, motivation, and inspiration.



4. Get Quality Sleep

Good sleep is essential for optimal brain and body health. Insufficient and inconsistent sleep can increase irritability, moodiness and poor judgment. To remain at the top of your game, it's recommended that you get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Whether you're too wired to sleep or too stressed to sleep, natural sleep aids can help improve your quality of sleep.



5. Write It Down

The process of journaling gives stressful thoughts a home, another place they can live besides your brain. Once those thoughts have been expressed, they often lose their intensity and urgency which will allow you to mentally relax. Writing in your journal 10 minutes before you go to bed can help release the stresses of the day and put you in a restful state of mind.

6. Get Regular Exercise

Physical exercise is perhaps the single most important thing you can do to keep your brain healthy. Exercise can boost blood flow and other positive nutrients to the brain, increase your levels of dopamine and generate new brain cells that can help the brain self-regulate and calm down. Walking can help you clear your mind, decrease anxiety, improve your mood and burn some calories all at the same time.

7. Meditate Daily

Make time for yourself every day. Taking breaks for meditation and relaxation provide benefits for both your physical and mental health. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh your mind. Clearing your mind and slowing your breathing can help restore inner calm. Repeating simple words like “May I be safe and secure” can increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones. Loving Kindness Meditations (LKM) can reduce pain and improve other mental health challenges.

8. Get a Massage

One way to counter the effects of stress is to get a massage. Massage therapy has been known to increase dopamine levels by nearly 30% while decreasing cortisol (a stress hormone) levels.

9. Just Say No

Take control of your schedule rather than letting it control you. Say no to cravings, events and activities that aren't essential to your life. Be mindful of what you do, how you spend your time and energy. Don't do things the same way just because that's how you've always done them. If what you're doing isn't making you happy or is causing you stress, it's time to do something different.

By following these mood-boosting and stress-reducing techniques they can help to improve your overall well-being so that you can take care of yourself and the other important people in your life.