

Self-Care During COVID-19

Right now is a very challenging time for many people. Whether it's a change in routine, financial troubles, health anxiety, or something else entirely, almost everyone is struggling in some way.

When we get stressed, it can be difficult to dedicate time to self-care, however, it's still important to look after ourselves. To help, we've put together this list of proven self-care strategies to help you feel more relaxed and better equipped to handle everything you're dealing with.

1. Maintain routines

For many people, routines are a great way to stay grounded. Routines can also help us be more successful in our daily activities because they act as cues for our brain and body for what we're about to do.

There are many ways to hold onto routines even if your daily life is completely different than usual. Instead of a morning commute, try going for a short walk or enjoying a cup of coffee in your backyard. If you usually go to the gym after work, try going for a bike ride or following an online yoga video. It's also a good idea to sleep when you usually would, work only within your normal hours, and eat at your regular times.

2. Eat well

Reaching for more snacks and comfort foods during stressful times is very common, but more nutrient-rich food may improve your mood and give you more energy. You may also find that staying hydrated helps you feel better.

Eating well can look different for everyone. You may want to add frozen fruits and vegetables to your grocery list so you can try enjoying a fruit smoothie or roasting some veggies to serve with dinner.

3. Get outside

Spending time outdoors is a great way to practice self-care for several reasons. Fresh air and exercise have well-known benefits to physical and mental health, and being outside gives you the opportunity to socialize with your neighbours, which can reduce feelings of isolation.

There are tons of different ways to spend time outside. If you have a lot of energy, try walking, running, or biking. On days when you just want to relax, you may want to try sitting in your backyard or a park and observing the sounds, smells, and textures of nature.

4. Avoid the news

Although it's important to stay informed, constant updates can be overwhelming. Taking a break from the news doesn't mean that you don't care about what's happening in the world, just that you need to look after yourself as well.

Depending on how you get your news, there are a few different ways you can distance yourself from the news a bit. Try limiting how long you spend watching or reading the news each day, disabling news notifications, following sources dedicated to positive news, or scheduling a news-free day on your calendar each week.

5. Call your friends

Calling your friends and family is a great way to feel more connected while physical distancing measures are in place.

Try scheduling calls with loved ones the same way you might normally plan to meet them for coffee or attend an event together. If it's possible, a video call is even better because you get to see their face at the same time.

6. Volunteer

Many people have been feeling overwhelmed and disheartened during the pandemic because they feel somewhat powerless in stopping it. One of the best ways to combat this feeling is to contribute to a good cause through community service.

Try looking up volunteer opportunities in your community or reaching out to organizations you may have volunteered with in the past. Many organizations still need in-person volunteers, but there are also plenty of remote volunteer opportunities if you'd prefer. Remember that community service doesn't have to be related to COVID-19 to help you feel like you're making a difference, for example, you could volunteer at an animal shelter or with a food bank.

7. Clean your space

Although cleaning isn't usually seen as self-care, many people find it helps them feel calmer. As well, living in a tidy environment tends to reduce stress levels.

Try picking a form of cleaning you enjoy, perhaps laundry, organizing something, or wiping down surfaces. If you're not in the mood for cleaning, try cleaning something for just 5 minutes. Even a bit of cleaning may help you feel accomplished and less overwhelmed.

8. Cut yourself some slack

We're all living through a global crisis, so it's completely understandable and normal if you find you're struggling with tasks you'd normally have no problem with.

Rather than beating yourself up, try forgiving yourself and trusting that you're doing your best right now, regardless of what that looks like. Try repeating some positive affirmations to yourself, such as "I am enough", "I accept myself unconditionally", or "I am deserving of love and respect".