



5 Ways

To Take Care of Yourself

Self-care isn't necessarily all about pampering yourself. In fact, if you reframe "self-care" as "taking care of yourself," you'll find that many habits actually count.

At its core, self-care is about doing things for yourself on a regular basis that keep your body functioning, your mind sharp and the day-to-day details of life handled. And even if these things don't seem like self-care, it's nice to have a bunch of reminders like this in one place. Right?

1

Meal prep at least one week out of the month.

You know that eating well is important for your overall health and well-being. I don't need to tell you that. But it can be so. darn. hard. to eat right sometimes. One thing that may help? Devoting a chunk of time to making big-batch meals that you can also eat for lunch.

Finding a chunk of time to meal prep can feel impossible, but you won't need more than an hour or two. You're only making enough food for 5 to 7 meals, and if you make something in a crock pot or on a single sheet pan in the oven, you can set it to cook and forget it. Another option is to make a mega batch of whatever you're cooking for dinner on Sunday night and pack that up for the rest of the week. There are a ton of great resources out there, too, so start small and then climb toward your goal. Even if you start with just a couple of lunches per week, that'll get you in the habit of meal prepping.



2

Set up a system for paying your bills on time.

You don't have to be a financial planner to pay your bills on time. One way to make sure your bills are always paid on time is to set up a system that works for you and then stick with it.

First, look at your last couple of months of bills (whether that's by printing out your bank statements and highlighting the bills you paid or printing out copies of all your recent bills) and note on a calendar when each one is due.

Then, decide on a system for how to pay them that makes sense for you. If you get a steady paycheck, you might want to set up auto-pay with each of your creditors or through online banking so that you don't even have to think about your recurring expenses. Or, you could get your bills delivered via email or snail mail and then pay them as soon as they come in. That gives you a bit more control. Setting up calendar reminders right before each bill's due date is an option, too, especially if you think you'll need some flexibility every month with your payment date.

If you miss a payment, don't freak out—there are remedies. The most important thing to not do right now is bury your head in the sand and ignore the issue. If you don't have the money to pay a bill, call your creditor and see if you can set up a payment arrangement. In most cases, the creditor would rather make a deal with you than send your account to collections.

You can do this.

3

Drink more water.

Water is life, and a huge number of us aren't drinking nearly enough of it. According to a 2016 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average American adult drinks just 4 cups of water per day—and that's far from ideal. The CDC doesn't set a specific minimum, since we all have different needs, but at least eight 8-ounce cups per day is a good benchmark.

4

Force yourself to go to bed on time.

There are a lot of fun reasons to stay up late (looking at you, Netflix), but getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night is essential for your well-being. When you don't sleep enough, your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes goes up, your metabolism slows down and you're more likely to get sick. Getting proper rest matters.

5

Find a type of exercise you like and do it at least once a week.

This could be anything: listening to music or a podcast while going for a brisk walk; taking a Jazzercise class at your local community center; enrolling in fancy-pants boxing lessons; or swinging on the monkey bars at the park. Prefer to exercise with a friend? Great! Go to the playground with your BFF once a week and chase her kid around the playground for an hour, or meet up with a friend for a walk. Exercise doesn't have to cost money, but it does require a commitment. The best way to keep that commitment is to find an activity you actually enjoy so that you don't lose your motivation.