**200+ Self-Care Ideas for Coping with Life**

With a list of 200+ self-care ideas, it may not seem easy to hunt down the 30-40 that might really apply to you and make a significant impact on your overall mind-body-spirit well-being.

To make things easier, I have divided these 200+ self-care ideas into [seven categories](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/shyness-is-nice/201403/seven-types-self-care-activities-coping-stress):

* Emotional
* Mental
* Physical
* Pleasure
* Sensory
* Social
* Spiritual

The idea is that if you know the type of self-care support you are looking for, it is easier to browse through the self-care ideas in that section alone.

Without further ado, let’s take a look at some of the best self-care ideas and activities.

**29 Emotional Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

Self-care is about a lot more than just mindset. While self-care can be a big help for your mental health days, it is often an even bigger response to your in-the-moment emotional needs.

Giving your emotions free reign—or at least acknowledging your emotional state and moving on—is an important part of self-care. Before you can get better, you must acknowledge what is and was, and make those changes.

Our emotions often dictate the way we behave, so we need to be mindful of what we’re feeling, especially in stressful situations. It’s not helpful to label emotions as “good” or “bad.” It’s better to give each emotion a descriptive term showing exactly what it is (e.g., anger, fear of rejection, sadness, etc.). When we assign negative emotions specific labels, we rob them of some of their power to terrify us.

Below are some further self-care ideas for dealing with emotions.

* Allow yourself to feel and express all of your feelings (in a safe and appropriate environment). For example, if you are angry, go into a private closet and scream, rather than taking it out on your secretary.
* Ask three good friends to give your positive feedback. What do they love about you?
* Dedicate a week to saying only positive things on your favorite social media channel.
* Learn 4-8-7 breathing.
* Do one thing today just because it makes you happy.
* Finish this sentence every day after you wake up: “I love myself because I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Have a good, long, cathartic cry.
* Try some [mindful exercises](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/mindfulness-exercises/) to help bring you into the present moment.
* If you need a good, body-shaking cry, watch sad movies or listen to sad songs.
* Keep a running list of great things people say about you. Read it when you feel down.
* Try some [adult coloring](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/adult-coloring-books/) as a form of anxiety and/or stress release. This can also serve to help you focus, be more mindful and perhaps spark some creativity.
* Look at yourself in the mirror and imagine that you’re your best friend. What would you tell you right now?
* Define only three daily goals. This makes goals achievable, while also allowing for normal “emergencies” at work that might take up your time.
* Recite some [self-love affirmations](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/self-love-affirmations/).
* Need help coming up with new ideas? Create an inspirational collage and hang it in your workspace.
* Read some feel-good poetry.
* ​Remind yourself of the good stuff in life by writing a list of things you’re grateful to have. Then post it somewhere you can see it often to help refocus your emotions when you feel down.
* Revisit happier times by reading old emails, letters, or postcards from friends and family.
* Give. Do it unconditionally, and with no strings attached. See how good it feels to help others without expecting reciprocation.
* Set photos of your loved ones as the wallpaper of your phone or laptop so you can look at them when you need inspiration.
* Take a moment to name your emotions without judging them.
* Stop being your harshest critic. Allow yourself to make mistakes. No one is perfect. Realize this means you too!
* Tell your pet all of your darkest secrets. Your pet's nonchalance will remind you that you’re going to be okay.
* Unfollow or mute toxic “friends” in your social media feeds.
* Tap into your creative side. Use painting or another creative art to release your fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration on paper. Check out this online [art therapy course.](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/art-therapy)
* Use 15 minutes to write out your thoughts about anything bothering you. Then burn or throw away the paper.
* Remove any equipment or appliances that make you feel bad about yourself, such as the bathroom scale.
* Clean up your work area. (Many people find a clean and neat work area to be cathartic.)
* Write encouraging affirmations or inspirational quotes on Post-its and place them where you will see them every day.

**54 Mental Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

I feel that mental self-care is one of the most important of the seven sections. At times, your mind may need rest and recuperation, while at other times you may be looking for stimulation and challenges. Without both timely rest and exercise, we run the risk of our minds slowly turning to mush.’

These self-care ideas help to:

* Give you mind a break so you are clear-headed.
* Challenge your brain.
* “Reboot” your brain so you can engage intellectually.
* Avoid toxic people.
* Learn not to feel selfish when you say “no.”
* Take “should” out of your vocabulary. Stop feeling you “should” be doing things.
* Take a nap without an alarm clock.
* Learn more about your local history.
* Challenge your [negative thinking](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/how-to-stop-being-negative/).
* Take another route to work, or do a routine differently. Develop new neural pathways and keep your brain healthy by mixing up your routine in small ways.
* Learn how to make a budget and keep track of your money. [These money-saving apps can help](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/money-saving-apps/).
* [Sew](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/sewing-101), quilt, or crochet something. Engage your hands.
* Try something new in your living space. Rearrange all of your furniture in a way that makes you more comfortable. When your home “looks” new, you receive constant new stimulus until your mind is completely settled with the new look.
* Write a limerick or a haiku.
* Develop an [energizing morning ritual](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/morning-routine-habits/)​.
* Read fiction for an hour.
* Find a new hobby, or revisit an old one.
* Intentionally schedule “me time” on your calendar or planner.
* [Reward yourself](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/reward-yourself/) for completing small tasks.
* Learn a new board game you’ve never played, such as [chess](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01256V578/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B01256V578&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=2e65a377aa7b570c68168b26f8dc9b83), [Carcassonne](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00NX627HW/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00NX627HW&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=9ee9d477095c565e2890a8e10f8aa6dc), [Settlers of Caatan](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00U26V4VQ/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00U26V4VQ&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=290be5da1fd1d23bd9e9e7029014ed95), or even [Game of Thrones](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1589947207/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1589947207&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=29860150ba121233862c159fdf261b9c).
* Get some inspiration by reading stories of people who overcame adversity.
* Buy a coloring book and crayons. Adult coloring is actually [good therapy](http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/06/health/adult-coloring-books-popularity-mental-health/index.html).
* Goof or play around for five minutes several times throughout your day.
* Catch up on your [favorite blog](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/).
* Establish and stick to a routine. Your [personal routine](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/my-daily-routine/)can be grounding in times when life seems chaotic.
* Use online tutorials to learn something new (i.e., Photoshop or Excel).
* Discover your stress indicators, such as mood swings, shortening temper, or feeling drained, overwhelmed, or angry. Use these “warning signs” to let you know you need “me time” and some self-care.
* Listen to a podcast about a topic that interests you, but you have yet to explore.
* [Declutter](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/steps-declutter-habit/)your wardrobe. Every month, pick three clothes that you don’t love (or love least) and give them away.
* Do something spontaneous.
* If you are going through something, be it an illness or major life change, educate yourself by learning about what you’re facing, what to expect, and where you can get support.
* Clean up just one small corner of a room in your house. Tidying up can help calm our minds.
* Learn the basics of a new language.
* [Learn something new.](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/new-skills-to-learn/) This could be a topic you’ve been interested in but have never taken the time to learn or it could reviewing news/articles related to your career.
* If you’re feeling overwhelmed, create a plan by listing out your three most important tasks and tackling them first. (See what qualifies as important according to the [Eisenhower Matrix](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/eisenhower-matrix/).)
* Unplug from email and social media for an hour.
* Read a magazine.
* If you’re feeling overwhelmed with too much social interaction, go home. Don't be afraid to cancel plans or say “no.”
* If you play an instrument, try learning a song from a genre or artist you don’t usually listen to.
* Take a mental health day.
* Do some hardcore nesting and make your home or bedroom as cozy, beautiful, and comforting as possible.
* Put the dishes away.
* Fix a small annoyance that’s been bothering you at home.
* Visit the library or a bookstore. Browse or read at your pleasure.
* Check your to-do list for something that's been there for ages, and get it done.
* [Declutter](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/simplicity-declutter-organization-books/) a room or a small space.
* Write a review of a business (restaurant, shop, or even Amazon sales page) you like. Spread some good will and positivity.
* Develop a relaxing evening ritual.
* Pick and read a book that’s easy and fun, then give it away, perhaps to a younger person in your life.
* Make your bed.
* On days when you lack self-confidence, try on expensive suits and dresses at a local boutique and see how good you look.
* Work on a jigsaw puzzle.
* Attend a 12-step or group meeting where support is offered.
* Listen to a chapter or two from an [audiobook](http://www.audible.com/offers/30free?asin=B073HHZK8Q).
* Make a Spotify playlist based on your current mood.
* Start a [journal](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1973531690/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=dghblogmindfulness-20&linkId=32aedbd65e4cf9b259e3a7ca927c427e) to record your thoughts and experiences.
* Forgive others who have hurt you in the past.

**29 Physical Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

In the first two sections of this massive self-care ideas list, we concentrated on the mind—first dealing with self-care for mental fatigue, and next sharing some self-care activities for handing emotional distress.

Of course, the mind is not the only thing that needs care. Remember that there is a mind-body-spirit connection. Each one of these aspects links to the others, creating a web where negative emotions can display as physical ailments and physical ailments may cause psychic pain.

The best self-care for the body is always going to revolve around two essential facts.

Your body is your temple. If you put good stuff in, you get more good stuff out (and vice versa).

You body wants to be active. It wants to be healthy. The more activity you can give it, the better your physical abilities will be. Engaging your body can even help you break away from unhelpful mental chatter.

These following self-care activities are designed to help you stay fit and healthy. They provide the energy to get things done and fulfill personal and professional commitments. These ideas are not JUST about the exercise they give you, but also the mental training and energy they provide throughout rough days.

* Commit to attending a free martial arts class.
* Get up out of your chair and dance to your favorite upbeat song.
* Do some [stretching exercises](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/stretching-exercises).
* Do some Pilates.
* Do some quick, deep breathing exercises.
* Do the [two-minute walking exercise](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/two-minute-walking-habit/).
* Do yoga.
* [Drink more water](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/daily-water-intake/).
* Exhaust yourself physically. Do whatever helps you feel fatigued.
* Get a massage.
* Go out and spend 10 minutes under the sun.
* Go for a bike ride to nowhere in particular.
* Go hiking, camping, or backpacking and spend some time in nature.
* Go kayaking or canoeing with a friend.
* Go swim for fun.
* Go to bed early.
* Go up and down the stairs three times.
* Join a walking group in the neighborhood.
* Know and use your self-soothing activities, like stroking your arm or leg, petting a dog, or sipping [hot tea](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B003D4F2US/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B003D4F2US&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=3332382ee5d69f4fc0bae4ef9a99b62a).
* Know your body intimately. Use a mirror and get to know your naked self. Remember: no judgment.
* Play some basketball (even if you don't know how).
* Scream, pound pillows, tear up paper, or shake your body to move the energy out.
* Sleep in. Life can be hectic. Sometimes you need to just dump your schedule and go ahead and rest.
* Slow dance for 30 minutes.
* Roll it out. The [benefits of foam rollers](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/foam-roller-benefits/) on the body are big. They stretch your muscles and give myofascial release to your body, which allows contracted muscles to relax, improving blood and nutrient flow to the area. This speeds healing and muscle regrowth, and just makes you feel awesome.
* Take a long shower, dry your hair, and put on clothes that make you feel good.
* Take a quick nap. Limit it to 10 to 20 minutes.
* Try [acupuncture](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0553349708/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0553349708&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=b78aeabe8c9e691c85d799e45501ae68).
* Walk the dog.
* Walk on the beach.

**54 Pleasurable and Pampering Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

Now we get to the fun stuff—things you can (and need) to do just for you. This pampering and self-care is important to us for the times when we are overworked, deprived, and stressed.

Life is a balancing act. It is often bad to live a self-indulgent life where we constantly get to do whatever we want. This often leads to addictions, issues with limits, and a lack of happiness because people do not feel they have earned their right to this self-indulgence.

But when you are doing these activities as part of a self-care routine, they can be essential. We all need the joy of just sitting back and enjoying life and the things we love from time to time.

Relaxing activities also help lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension and pain, and improve concentration and mood.

Let’s get to it, and check out some favorite indulgent and enjoyable methods of mental and physical self-care.

* Go on a two-day holiday for the weekend.
* Allow yourself to fantasize and daydream.
* Attend a local high school sporting event.
* Bake something just for fun.
* Book a night in a fancy hotel. Take a bubble bath. Get room service. Relax.
* Build something with Legos.
* Buy a fun treat when grocery shopping.
* Buy some flowers that delight you.
* Cook a [fancy French meal](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/cook-french-classics)​ or [have fun cooking delicious pre-made meals at home](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/emeals).  **​​**
* Create a piece of art. It could be a poem, song, or painting.
* Eat your favorite comfort foods.
* Get a massage.
* Give yourself a long bubble bath.
* Give yourself a manicure.
* Give yourself a pedicure.
* Throw away old, stretched-out underwear and socks. Replace them with [sexy new versions](https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Exotic-Apparel/zgbs/fashion/7586174011).
* Go out to see a movie at your favorite theater, all by yourself.
* Go to a comedy club.
* Go to an antique shop or a museum.
* Go to the farmer’s market.
* Splurge on expensive skin care products.
* Walk someplace with a nice view of the sunset.
* Have fun with nail art.
* Order in dinner.
* Plan out an extravagant vacation for fun. (You don’t need to follow through. Planning is where the fun is.)
* Put on a homemade face mask.
* Read comic strips that you enjoy.
* Hire someone to clean your house.
* Read some [inspirational quotes](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/achievement-quotes/).
* Revisit your favorite books from childhood.
* Sing at the top of your lungs.
* Sit in a coffee shop or on a park bench and people watch.
* Sleep in a couple of extra hours over the weekend.
* Try sober karaoke.
* Start a blog and write absolutely anything.
* Style your hair differently.
* Swing on a swing set.
* Light candles around the house.
* [Use aromatherapy](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/benefits-natural-essential-oils/).
* Enjoy a home spa. Take a long, hot bath, light a candle, and pamper yourself.
* Take a leisurely walk at the park or around your neighborhood.
* Take a taxi (versus the bus).
* Treat yourself. Spend a little money and buy a small luxury.
* Visit a hot spring.
* Watch a chick flick.
* Watch a couple episodes of your favorite sitcom.
* Watch funny Youtube videos.
* Allow yourself a “Netflix day”
* Get a foot massage.
* Get a head massage.
* Get a back massage.
* Get a facial.
* Exfoliate your skin with a [good body scrub](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01K8PEZMU/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B01K8PEZMU&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=0486a25d2d0263687ef823ddc23343d6).
* Watch old *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood* videos online.
* Watch or listen to your favorite comedy podcasts.
* Watch your favorite classic films.
* Wear a dress that makes you feel great.
* Wrap yourself up in a cozy blanket and sip a cup of [hot tea](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B003D4MUYY/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B003D4MUYY&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=16bea6cb398faa071bc439f31212dd0d) while reading a book.

**18 Sensory Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

Sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touch: For those of us who are [HSP](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/neuroscience-in-everyday-life/201707/are-you-highly-sensitive-person-should-you-change), these can be big distractions, and even cause our self-care to derail.

Sensory self-care for highly sensitive people may actually look like a list of “avoids”:

* Avoid bright sunlight
* Avoid crowds
* Avoid loud noises

But even those without HSP tendencies may be either soothed or enraged depending on sensory input.

Sensory self-care activities help you focus on the present moment. Focusing on sensations of sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound gives you a break from worrying.

* Color some adult coloring books.
* Create a playlist of songs that soothe and calm you.
* Do some gardening. Dig your hands into the dirt and enjoy the feeling.
* Find a shop with tea, coffee, or spices and enjoy the free smells for a while.
* Go to an art museum.
* Lie down on the ground for a few minutes.
* Light a candle in a dark room and sit in silence.
* Listen to meditative sounds, such as monks chanting or nature sounds.
* Listen to songs that remind you of happier times.
* Look at the stars.
* Make yourself a [fancy coffee drink](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00UGK4S3Y/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00UGK4S3Y&linkCode=as2&tag=developgoodhabits-20&linkId=3ae9d90be86cbbdf11c58e2703e83dbc).
* Put up some Christmas lights in your bedroom.
* Take pictures of anything that catches your eye outside your home or in a public space.
* Buy an [essential oil diffuser](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/best-essential-oil-diffusers/)and try aromatherapy using essential oils.
* Turn down the lights, sit down, stare into space, and do absolutely nothing.
* Watch some [autonomous sensory meridian response videos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCLsGTrxg1o) to help you calm down and fall asleep.
* Watch the clouds.
* Watch the sun rise or set.

**29 Social Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

Self-care can sometimes be a bit of a misnomer. Self-care also includes the work you do in making sure that relationships with others you care about remain healthy.

No man (or woman) is an island. We need other people in our lives. Even the most introverted person does not “hate” being around other people. They simply want their relationships to be on an even ground. They want to understand and be understood by other people.  (In fact, one of the best self care activity is to [engage in fun activities with your kids](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/fun-activities/).)

Social self-care is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and authentically connecting with others. Engaging in social self-care activities also help ensure that you have diverse relationships, not just with family, friends, and co-workers.

This is not only good for the social butterfly. In fact, these self-care steps are more useful to the introvert. The social butterfly finds social interactions second nature, and needs to expend little (or no) energy on figuring out these relationships. But the introvert has to keep these things in mind.

* Accompany a friend or family member while they run errands or attend events.
* Ask for help. Let people know you need some help.
* Ask friends and family to remind you that things will be OK, and that what you’re feeling is temporary.
* Call a friend or family member you care about, just to say hi.
* Call a trusted friend or family member and talk things out.
* Choose who you spend your time with today. Spend time with people who are enthusiastic and positive.
* Converse positively with someone in customer service.
* Cuddle someone or something. Don't be afraid to ask for it!
* Dress your pet in a silly costume and show them around to make others smile.
* Go out in public and be around other people. Engaging is optional.
* Tell someone near you what you appreciate or like about them.
* Have a picnic with family or friends.
* Host a family movie night over the weekend.
* Intentionally reconnect with someone you’ve lost touch with or have unresolved conflict with.
* Join a support group for people who are going through what you’re going through.
* Join and attend a support group meeting. Share and listen.
* Leave a funny voicemail for someone you care about.
* Make cookies or brownies and give them away to a neighbor, family member, friend, or even strangers.
* Post some dorky #ThrowbackThursday pictures of you from childhood and ask friends to do the same.
* Schedule a regular date night with your significant other.
* Seek out models of inspiration and read their stories.
* Send a surprise care package to someone you love.
* Send a letter or a postcard to someone far away.
* Share a kind smile with strangers on your way to and from work.
* Sit down and start a genuine conversation with a trusted friend or family member about things that are going well, things you’re having a hard time with, or things you are grateful for.
* Take a family member out to lunch.
* Take a road trip with your siblings.
* [Take your dog or a friend's dog for a walk.](https://www.happierhuman.com/do-pets-bring-happiness/)
* Talk to a stranger at the bus stop.

**26 Spiritual Self-Care Ideas and Activities**

Not all self-care activities are physical and mental. Many self-care activities fall into a category we know as spiritual, religious, or internal thinking.

Spiritual self-care revolves around your values, and not just your religion.

These activities focus on helping you foster a calm mind and a sense of perspective beyond your day-to-day grind.

* Attend a church or spiritual community service.
* Make time for [meditation](https://www.developgoodhabits.com/meditation-vs-mindfulness/) in your day.
* Do a 10-minute body scan technique to check in with each part of your body.
* Do several one-minute body awareness meditations throughout the day.
* Do several one-minute breathing meditations throughout the day.
* Do several one-minute thought awareness meditations throughout the day to check in with your feelings and emotions.
* Do something nice for someone in secret.
* Donate money to a charity of your choosing.
* Help someone in some way. Open a door, carry a bag, or feed someone's parking meter.
* Intentionally find five unexpected beautiful things on your way to work.
* Pay mindful attention to the things you do during your morning and evening routine.
* Practice relaxation techniques.
* Pray.
* Read some spiritual literature.
* Share with someone less fortunate, be it some extra lunch or clothes you no longer want.
* Memorize passages from the Bible (or any spiritual or religious text).
* Sit somewhere green and be still and quiet for a few minutes.
* Soften your expectations of you and others.
* Take a break from social media by deleting or deactivating it.
* “Turn the other cheek” and be the better person when you disagree with someone.
* Vent by freewriting in a journal or a Google doc.
* Empathize. Try to understand why others think, feel, and react differently. Put yourself in their shoes and see how you would feel about their actions.
* Visit or volunteer at your local animal rescue.
* Try [random acts of kindness](https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/).
* Volunteer at a local shelter, hospital, or nursing home. Be of service to others.