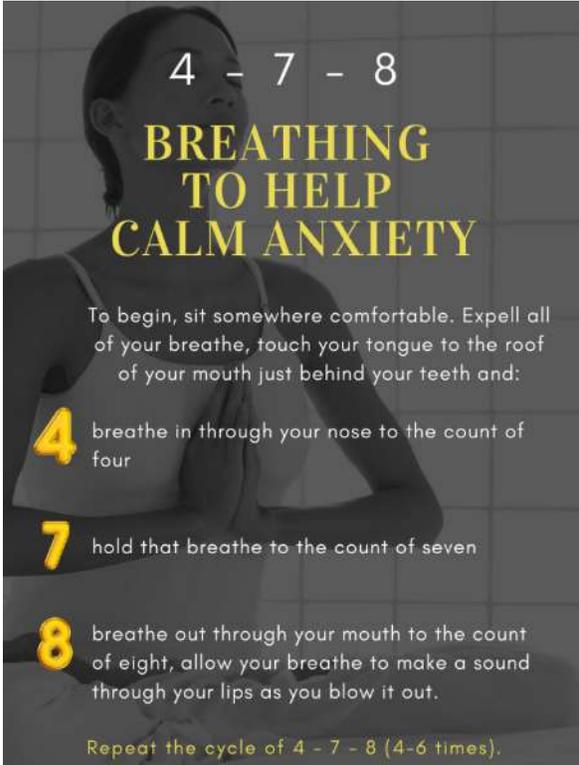


## SUSTAINABLE SELF CARE

### QUICK TIP:



4 - 7 - 8

### BREATHING TO HELP CALM ANXIETY

To begin, sit somewhere comfortable. Expell all of your breathe, touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind your teeth and:

- 4** breathe in through your nose to the count of four
- 7** hold that breathe to the count of seven
- 8** breathe out through your mouth to the count of eight, allow your breathe to make a sound through your lips as you blow it out.

Repeat the cycle of 4 - 7 - 8 (4-6 times).

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## WELLNESS OBSERVANCES

- NATIONAL GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH
- PTSD AWARENESS MONTH
- JUNE 11: FAMILY HEALTH & FITNESS DAY
- JUNE 13-19: MEN'S HEALTH WEEK



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# The Basics OF SELFCARE

Ask yourself the question of "In what ways do you take care of yourself?" Typically, when we think of caring for ourselves, this is a no brainer. We brush our teeth, our hair, take showers, etc. etc. However, the concept of "self care" goes a step further than just the basics of hygiene and grooming. It encompasses things that we love to do and activities that are beneficial for our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

## WHAT IS IT?

Self-care is any activity that we deliberately do to improve our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Although it's a simple concept in theory, it's something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood, reduced stress and anxiety. It's also key to a good relationship with oneself and others. Self-care is the key to living a balanced life.

## WHAT IT IS NOT

Knowing what self-care is not might be even more important. It is not something that we force ourselves to do, or something we don't enjoy doing. As Agnes Wainman explained, self-care is "something that refuels us, rather than takes from us."

Self-care isn't a selfish act either. It is not only about considering our needs; it is rather about knowing what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves, being subsequently, able to take care of others as well. That is, if I don't take enough care of myself, I won't be in the place to give to my loved ones either.

## THREE GOLDEN RULES:

- Stick to the basics. Over time you will find your own rhythm and routine. You will be able to implement more and identify more particular forms of self-care that work for you.
- Self-care needs to be something you actively plan, rather than something that just happens. It is an active choice and you must treat it as such. Add certain activities to your calendar, announce your plans to others in order to increase your commitment, and actively look for opportunities to practice self-care.
- Keeping a conscious mind is what counts. In other words if you don't see something as self-care or don't do something in order to take care of yourself, it won't work as such. Be aware of what you do, why you do it, how it feels, and what the outcomes are.



# The Importance of A SELF CARE PLAN

## WHY IS A PLAN IMPORTANT?

### IT'S A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE

By designing a roadmap that is unique to you, in moments when you're NOT in crisis, you're directing your best self to reflect on what you may need (and have access to) in your worst moments. The reality is that only YOU know how intense your stress levels can get and what resources are available to you. Write it all down.

### ELIMINATES GUESSWORK OF WHAT TO DO IN TOUGH MOMENTS

From a mindfulness point of view, it helps you respond instead of react to the situation at hand. When you have a plan in place, you'll feel more in control of your circumstances and life won't feel quite as chaotic. (It also makes it easier to ask for help from those you share your plan with.)

### HELPS YOU STAY THE COURSE

You'll find it far easier to stick to your personal care strategy and avoid falling into the trap of making excuses. Having a plan helps you establish a routine, ensuring that you and your self-care partners don't wind up in isolation, but rather check in with each other, hold each other accountable, and share the responsibility to support one another.

*Self-care*  
**IS EMPOWERMENT**

## THE BOTTOM LINE

A Self-Care Plan is an intervention tool that keeps you from being completely sucked into the vortex, saving you when you find yourself standing on the precipice gazing into the dark abyss. It's a fail-safe, created by you, and filled with your favorite self-care activities, important reminders, and ways to activate your self-care community.

Your Self-Care Plan is a roadmap that you can carry in your back pocket. It's there to help you walk your talk as well as help you find your way back to equilibrium by providing a clearly defined route back home if you find yourself on off-track. Creating and following a plan helps you balance your mental, physical, and emotional needs while reminding you of the important people in your support system and the self-care goals you wish to accomplish.

# How to Develop A SELF CARE PLAN

## FIRST, CREATE AN ACTIVITY LIST ORGANIZED AROUND DIFFERENT PARTS OF YOUR LIFE.

I've found that the easiest way to start is by breaking up this daunting task into several categories, for example:

- Work
- Physical fitness
- Emotional life
- Relationships & Community

For each area above, write down the activities or strategies that you can call on, that are authentic to you and contribute to your wellbeing. Some examples include spending time with friends, eating healthy, being active, mindfulness meditation, and finding the confidence to create healthy boundaries. Have fun, be creative, and most importantly, be real with yourself about what works for you and what doesn't.



## SECONDLY, NOTE ANY BARRIERS THAT MAY BE IN YOUR WAY AND HOW TO SHIFT THEM.

As you write down each activity, ask yourself what barriers might get in the way of you being able to accomplish it. Then, try to strategize ways that you might be able to shift these barriers (FYI, this works even better when you do so with a friend, partner or community!). If you find that you can't shift the barriers, feel free to adjust the activities. Your Self-Care Plan is NOT written in stone! It's meant to be a living, breathing guide that adapts as your life circumstances and demands change.

## THIRD, SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS & FAMILY.

Don't forget to rely on your network of self-care buddies, your community of care. Share a copy of your Self-Care Plan with them and ask them to hold you accountable. Encourage them to create their own Plan and share it with you so you can do the same for them.

## MAKE IT VISUAL

- 1) Start by jotting down a list of keywords or phrases from the activities list you created—choose whichever words resonate with you the most.
- 2) Then, grab a white piece of paper or a posterboard and transform these into graphic elements. Go ahead and use different colors, drawings, photos, whatever works for you to create visual cues that resonate with you and your plan.

Once you complete your masterpiece, put it somewhere you're sure to see it every day because doing so will help you think about and (re)commit to your strategies.

# Simple Self Care

## IDEAS

- Create a "no" list, with things you know you don't like or you no longer want to do. Examples might include: Not checking emails at night, not attending gatherings you don't like, not answering your phone during lunch/dinner.
- Make sleep a priority. If you have trouble falling or staying asleep, create a relaxing environment for yourself at least an hour before bed. Dim the lights, listen to calming music, use relaxing aromatic essential oils like lavender, invest in quality bedding, drink tea or broth, and make sure the temperature is around 67 degrees.
- Exercise. In contrast to what many people think, exercise is as good for our emotional health as it is for our physical health. It increases serotonin levels, leading to improved mood and energy. In line with the self-care conditions, what's important is that you choose a form of exercise that you like!
- Use relaxation exercises (progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, etc.) and/or practice a form of meditation (mantra meditation, guided meditation, etc.)
- Promote a nutritious, healthy diet. The food we eat has the potential to either keep us healthy or contribute to weight gain or diseases such as diabetes, but it can also keep our minds working and alert. Eating the right foods can help prevent short-term memory loss and inflammation, both of which can have long-term effects on the brain and, in turn, the rest of the body. Some of the most amazing self-care foods include fatty fish, blueberries, nuts, green leafy veggies, and brassicas, like broccoli.
- Take a break by getting outside. Spending time outside can help you reduce stress, lower your blood pressure, and be more mindful. Studies have even shown that getting outside can help reduce fatigue, making it a great way to overcome symptoms of depression or burnout. Getting outside can also help you sleep better at night, especially if you do some physical activity, like gardening, hiking, or walking while you are outside.
- Do at least one relaxing and pleasurable activity every day; from going to the cinema, to cooking or meeting with friends.
- Look for opportunities to laugh!
- Schedule your self-care time, and guard it with everything you have. It can be hard for us all to find extra time, but it's very important to plan regular self-care time. Moments alone can help you ponder the best ways to move forward in your life and keep you grounded. And moments with friends can help you feel more connected and relaxed. Whether you decide you want to go for a long walk, take a hot bath, or enjoy a good movie with friends, taking self-care time is imperative. Look for small ways you can incorporate it into everyday life; for example, you might wake up 15 min earlier to sit with a cup of tea and practice deep breathing before the chaos of the day begins, or you might take a walk around the block on your lunch break. The more you can work self-care time into your schedule, the better you'll be able to grow, enjoy your life, and thrive.

# Mindful Moments

## 4-7-8 BREATHING EXERCISE TO LET GO OF STRESS & ANXIETY



# Nourish

## CUCUMBER SALAD WITH FRESH DILL & MINT

<https://minimalistbaker.com/cucumber-salad-with-fresh-dill-mint/>



### ingredients

- 1/4 large ripe avocado\*, mashed (1/4 avocado yields ~2 ½ Tbsp or 40 g mashed)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil (if oil-free, sub more mashed avocado)
- 3 Tbsp white balsamic vinegar\*
- 1/4 tsp each sea salt and black pepper
- 2 large cucumbers (2 cucumbers yield ~600-750 g or 4-5 cups sliced), peeling optional, seeds scraped out, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 cup freshly chopped mint
- 1/4 cup freshly chopped dill
- 1 batch Crispy Baked Chickpeas (optional // or ~1 cup store-bought crispy chickpeas)
- 1/4 cup vegan feta crumbles (optional // we like Follow Your Heart brand // or sub regular feta if not vegan/dairy-free)

### recipe preparation

- If serving with crispy chickpeas (optional), prepare them at this time.
- Meanwhile, add the avocado to a large bowl and use a fork to roughly mash. Add olive oil, white balsamic vinegar, salt, and pepper and mix to combine.
- Peeling the cucumbers is optional — we like peeling them in a stripe pattern. Cut each cucumber in half lengthwise and use a small spoon to scrape out the seeds (you can freeze these and save them for [green juice](#) and [smoothies](#)). Then cut the cucumber into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Add the cucumber, mint, and dill to the bowl and mix well.
- Divide between serving plates/bowls right away and (optionally) top with crispy chickpeas and vegan feta.
- Best when fresh as the cucumber will release moisture and the avocado will turn brown if kept for more than 24 hours. Not freezer friendly.