

Self-care in the workplace? Yes, it's a thing.

Why self-care isn't just important for your personal life anymore



Your guide to practicing self-care at work

We're happy to see you here, digging into another educational resource developed to offer you valuable information on why it's every bit as important to take care of your business self as it is to take care of your personal self.

Changing the perception of self-care

Somewhere along the way, the face of self-care became a woman blissing out in a plush white robe and a hair towel while a facial masque soothes her skin and cucumber slices de-puff her eyes.

Which, don't get us wrong, sounds *wonderful*. However, it also tends to perpetuate the belief that self-care is something that women who can afford it do at a luxury spa or salon when they need a day of pampering.

The reality? Self-care is something that anyone can practice—no spa or financial outlay required. And it's not just something that's reserved for when you're off the clock. Both team members and managers can also practice steps for self-care at work (not incidentally, one of humankind's principal sources of stress).

Read on for some information on why self-care at work is just as important as self-care at home. Even more important, we'll also share some easy and inexpensive or free ways that you can—and should—practice self-care in the workplace.



So...what exactly *is* self-care—and why is it so important?

At its most basic, self-care encompasses the steps you take to improve your emotional, physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. Practicing self-care in the workplace not only helps you fight stress and burnout, but it also helps keep you focused, calm and productive as you move through your workdays.

Because self-care has become something of an industry, it's frequently marketed as an indulgence, rather than a necessity. But expensive chocolates, luxuriant bubble baths and spa days, while nice to enjoy, aren't practical for most of us—especially when you're having a stressful day at work.

The good news, though, is that self-care can be as easy as taking a walk outdoors, eating healthier or getting enough sleep.

A caveat, however: [Self-care does require some discipline](#), along with an understanding of your personal and work priorities. As Tami Forman, the chief executive of Path Forward, an organization that empowers stay-at-home mothers and other caregivers to restart their professional careers, says:

“Self-care is...what you do every day, every week, month in and month out. It’s taking care of yourself in a way that doesn’t require you to ‘indulge’ in order to restore balance. It’s making the commitment to stay healthy and balanced as a regular practice.”

That's especially important to remember in the workplace, where we tend to have less control over our time. And since we [spend about a third of our lives](#) (90,000 hours? Yikes!) at work, that can add up to a *lot* of time.

So now that you know a little more about self-care, we'll look at some appropriate ways to integrate self-care into the workplace.

10 ways to practice self-care without breaking the bank

- 1 Get a good night's sleep.
- 2 Drink lots of water.
- 3 Go for a brisk walk.
- 4 Take a relaxing bath.
- 5 Say no to something you don't want to do.
- 6 Listen to your favorite music.
- 7 Watch your favorite film.
- 8 Make something healthy yet delicious for dinner.
- 9 Make a list of five or more things you like about yourself.
- 10 Spend time with loved ones.

[Circle Health Group, UK](#)

In a national survey, Americans cited the top benefits of self-care as:

- Enhanced self-confidence **64%**
- Increased productivity **67%**
- Happiness **71%**

[Mental Health First Aid® from National Council for Mental Wellbeing®](#)

Ways to incorporate self-care into the workday

Over time, self-care has been considered something to be done outside of work. However, stress and anxiety don't only appear between the hours of 5:00-9:00 p.m.; they're all too willing to rear their ugly heads during the workday. So, let's change that and begin the normalization and support of self-care for everyone at work, starting with these tips—most of which apply to both teams and leaders.

■ Take breaks and lunches

Do you ever have days when you can't look at a computer screen or four bland walls for one more second? One of the kindest things you can do for yourself is to get up and [take a break](#), which helps restore your focus and attention; improves your mental, emotional and physical health; and even increases your job satisfaction. Try going outdoors, but if the weather doesn't cooperate, find a quiet space inside where you can sit and clear your head for a few minutes. Also, take time every day for a healthy, enjoyable lunch with your friends (or a good book), outdoors or indoors.

■ Make your workspace more comfortable

If you're going to spend 90,000 hours of your life somewhere, you might as well be comfortable. Check with your manager about the possibility of creating a more ergonomic workspace. A higher-quality chair, better lighting or the options offered by a stand-up desk can not only improve your posture and comfort, but your outlook as well.

■ Learn to say no

Everyone wants to be a helpful member of the team, but it's vital to set and maintain your work boundaries. Are you overloaded with work and more keeps getting piled on? Are you consistently asked to work overtime? Do you risk your own deadlines to help others with their work? You have every right to diplomatically say, "No, sorry. I can't do that right now." And you also have the right to ask your manager to collaborate on a solution.

■ Use your vacation time

Vacation, staycation, long weekend, time to run errands—whatever you choose to do on your days off is your decision. Just make sure you actually request those vacation days. Time off from work helps reduce depression, anxiety and stress; recharge your mind; and reset your attitude. And whether you work in a labor-intensive job or sit at a desk all day, the increased activity of non-workdays can help you feel better physically, too. So, don't wait; plan out some vacation time and put in those requests!

■ Be present

We're human, so our minds wander. But during the workday, when you catch your brain trying to sneak off somewhere else, try to recenter your focus and be present in the moment. If your mind is wandering because you're stressed, practice a few helpful [stress management techniques](#) to keep you [focused](#).

If you're going to spend 90,000 hours of your life somewhere, you might as well be comfortable.

■ Remember, leaders need self-care, too

Everyone has the right to enjoy the benefits of self-care. And if you're a leader, you're not only responsible for your own self-care, but you need to ensure your teams have the time and opportunity to take care of their needs, as well. However, when you're low on energy and motivation, and up to here with stress, it's hard—if not impossible—to take care of someone else. So, leaders and managers, take care of yourselves, too, before you find yourself on the [fast train to Burnout City](#).

■ Extend grace to others—and to yourself

It doesn't matter if you're a leader or a team member; we all have moments when we feel like we need to be everything to everyone and solve *all* the problems. We're also great at beating ourselves up when we feel that we could have done better, been faster or thought smarter. Stop putting pressure on yourself and others to be perfect, and instead, concentrate on being flexible in our fast-moving world, where situations can change in a millisecond. Keep an eye out for others in your business who are putting the same pressure on themselves, and band together to work everything out without bringing yourselves down.

In the 2021 Mind Share Partners' Mental Health at Work report, more than 75% of respondents experienced:

- At least one symptom associated with a mental health condition.
- A decline in productivity due to mental health.



■ **Everyone has the right to enjoy the benefits of self-care.**

Since you can never have enough information, here are a few more quick-hit tips for self-care:

■ Get active

Stretch, take a walk, ride a bike or even dance in the kitchen if you work from home. Just give yourself a chance to move on a regular basis.

■ Sleep well

Build a consistent sleep schedule, with enough time for your body's needs. If you nap, go short (10-20 minutes) to avoid disruptions to your sleep at night.

■ Eat better

Try to include more nutritious foods that require less preparation into your diet, and consider cutting back on junk food (but enjoy favorite treats occasionally).

■ Be yourself

Make time to do the things that make you happy. Read, write, paint, swim, bike, travel, volunteer or cuddle with your favorite pet... you deserve it.

■ Learn more

Learning creates new pathways in the brain. Explore non-work activities to keep your mind agile: a new hobby, a new language or music lessons.

■ Practice, practice

Leaders: Set an example for your team by living your best self-care life. Take breaks, switch off at 5 p.m. and let others know they can, too.

■ Be kind

Caring for others is [a way of caring for yourself](#). Kindness can decrease blood pressure and cortisol, a stress hormone that can lower your own stress.

■ Go green

UK researchers found that just [five minutes outside](#) among nature can improve mood and self-esteem. Make it a point to get outside and enjoy nature.

■ Hang out

Quality time with your loved ones will exponentially increase your self-care feels. Even if you have to schedule it, spend time with your family and friends.

■ Move mountains

The bumps that keep you from self-care can seem more like mountains. Take time to figure out what's in the way and how to work around it.

■ Switch off

When work is done, you should be, too. Leave the non-urgent to-dos for the morning, shut down your device and go home—physically and mentally.

■ Treat yourself

Another "even if you have to schedule it" tip: Do something just for you. Watch a TV show, eat the ice cream, start the book. Uninterrupted.

■ Consider meditation

Sitting quietly, journaling, praying or being in nature are all ways to meditate. You just need peace and quiet to be with your thoughts.

■ Meeting-walk

Walking meetings not only boost your physical and mental health, but they've also been proven to encourage out-of-the-box thinking.

■ Create rituals

Make coffee, greet the receptionist, make a list or straighten your desk—whatever signals to you that the day has begun or is ending.

■ Go screenless

Turning off tech, even for a few minutes, helps reset the brain and reduces stress, headaches and eye strain—and lets you experience the moment.

The most important thing to remember is that there's no one "correct" way to do self-care. There are as many different ways to practice self-care as there are people in the world, so what works for your coworkers, your best friend, your partner or your Aunt Janet won't necessarily work for you.

How do you recognize the self-care that *does* work for you? If it makes you happy and enables you to take time for yourself to rest and recharge, you've found it. So, take a well-deserved break to do a Sudoku puzzle, eat your favorite chocolate, enjoy photos of cute puppies, listen to music or just breathe.

And then, just keep being the best *you* that you can be.

Summing it all up

We hope this guide has given you some insight into why self-care is so important at work, as well as ways that you can practice self-care in your own workplace. Whether you're a business owner, a manager or a team member, we all need to take care of ourselves, and we hope the tips provided in this eBook will help you do just that.

We invite you to check with us if you'd rather reduce the stress and worry in the financial areas of your life or business and practice self-care by working with a trusted advisor.

Just click the **GET IN TOUCH** button and complete the brief form or give us a call. We look forward to hearing from you!

