

Small and Large Activities that Can Make a Difference

Acts of self-care can help us to be the partner, parent, friend, and employee we want to be.

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1. Pick one thing that you need to do and get it done so it's off your mental "to do" list.
2. Get a manicure or pedicure.
3. Get a massage.
4. Try acupuncture. Read up on it if you've never tried it.
5. Get a book from the library (free) or bookstore about some topic you've been interested in but have never taken the time to learn. Afterward, spend a few minutes each day learning about it.
6. Use a planner or a calendar to intentionally schedule "me time."
7. In the morning, listen to music that inspires and motivates you.
8. Write a list of things you're grateful to have in your life and post it somewhere you can see it often. We tend to focus on the negative, so remind yourself of the good stuff.
9. Go through your closet and purge the clothes you haven't worn in years. Donate them to a charitable organization.
10. If you bring your lunch to work/school, pack a few extra items to share with someone less fortunate on your way or during your lunch break.
11. Try a new exercise class (can be in person, on YouTube, etc.)
12. Share a kind smile with strangers on your commute. Some people may go all day without anyone acknowledging their existence.
13. Start a cycle of encouragement. Tell someone near you what you appreciate about them. They may return the favor when you need it most.
14. If you buy your morning coffee, skip it today and donate the money to a charity of your choosing.
15. Call your mom, dad, or any other family member you care about just to say hi.
16. For fun, dress your pet in a silly costume and take them on tour to make others smile.
17. Learn how to sew. Self-sufficiency may have some other mental health benefits for you as well.
18. Send a completely random care package to someone you love. Who doesn't love a surprise?
19. Intentionally reestablish contact with someone you've lost touch with or have unresolved conflict with. If there is conflict, resolve it and let go of the unnecessary baggage.
20. Try out a form of martial arts. A lot of schools offer a free lesson.
21. Learn how to make a budget and keep track of your money coming in, going out, and know how much money you have right now. If you live paycheck to paycheck, this can be incredibly empowering.
22. Take a moment at the end of each day and consciously list a few good things in your life. This can help refocus your emotions on all the positive things that happen each day, even when it doesn't seem like it.
23. Turn off your phone and step away from the computer for a whole day.
24. Carry some extra change and feed someone's meter if you see it running low. Random acts of kindness come back around!

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25. Take a few minutes out of your day and enjoy a funny animal video on YouTube.
26. Go for a walk by yourself with headphones on, listening to music you love.
27. Prepare a meal, no matter how simple.
28. Create something for no practical purpose such as a song, a poem, an essay, a painting, a drawing, a comic strip, a collage, etc.
29. Start a genuine conversation with someone you care about that covers the following: things that are going well, things you're having a hard time with, and things you are grateful for.
30. Lay on the floor on your back with your eyes closed for five minutes (or longer) and just breathe deeply and slowly.
31. Rearrange all of your furniture in a way that makes you more comfortable or just to try something fresh in your living space.
32. Check in with yourself a few times each day and take a moment to process your thoughts and emotions. Don't let them build up.
33. Swing on a swing set. Too many adults forget how much fun this is.
34. Call your friend or sibling when you know they can't answer and leave a ridiculously funny made up song as your voicemail. You'll spread a little laughter while also laughing in the process.
35. Make up a brand-new dance move and teach it to someone.
36. Do a five-minute meditation on your feet.
37. Carve a couple hours out of your schedule this weekend to enjoy a classic film.
38. Go out to see a movie at your favorite theater all by yourself.
39. Make brownies and give them away to a neighbor, family member, friend, or someone you know that could use a pick-me-up. Enjoy any leftover batter.
40. Make a piece of artwork—draw, paint, cut and paste, whatever—that someone might interpret as ugly and tell it you love and accept it anyway.
41. Watch RuPaul's Drag Race and bask in the charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent of the contestants. Try to channel some of that in your own life when you find yourself needing it.
42. Karaoke, but do it completely sober.
43. Worry less about your bathroom scale or any other appliance that makes you feel bad about yourself.
44. Go to a support group meeting and share.
45. Go to a support group meeting and listen.
46. Listen to a podcast about something that interests you that you haven't yet explored.
47. Tell your cat all of your darkest, most shameful secrets. His or her nonchalance and snuggles will remind you that you're okay.
48. Share dorky pictures of yourself from middle school and angsty teenage poetry and drawings with your friends. Ask for your friends to share theirs with you. This is a great way to let go of feelings of shame or any embarrassment you might be holding onto from those awkward years.
49. Roll out a blanket and eat your dinner on the grass at home or in the park. Invite someone else if you'd like company.
50. Make yourself a gourmet grilled cheese and some tomato soup. Comfort food at the right time or during the right type of weather can be great for boosting your mood.
51. Tell yourself something that resists self-criticism but feels encouraging like, "I'm doing the best that I can."

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52. Taking care of yourself can start with something small! Maybe today you just need to lie down on the couch instead of on your bed for a change of scenery.
53. Write a zine, or a mini-zine, about something you care about, or that you think is interesting. You can make a mini-zine with just one sheet of 8 1/2 x 11 paper!
54. Write something encouraging on a post-it and put it where you will see it every day! Or write directly on your mirror: "I am beautiful and brave."
55. Say a magnificent affirmation out loud, like "I am a child of the universe, and I have been given endless talents and capabilities."
56. Commit to posting mostly or only positive things on your favored social media site for a while. For every sad news item, there's a related (or unrelated) story of resilience, bravery, and triumph.
57. Write a review of a business you like. Send that positive energy into the universe and share some love for your favorite local places!
58. Do something you used to like to do, whether or not you were or are "good at it." Remind yourself that you can do something just because you enjoy it, and the only way most people get better at something is practice.
59. Listen to an album you loved when you were younger but haven't heard in a long time.
60. Make a playlist or mixtape about your current mood. Give yourself permission to make one that expresses how you feel, or maybe even how you'd like to feel.
61. Congratulate yourself for doing difficult things, even if they might not seem difficult to others. Depending on the individual, plenty of everyday things can be difficult, like riding the bus, standing in line, filing paperwork, going to the doctor, making food, doing chores, etc.
62. Send a postcard to someone far away. Decorate it before sending it.
63. Paint your nails a fun color. Use jewels, glitter, nail stickers, or false nails. If you don't want to spend money, try to use something you have around the house and see where your creativity leads.
64. Go to a store that sells crystals and buy one that speaks to you. Look up what it means or does. Sometimes they are \$1 or less!
65. Reflect on the struggles your ancestors endured so you could exist and remember that you have inherited their strength and resilience.
66. Set your camera to macro and take close-up pictures of bugs, flowers, and anything else that catches your eye outside your home or in a public space.
67. Select a lesser-known book by one of your favorite writers and dive into the pages.
68. Use a site like meetup.com, find something you're interested in, and commit to attending at least one meeting.
69. Hand write a letter to a friend or relative and start a conversation the old-fashioned way.
70. Learn a new board game you've never played such as chess, backgammon, or Othello.
71. If you play guitar, try learning a song from a genre you don't typically listen to.
72. Find a spot in a busy place such as downtown, a bus station, or a mall and sit in silence with nowhere to be.
73. Read a religious text you aren't familiar with.
74. Build something spectacular with Legos, either from a kit or from your imagination.
75. Dedicate a day to learning more about the local history where you live.
76. Take an Epsom salt bath in total darkness and silence, or perhaps with just a candle or two.

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77. Bring a little cheer to your local animal shelter. Pet the kitties and walk a dog. You don't necessarily have to take one home with you.
78. Go for a walk around the neighborhood, or hike a local trail you've never been on.
79. Cook a healthy and delicious meal using fresh ingredients you rarely splurge on.
80. Plant something—a tree, a small vegetable garden, a flower.
81. Sing! Turn up your favorite sing-along tunes and channel Etta James, Eminem, Eddie Vedder, or whoever moves you.
82. If you live near a body of water and have access, go kayaking or canoeing. Bring a buddy, and wear a life vest.
83. Go to a local gym or park and shoot some hoops, even if basketball isn't really your thing; don't worry about being "good" at it.
84. Get that trendy or fashionable haircut you've been thinking about but always talk yourself out of.
85. Finish this sentence: "I love myself because I _____." Do this once per day, with a new ending each time.
86. Watch a couple episodes of a feel-good sitcom for a few giggles. Have an exit strategy so you don't get sucked into an all-day marathon and feel guilty for it.
87. When you wake up in the morning, get in the habit of making your first thought a positive one: "I am ready for today." "Today is a new opportunity." "I will do something I am proud of today."
88. Touch nature every single day. Hug a tree, pick a flower, or run your fingers
89. Pilates!
90. Cut some fresh flowers and display them prominently to lift your spirit.
91. Take a nap on the next Saturday you find yourself with an extra hour or two.
92. Treat yourself to a tasty meal at a fancy restaurant because you've earned it.
93. Learn the basics of a new language.
94. Go to a comedy club. Laughter really is the best medicine.
95. Go for a bike ride or a drive to nowhere in particular.
96. Attend a local music performance. Many small clubs, restaurants, and coffee shops have free admission for some shows.
97. Listen to a chapter or two from an audiobook.
98. Allow yourself to sleep in a couple of extra hours this weekend; errands and chores can wait!
99. Instead of always going to the tried-and-true, try a new restaurant this week. You might discover a new go-to.
100. Next time you're getting lunch, buy lunch for the person behind you in line. Say you're "paying it forward" and walk away with a smile on your face.
101. Book a night at a hotel outside of town, somewhere you've never spent much time. Explore the scene and enjoy the sights.
102. Go wine tasting. It's an inexpensive way to sample a variety of local wines you might not be able to find in stores.
103. Learn Photoshop, Excel, or some other program you've been wanting to learn. There are many online tutorials.
104. Take your mom, dad, or another family member to lunch. You'll be glad you did.

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105. Drink more water. The benefits are endless.
106. Write positive affirmations or inspirational quotes on small pieces of paper, then go to a bookstore and hide them in random books for strangers to find.
107. Make an inspiration collage and hang it where you can see it. Use it to help generate new ideas and thoughts when you need them.
108. Ask for help when you need it. It sounds simple, but trying to handle everything without help causes stress and anxiety for a lot of people.
109. Take five to 10 minutes before bed to focus on what's going on inside. Notice any parts of you that don't feel relaxed. Invite them closer, listen to them, pay close attention and discover what their worries, fears, concerns, or other feelings are. Witness each part. Once all parts have relaxed, confirm with yourself that everything's going to be all right and fall blissfully into sweet dreams.
110. If you want cuddles or a massage or quality time or whatever from your partner, ask for it! Sometimes the easiest way to get your needs met is to voice your needs in the first place.
111. Start a blog and write absolutely anything. You never know how your words might touch or hook people from all over the world!
112. Join a forum like Reddit or another place to talk about things you like.
113. Spend an hour this weekend at a soup kitchen or other volunteer opportunity.
114. Find a shop with tea, chocolate, or spices and enjoy the free smells for a while.
115. Go to an antique shop and marvel at all the history represented there. Make up stories about the objects' pasts and the people they belonged to.
116. Go camping or backpacking and spend some time truly immersed in nature.
117. Go dancing and forget about any shame or regret. Even if you think you look like a fool, get out there and get moving.
118. We all get busy, but make it a point to make a date night with your significant other.
119. Stay in this weekend and host a family movie night.
120. Try journaling if you've never tried it before. There are a lot of different ways to do it and a lot of resources available to help you get started.
121. Learn how to tactfully say no to invitations or requests at times when you already feel overwhelmed.
122. Have a glass (or two) of red wine. Other than temporary stress relief, there are some great health benefits as long as you don't overdo it.
123. Take a bubble bath.