

PLAN FOR HEALTH

Self-Care: It's Time to Take Care of You



December 2023

“Always fill your own cup first and allow the world to benefit from the overflow.”

You may have heard the phrase, “you can’t pour from an empty cup”. It is important to know and be able to communicate what fills your cup in order to live a happier healthier life.

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help improve your overall well-being. It is taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, do your job, and help take care of others. Practicing self-care can help you manage your stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. Consider all of the ways you can care for yourself to improve your overall health and well-being:

- **Physical self-care.** Physical care includes how much physical activity you get, how you’re fueling your body, how much sleep you’re getting, and how you’re caring for your physical needs.

- **Social self-care.** This can involve the people you spend and enjoy time with. It’s easy to neglect socializing with your friends and family when life gets busy, but close relationships are important to your well-being.
- **Mental self-care.** Involves practicing acceptance and self-compassion, as well as doing things to keep your mind sharp, like puzzles or learning about something new that interests you.
- **Spiritual self-care.** Nurturing your spirit can involve anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection with the universe. This could include religious services, meditation, or praying.
- **Emotional self-care.** Emotional self-care is important for dealing with uncomfortable emotions such as anger, sadness, and anxiety. Practice activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings regularly and safely.

- **Recreational self-care.** This can include things like special activities or hobbies. It's important to make time for things that interest you and bring you joy. Recreational self-care practices can be time spent alone or with others.
- **Environmental self-care.** Taking care of the places around you is important. Make sure workspaces are clean, organized, and peaceful. Declutter your living space, explore new places, or take a walk outdoors.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

With the holiday season in full swing, now is a wonderful time to practice gratitude. Focusing on the things you are thankful for is a terrific way to practice self-care.

The benefits of gratitude include:

- Better physical health.
- Better sleep habits.
- Reduced feelings of aggression.
- More social connection.
- Improved psychological health.
- Higher sense of empathy.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Stronger mental resilience.

Create a practice of gratitude by forming healthy habits in your daily life, such as:

- **Keeping a gratitude journal.** Every evening, spend a few minutes writing down good things about your day.
- **Giving thanks.** Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say, "thank you." Make a conscious effort to notice when people do good things.
- **Taking mindfulness walks.** Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings.
- **Writing letters of gratitude.** Think about someone you appreciate and write a letter about why you appreciate them along with examples.
- **Grateful contemplation.** Remove yourself from distractions and spend 5-10 minutes mentally reviewing the good things from your day.
- **Gratitude conversations.** Take turns with another person listing three things you were grateful for throughout the day.

Sharecare Featured Challenge:

Being kind does not just benefit others, it could also help you live a longer, healthier life! Join the 21 Days of Kindness Challenge this December. Track for 21 days that you strived to do at least one act of kindness. Join the challenge by clicking **Achieve → Challenges → 21 Days of Kindness Challenge** beginning on 11/25.

Please note: The Sharecare Platform will be sunseting December 31, 2023.



**Plan ahead...Join us next month for January's health topic:
Preventive Care and Emergency Preparedness**

4 Healthy Holiday Habits

Amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it can be easy to neglect your own health. Here are some easy ways you can stick with your healthy habits over the holiday season!



Don't neglect exercise

The holidays are busy, but you'll feel better (and happier) if you dedicate some time each day to take a walk, stream a workout video, or do yoga!

Enjoy treat foods in moderation

Enjoy your treats in the moment and balance your choices out the following day with fruits, veggies, whole grains and lean protein.

Watch your alcohol consumption

Binge drinking can impair your judgement and worsen your health. Drink in moderation or abstain!

Stick to your sleep schedule

Try not to stay up too late wrapping last-minute presents or baking cookies! Aim to lay down and wake up at the same time each day.



For more healthy holiday tips, visit mycare.sharecare.com.

SHARECARE CHALLENGES

DECEMBER 2023

Making healthy choices isn't always easy, especially when temperatures drop, stress rises, and the days become darker. It can be hard to find the time and energy to exercise regularly, prepare healthy meals, practice self-care, and ensure that you're getting enough quality sleep. But taking some steps to protect your health can help you thrive during the winter months. Remember, even small changes can make a difference!

Starting this month...

Winter Walking Challenge

December 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024

Goal: Track 300K Steps

Winter Wellness Challenge

December 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024

Goal: Earn 75 Green Days



Rethink Your Drink

Track diet for 31 days

One simple way to avoid overindulging during the holidays: Rethink your drink. Eggnog, peppermint lattes, hot apple cider, holiday punch, and other seasonal beverages may be loaded with calories, but have little nutritional value. In fact, sometimes these drinks are more like desserts. Be mindful of your choices this month, and try to limit your intake of drinks with added sugars and cream

Snuggle Up

Track sleep for 31 days

Shorter days and reduced exposure to sunlight during winter can affect your circadian rhythm—the 24-hour internal body clock that tells you when it's time to be sleepy and when you should be fully awake. The darker winter months cause your body to produce more melatonin, a hormone that makes you sleepy. As a result, you may feel tired more often. Practicing good sleep hygiene can help you keep your body clock running smoothly.

For more information, go to mycare.sharecare.com and click the Achieve icon, then Challenges.

Please note: The Sharecare Platform will be sunsetting December 31, 2023.



Healthier Holidays

Track for 31 days

'Tis the season for family, festivities—and food. But the holidays don't have to completely derail your healthy eating goals. Sample some of your seasonal favorites, but don't skip meals so you can overeat later. And be sure to limit your portions and eat mindfully so you're more likely to stop when you're full. It's also a good idea to start off with healthier food choices. This way you may be less likely to overdo it on sweet or savory treats.

Relax and Recharge

Track stress for 31 days

Mindfulness is a form of meditation that involves being very aware of how you are feeling at a particular moment in time. You are simply present in the moment without ruminating, judging, or planning. Studies suggest that mindfulness meditation helps people avoid reacting with negative thoughts or emotions during stressful times.

Fitting in Fitness

Track 155K steps

Is the holiday hustle causing your anxiety level to rise? Do one simple thing to help keep your stress in check: Walk. Head outside for a stroll—either alone for some quiet time or with a friend or loved ones. Physical activity provides some immediate health benefits. It can help you relax by lowering stress hormone levels and triggering the production of mood-boosting endorphins.

