

# 15 Self-Care Strategies for Parents

## Simple but Effective Ways to Take Care of Yourself

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The minute you become a parent, your focus turns to [take care](#) of your new bundle of joy. And as your child grows from an [infant](#) to a [toddler](#) and beyond, you might find it's tough to return your attention to taking care of yourself.

However, a lack of self-care can create a downward spiral. You are likely to feel [stressed out](#) and [overwhelmed](#) when you are not caring for yourself, which makes it tougher to be an empathetic and patient parent. In turn, you might feel [guilty](#) and overwhelmed—self-care may be the last thing on your mind.

Taking care of your spiritual, physical, psychological, and social needs will help you feel your best so you can be the best parent you can be. It's important to set aside a little bit of time for self-care even when you feel like you don't have a single second to devote to yourself. While there are many different self-care strategies for parents, it's important to experiment with them to figure out which strategies work best for you.

## 1. Meditate

Even a quick 5-minute meditation can help you feel rejuvenated. If you are new to meditation, guided meditation might be a good option. There are many apps, websites, and audio files that can walk you through the steps of meditation.

There are also many breathing exercises that can help reduce your stress in just a couple of minutes which means that you can practice these even when you're short on time. Even though they're quick, a few deep cleansing breaths can do wonders for calming your mind and your body.

You might even decide to get your [child involved in meditation](#). It's a great lifelong skill that can benefit both of you.

## 2. Spend Time in Nature

Studies have found that spending time in nature can be good for your psychological well-being. A quick walk in the park, a hike on a trail, or time spent tending a garden could help you feel rested and relaxed.

If you don't have many opportunities to get outside and be in nature, you still have some options. Looking at landscape photos can be just as calming as physically being in nature.

Researchers discovered that patients residing in hospital spaces with a window that overlooked green spaces healed faster than patients who weren't able to look outside. Patients without a window were then offered pictures of landscapes. Those patients began reporting reduced pain and less anxiety, indicating that landscape pictures were good for their physical and mental well-being.

You can also bring green spaces indoors with some indoor plants. Of course, it's important not to purchase tons of indoor plants if the upkeep is going to create more stress in your life.

If you live near the coast, plan a trip to the ocean. Being near the water also produces a relaxation effect. A study published in *Health & Place* found that looking at "blue spaces" reduced an individual's risk of depression and anxiety.


In addition to creating a sense of inner calm, water has also been found to increase creativity.

### 3. Listen to Music

Whether you find classical music soothing or you prefer to dance to some 80s tunes, listening to music can be a great way to take care of yourself. You don't necessarily need to set aside a special time to listen to music. Turn it on while you're feeding your little one or listen to your favorite song while you're getting ready for the day. It's a simple thing that can go a long way toward boosting your mood and helping you feel ready to tackle whatever life throws your way.

### 4. Join a Book Club

A book club can serve several purposes. Joining a book club that meets in person will help you have regular social interaction, it will motivate you to set aside time to read, and it can help you have something to look forward to each week. If you aren't aware of any local book clubs, contact your library. They may host book clubs or they may be able to help you find one in your community.



Keep in mind you can always start your own book club, too. Gather a couple of people every week to discuss a chapter of a book. Take turns picking the books and host the discussion at your home or a coffee shop.

Online book clubs may also be an option, but they aren't always a good substitute for face-to-face interaction. Online settings may also be large and impersonal which may make you less motivated to connect.

## 5. Go for a Walk

Exercise can be just as good for your mind as it is for your body. Though you might not always feel like you have time to hit the gym or to engage in an intense workout, fortunately, a brisk walk can be an excellent self-care strategy.

Whether you're pushing a stroller or you're walking by yourself, get your body moving for 20 minutes. A little extra activity can help you feel energized for the rest of the day.

## 6. Write in a Gratitude Journal

Studies show people who keep gratitude journals sleep longer and experience higher quality sleep (something every parent could likely use). The best part is, writing in a gratitude journal only takes a few minutes of your time and it doesn't cost you any money.

Before you go to sleep, jot down three things you're thankful for. Your list might include simple things, like a sunny day, or it may include big things, like being able to get a debt paid off. Either

way, simply reminding yourself of the things you have to be grateful for can help you feel good about life.

## **7. Engage Your Senses**

It's hard to be in the moment when life is busy. Engaging your senses is a good way to relax and find a sense of inner peace. Light a scented candle, take a hot bath, listen to soothing sounds, or drink some herbal tea. Engaging one or more of your senses can be a simple but effective way to take a time out from the hustle and bustle.

## **8. Carve out Time to Be Alone**

Some parents find the only opportunity for solitude seems to be in the restroom. It's important to give yourself a few minutes of alone time aside from bathroom breaks.

Even if it's just five minutes each day that you set aside to relax by yourself, a little solitude can help you unwind. Whether that means waiting until your child takes a nap or waiting until a friend or family member is watching your child, give yourself permission to charge your batteries with a little alone time.

## 9. Schedule Time With Friends or Family

Maintaining your social connections is an integral part of self-care. However, it can be difficult to find time to see friends and family, especially if the activities don't involve the kids.

If you schedule a future social activity for yourself, it gives you something to look forward to (which can be a good self-care strategy in itself). Then, actually engaging in social activity will give another boost to your psychological well-being.

Whether you decide to go golfing with a family member, have lunch with your neighbor, or get your nails done with your friends, do things that help you stay connected with other adults.

## 10. Check the To-Do List

It may not seem like doing chores are good ways to take care of yourself. After all, you might feel like cleaning up and running errands is all you do sometimes.

On the other hand, checking something off your to-do list that has been bothering you can free up a lot of mental energy. Whether it's scheduling an appointment for yourself or finally cleaning that messy cabinet, consider doing something on your to-do list that will give you a sense of relief and a feeling of accomplishment.

You might decide to choose one task each day to tackle outside of your normal duties. You might find that getting things done, rather than letting those little things pile up, helps you maintain a sense of calm.

## 11. Turn Your Bedroom Into a Retreat

If your bedroom is filled with piles of clothes and clutter, you may feel more stress when you enter it. A good way to take care of yourself is to turn your bedroom into a retreat that you look

forward to entering. Declutter your space, buy some comfortable sheets, and do a little redecorating. A cozy chair to read a good book in or a decluttered closet may help you to feel more relaxed.

Investing some time into making your room a retreat now can ensure you will have a comfortable place to unwind at the end of the day.

## 12. Spend a Little Money on Yourself

You might find it's easy to spend money on your kids while neglecting yourself a bit. However, it's important to show your kids that you value yourself, too. Give yourself permission to spend a little time and money on yourself.

Just buying yourself a new shirt or paying to get a haircut can make you feel good. You might set aside a little bit in the budget each month to spend on yourself or perhaps you just do something nice for yourself once in a while. Either way, it's okay to treat yourself sometimes.

## 13. Take a Break From Electronics

Scrolling through social media, surfing the internet, and binge-watching TV might seem like a good way to relax. On the contrary, those activities can sometimes cause more stress than they relieve.

Digital devices can create a lot of pressure to be "on." Whether you feel compelled to reply to a work email late at night or you answer social media messages right before bed, your electronic habits might be taking a bigger toll on you than you realize.

A [digital detox](#) might help you reset some of your habits and it could also be good for your kids.

### Methods for Digital Detox

- Unplug your device for an hour every night
- Set aside one weekend a month to step away from your smartphone
- Make a rule to keep your phone out of your bedroom

Interestingly, research shows people who sleep without a phone in their rooms feel happier and better rested. These quick tips might be just what you need to feel more relaxed and at peace.

## 14. Savor Something

If you feel like you're in a rush all the time, there's a good chance you don't ever really get to savor anything. Commit to savoring something and make it a daily habit. Whether you want to savor your first cup of coffee or you decide to savor those moments when you're snuggling with your child, practice being in the moment.

## 15. Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness programs or simply a daily mindfulness practice can help you become more present—this is key to fully savoring what's going on right now. Rather than replay something in your mind that happened yesterday or worry about what might happen later today, savoring the moment will help you enjoy what's right in front of you now.

### A Word From Verywell

Don't neglect the most basic components of self-care: eat a healthy diet, get seven to eight hours of sleep each night, and get [regular exercise](#). Don't expect perfection when it comes to maintaining a tidy home, but do keep up on the basics—dishes, vacuuming, and laundry.

Then, integrate regular self-care strategies into your [routine](#). Keep in mind that the times when you're thinking you don't have time to take care of yourself are likely the times when you need to practice self-care the most.

If you're experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety or you think you may be depressed, talk to your physician. You may benefit from a referral to a mental health professional. However, your doctor may want to rule out physical health problems first.

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