SEPTEMBER IS SELF-CARE AWARENESS MONTH.
MAKE SOME TIME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!

Discover why self-care is so important to maintaining a healthy and fulfilled life, as well as learn effective ways to practice self-care.

As we go about our busy lives, it can often be difficult to slow down, take a breath, and consider getting some much-needed rest before our health begins to spiral.

There are many ways to mitigate stress-related illnesses -- most of them fall within the realm of self-care, the mindful taking of time to pay attention to ourselves to ensure we are being cared for.

Here are 10 ways to exercise self-care and ensure steps toward a healthier and better life:

1. **Know your limits.**
   Take a moment to recognize when you are doing more than your mind and body are accustomed to handling. Pushing yourself too much can be both physically and emotionally draining.

2. **Get enough sleep.**
   Make a serious effort to get the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep each night to function well the next day.

3. **Make nutritious choices.**
   Integrate your favorite healthy foods into your lifestyle and routine. Do you have a short lunch break that unintentionally leads to snacking throughout the day? Plan ahead by packing healthy snack options when the hunger pangs hit.

4. **Decompress throughout the day.**
   Take mini breaks to rest your mind during and after the workday. Allow your brain those small pauses -- try stretching, taking a brief walk, or talking to a friend.

5. **Keep an organized workspace.**
   Sometimes the smallest of things can stress us out. Take a few minutes to organize your desk or work station, allowing you to focus more on the work at hand.

6. **Get to know yourself better.**
   Get to know the things that make you tick. Do you become angry when you’re hungry? Do you lose all focus when you’re distracted by

**IN PRACTICE:**
*With fall weather around the corner, try these delicious recipes to indulge in some seasonal self-care.*
something like uncomfortable shoes? When you know your triggers, you can either avoid or appropriately respond to a certain situation or stimulation.

7. Integrate fun with each day.
Build a new habit of incorporating some form of enjoyment into your everyday routine, or at least every week. Having something to look forward to can brighten the worst of moods caused by stress.

8. Debrief from a day’s work.
Learn how to effectively transition from work to home. Clear your mind and wash the stress of the day away by taking part in a relaxing after-work activity, such as listening to music, driving home in silence, or taking a walk home.

9. Feed your spiritual self.
Take part in something that nurtures the soul. Depending upon your values and beliefs, this can take the form of volunteering, spending time out in nature, attending a religious service, or practicing gratitude.

10. Treat yourself.
Appreciate that you’re the expert on knowing your own feelings and stressors. Treat yourself every once in awhile -- whether it be with a tasty sweet, an outing with a loved one, or even a night in with your favorite movies and popcorn -- because you’re the expert on you.

BONUS: 11. Call the EAP
A final way to practice self-care is calling your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 800-327-4692.

Your EAP can help you when life gets challenging -- give us a call for counseling, legal and financial consultation, identity theft restoration, life coaching, and more!

WELLNESS WISDOM

All of the aforementioned ways to exercise self-care are important and should be a priority regardless of how busy you are.

Is it possible to do all of these things every day? Absolutely not! That might cause more stress, and no one needs more stress.

Is it possible to pick one item from this list and be mindful of that each day? Absolutely! There will be days when you make excellent food choices but have a messy desk, and that’s okay. There will be days when you choose sleeping in over hitting the gym, and that is okay, too.

The practice of self-care is at its best when you can say “what do I need today?” and proceed to take care of yourself. And remember, practicing self-care does not equate to being selfish. When you aren’t taking care of yourself, you can’t take care of loved ones, your work, your pets, or your home.