

Ideas and Practices for Daily Self-care

Storytelling takes a lot of emotional labor. Factoring in external instances that happen in everyone's lives as well, it is important for storytellers to take some time to rejuvenate and invest in themselves. We know that times are difficult, and we are collectively living through a pandemic unlike any of us have seen before. In these times, it is extremely important to prioritize yourself, ensuring that you are living in your most fulfilling and healthy ways. We're all stuck inside and cut off from our normal routines and loved ones, but we should try our best to make the best of the situation!

Below are some ideas for self-care management. These activities can be used during COVID and beyond, with an emphasis on virtual and personal activities that are accessible.

For more information on developing a self-care plan, you can use the following resources:

- [Self-care resources](#)
- [6 Types of Self Care](#)
- [Self Care Shield](#)

Mental: There are so many things that occupy our minds on a daily basis. It's important to take some time and steps to clear your head!

- Try the [Calm app](#) for guided meditation
 - You can also [meditate with Lizzo!](#)
- Music can be really soothing:
 - Try out [this playlist on Spotify](#) - tailored for relaxation!
 - Try [Lo-Fi Hip Hop Radio](#)- the one 24/7 live Youtube station filled with relaxing beats.
- Try [self-care TED Talks](#). Sometimes we need some motivational words to get us through!
- Why not try coloring? You can [print out some pages](#) to color- which is a perfect activity to keep your hands and mind occupied.
 - Planned Parenthood has some [sex-ed coloring pages and activities!](#)
- Play mind games online, such as [Sudoku](#)
 - The New York Times has a variety of brain teasers, including a [daily crossword puzzle](#) (subscription required)
 - USA Today has a [free crossword puzzle](#)
- See if your local library has e-books or audiobooks available for check out from home!

Physical: You only get one body in this lifetime! Make sure to take care of it, so you can be the best version of yourself.

- Go on a walk as you are able! Lunch break walks are a perfect time to stretch yourself.
- Core Power yoga is offering daily [free yoga classes](#).
- Check out this list of [free virtual fitness classes](#). Some classes include:

- High intensity interval training
- Dance/toning
- Yoga
- Celebrity training classes
- Routine workouts
- Invest in a [jump rope](#)! A fun activity to do outside, even if you do not have a yard.
- Check out these videos of [at-home workouts](#)
- Go bike riding! It's a great way to get your blood pumping and to do a little sightseeing.
- Join a [virtual dance party](#) or [host your own](#)!
- Make sure to get 8 hours of sleep every night, and develop a consistent sleep schedule. This is [beneficial for many reasons](#)!
- Feeling sluggish? Try drinking a glass of cold water, a cup of hot tea, or eat an apple to re-energize!
- Make sure to eat healthy, balanced meals to get the nutrients your body needs!
- The recommended water intake for adults is [8 glasses of 8oz per day](#). Increase your water intake to feel good!
- Take a bath! Hot baths with epsom salts are a great way to de-stress and relax your body. Add some music and maybe some candles, and use this time to be away from a screen.
- Get some sunlight and fresh air. [An intake of Vitamin D](#) helps boost serotonin levels among other benefits.
- Take control of your physical health! Check if your primary care physician is offering telehealth services. [Planned Parenthood is offering telehealth services](#) for your reproductive health needs.

Spiritual: It is good to lean on things that are bigger than ourselves. Whether this be religious or not, take some time to practice your beliefs.

- Check out this guide to [mindful self-compassion during COVID-19](#) by CMSC
- Here are some resources for mindfulness:
 - [NYT guide to mindfulness](#)
 - [Mayo clinic mindfulness exercises](#)
 - [The Harvard Gazette: With Mindfulness, Life's in the Moment](#)
 - [Positive Psychology Mindfulness activities and exercises](#)
- With the pandemic, many religious services have [moved to online streaming](#). A lot of local places are offering their services on their websites. Google search your place of worship and see if they are offering any services, or if potentially other local places are!
- You can practice prayer
 - [Sacred space](#) has daily prayer
 - [The Jumah Stream](#) hosts prayer sessions at 1:00pm EST every Friday
- The Japanese practice of [shinrin-yoku, or, forest bathing](#), can be a great way to connect to the natural world around you

- We're living in unprecedented times. Here are some [resources for grief support](#) from the Harvard Divinity School.
- Explore Deepak Chopra's [3 Mantras to Get You Through Any Crisis](#)

Practical: Ensuring your home environment and day-to-day activities are settled and full is important. Doing practical things to make each day easier and safer is a great way to practice self-care.

- During this time, it may be helpful to try to stick to a routine as much as possible. Adobe Spark has a free [schedule maker](#).
- Make your bed! It will be nice to have a clean space throughout the day, and will give you a nice place to wind down at the end of the day.
- Do a deep clean of all your possessions. Consider donating or throwing out old items that are no longer of use. Try watching [Tidying Up with Marie Kondo](#) for some inspiration!
- Try cooking for yourself and trying some new recipes, both fun and healthy!
 - [Femme Brûlée](#), a series of desserts recipes written by a queer Black woman named Reneice Charles.
 - [30 Vegan recipes](#) - without oil!
 - Try making some [gluten free recipes](#)
 - [Betty Croker](#) has a really great online archive of free recipes
- Are you a caretaker for children? The National Association of School Psychologists has a guide for [Helping Children Cope with Change during COVID-19](#).

Emotional: You can't pour from an empty cup! Make sure you are prioritizing your emotions as a part of self-care.

- Consider using a chalk pen or permanent marker to [write affirmations](#) on your daily mirror!
- Go through a social media cleanse - unfollow accounts that don't make you feel good.
- Write a letter about your feelings in the moment, and then burn the letter.
- Practice [breathing techniques](#).
- Repeat some [positive affirmations](#).
- Keep a journal or personal blog post to write down your thoughts and feelings throughout the day.
- Create an inspirational collage or [Pinterest board](#).
- Know when to step back! If your storytelling work is getting to be overwhelming, it is completely okay to say "no" to engagements.
- Check out this guide on [what to do if you are feeling anxious during COVID-19](#)
- Seek help when needed— If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-985-5990.
- We're collectively living through a traumatic time. Here is a Podcast on [Coping with Traumatic Events](#) by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

- Incorporate virtual therapy into your routine. Talking to someone can be helpful. [Here is a guide](#) for available services.
- Watch this Red Table Talk for [Managing Stress and Anxiety During a Pandemic](#)
- [Manage your stress!](#) Here is a list of the best apps that can assist.

Social: Humans are social creatures! Whether you are an introvert or extrovert, take some time to stay connected with the loved ones in your life.

- Why not virtual happy hour? There are many platforms you can do this on:
 - [Facebook messenger](#)
 - [Instagram video chat](#)
 - [Skype](#)
 - [Zoom](#)
 - [Google hangouts](#)
 - [Houseparty](#)
- Play some online video games and meet some new people! [Discord](#) is a great chatting service.
- [Game Pigeon](#) is a fun iOS app that allows you to play games with your friends in real time
- Why not play [Words With Friends](#)?? Scrabble- but virtual. Available on iOS and the Google Play Store
- Take some time to call your loved ones- build some time in your schedule!
- Snail mail! It may be nice to send and receive letters from your friends. Whether you live close or far away, writing a letter is a different mode of communication that doesn't happen very often.
- Hiking, biking, or jogging with friends can be a good way to spend socially distant time with your people.

Offline: A lot of people are finding themselves having to work remotely, which means being in the same environment each day.

- Working remotely for the first time? [This article](#) has some good tips and best practices to stay grounded while adjusting to a new work environment.
 - [Here are some additional tips](#) by Alice Goldfuss for keeping a consistent work from home schedule.
- Make sure to unplug for at least 30 minutes during the day! Staring at a screen is draining.
- Designate work spaces and relaxation spaces.
- If you are working remotely, build some time in your schedule to take stretch and walk breaks.
- Create a schedule, get ready in the morning, and have consistent meals.
- Here are some tips for [keeping children occupied during COVID](#).
- Evaluate the [ergonomics of your work from home station](#), and adjust accordingly!

- [Learn how to assess your feelings](#). This guide by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration gives tips on social distancing, isolation, and quarantine.
- If you live in a space with another person or multiple people, designate work spaces for each of you, and use headphones to limit distractions for each person in the home.
- Are you quarantined with an [abusive partner/individual](#)? Contact the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) at 1-800-799-7233