

SELF-CARE

APPLYING YOUR OXYGEN MASK

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

Self-care is about taking time to address your own wellbeing. It is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

Self-care comes in many different forms and is very much about what works best for you. Like the flight attendant tells us at the start of every flight in the safety demo:

“In the case of an emergency Please ensure that you apply the oxygen mask to yourself before helping others.”

What is your oxygen? Is it quality sleep, preparing a home cooked meal, the gym work out after shift, reading a book to wind down? Find your oxygen and ensure that it is applied every day.

Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you!

Robert Wicks, Author of ‘*Embracing Compassion and Hope in a Troubled World*’ provides a unique insight into a self-care philosophy in his short clip ‘The Necessity of Self-Care’. Take a look.

[Self-Care in 3 minutes by Professor Robert Wicks](#)

6 TIPS FOR SELF-CARE

Taking some time each day to focus on your own wellbeing can have a huge positive impact. They might seem like little things, but they really do add up. Here are some suggestions to incorporate into your daily routine.

- + **Go for a morning walk** - starting your day with fresh air and movement not only has physical benefits, it also kick-starts a positive mindset.
- + **Read because you want to** - not because you have to. Pull out that book you were given for your birthday two years ago and give it a go.... reading really is exercise for the mind.

- + **Get creative in the kitchen** - try and make the effort one night a week to create something new. Put some music on to get you inspired while you do it. Taste have an awesome range of easy recipes.
- + **Address your posture** - even though we know excessive sitting has detrimental effects on our health, so many of us still do it. At home. At work. On the commute in between. Your lower back is crying out for a change ... get moving
- + **Listen to podcasts** - listen to podcasts on subjects you are passionate about, or want to know more about, or simply ones that make you laugh.
- + **Box breathing** - a simple exercise that you can do anytime, anywhere is a technique known as [box breathing](#). It's called 'box breathing' because it consists of four counts of four. Picture a square with each side representing a different count to four. Start with a slow inhale to the count of four, hold for the count of four, exhale for four, hold for four...and repeat. Or follow this simple guided [box breathing exercise](#).

Want more ideas? Click on the following link - [MORE INFO](#)

HOW'S YOUR BALANCE?

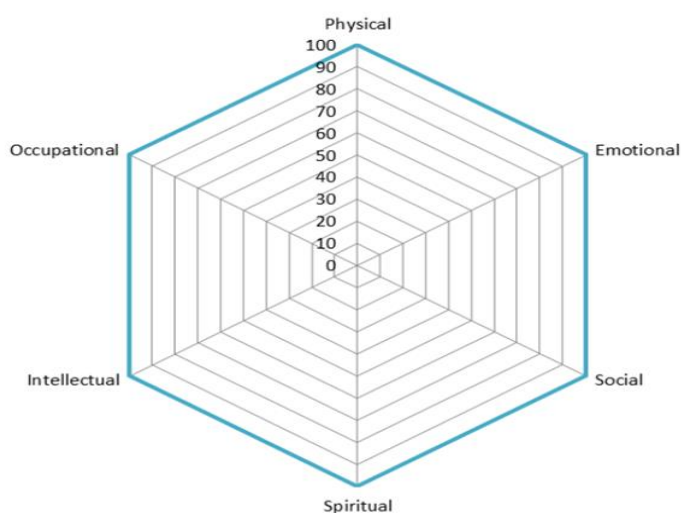
The next three pages provide further tools and links about self-care.

The first is a wellbeing check in activity, where you can score yourself 0-100 (0 – low; 100 – high/optimal) across the 6 domains of wellbeing. Join each of these scores with a line and see what shape you end up with. If there are gaps or areas to work on, illustrated by dips in your web, look at completing the Action Plan and identify changes you can make/commit to improve what matters most to you.

The second page provides ideas for approaching niggling challenges at work.

The third provides further links to tools and resources.

Your Wellness Profile



1. **Spiritual Wellness:** Your sense of meaning and purpose in your life; how you integrate your beliefs and values into action.
2. **Physical Wellness:** How you care for you body and mind; your health and vitality.
3. **Emotional/Mental Wellness:** Your awareness and acceptance of your feelings; your thoughts, attitudes, and self-talk; your resilience and self-esteem.
4. **Social Wellness:** How you relate to self, others, and community; having supportive relationships and a sense of belonging.
5. **Occupational - Career / Livelihood -** having fulfilling and meaningful work in which you nurture your gifts, skills and talents.
6. **Intellectual Wellness:** Having creative and stimulating activities that allow you to continue learning and pursuing your interests

Wellbeing Action Plan

What's the most important area of wellbeing for you personally to address?

What's an action that you can commit to over the next month that can improve this?

Your Mind at Work

New Ways to Approach Those Niggling Challenges in the Office



Distracted & scattered

PRACTICE

Learn a practice where you follow a simple object (like your breath). The repeated returning to a focal point trains your attention.

BENEFIT

Focus. Your attention wavers less and you're not as easily pulled away by external distractions or internal chatter.



Annoyed by difficult colleagues, office politics, gossip

PRACTICE

Let others talk about themselves. Listen and consider what might cause them pain.

BENEFIT

Not as judgmental. You take more time to explore what might be causing other people pain and problems instead of assuming the worst.



Physically worn down by too much tension, rushing through meals, staring at screens

PRACTICE

Take a few minutes and let your attention scan your whole body from toe to head. Go breathe fresh air.

BENEFIT

Body awareness. You more often notice how you actually feel in your body and when it needs care.



Stuck: solution to a problem keeps evading you

PRACTICE

Sit quietly doing nothing for five minutes. Then as you contemplate the problem, imagine you're seeing it for the first time.

BENEFIT

Fresh eyes. Increased ability to let go of assumptions, expectations, and storylines and see things anew.



Frustrated with lack of progress in yourself or others

PRACTICE

Listen fully to a longer piece of music without doing anything else at all. This helps you appreciate rhythm, rather than trying to force things.

BENEFIT

Patience. You let things develop in their own time rather than always trying to push them.

By Jeremy Hunter

From the April 2013 issue of Mindful magazine • mindful.org • ©2013 Mindful

SELF CARE RESOURCES

- + Smiling Mind – mindfulness meditation app: <https://smilingmind.com.au/>
- + Headspace Guided Meditation app: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/headspace-guided-meditation/id493145008?mt=8>
- + Happify – positive psychology tools for stress management (including an app): Happify.com
- + My Compass – personalised self-help program to boost mental fitness: <https://www.mycompass.org.au/>
- + Head to Health – one stop shop for a range of digital mental health resources including fact sheets, apps, chat groups, websites: <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

