



30 SELF-CARE TIPS FOR THE MIND & BODY

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Introduction

"There are days I drop words of comfort on myself like falling leaves and remember that it is enough to be taken care of by myself." - Brian Andreas

You only have one body, so it just makes sense to take care of it. A strong, healthy body leads to a positive mindset. Strength and fitness help you move through your day with confidence, and a confident mind is a strong mind. You don't have as many health concerns to worry about either, and life just tends to be easier when you are fit and firm as opposed to sick and weak.

When your mind is healthy and you have control of your emotions, you experience fewer physical issues. The constant stress that comes from a clouded, worrisome brain leads to the overproduction of stress-causing hormones like cortisol. This creates inflammation and other health conditions that lead to a decline in physical health.

Your mind and body are indelibly connected, and act as contributing factors to your overall health, well-being, and quality of life.

So why aren't you taking better care of yourself? There is only one person you have control over ... yourself. It makes sense then that your efforts should focus on achieving the best "you" that you can possibly be. Besides, you can't properly help the important people in your life if you aren't capable and healthy yourself.

The following 30 tips and strategies will help you realize better health and tranquility in mind and body. They also give you more natural energy, calm your mind in a hectic world, and help you put tasks, responsibilities and distractions in their proper perspective. For less stress and more calm, peaceful strength, less anxiety and better health and well-being, incorporate these healthy lifestyle practices into your daily routine.



1 - Take time to breathe. When your brain and all your muscles get plenty of oxygen, they function properly. Without rich, oxygenated blood, your mind has a “foggy” perception of the world around you. Your body does not work correctly either. Take time throughout the day to breathe deeply for a few moments. Pull your shoulders back and draw air deep down into your lungs. Even after just a few seconds you can clear your mind and experience a healthy energy boost.

2 – Keep a compliments log. This is not an egotistical move. Everyone has times in their life when they need a reminder of how awesome they are. Record all of the wonderful compliments you receive, and rightly deserve, and refer to them frequently for a healthy pick-me-up when needed.

3 – Say thank you. Science has proven beyond doubt that the human brain has a definite impact on overall health. When your brain is happy and healthy, your body is too. One of the easiest ways to mental health is through a practice of daily gratitude. Research shows that people who express gratitude regularly live longer, enjoy less stress, and develop fewer negative health conditions.

4 – Perform a 2-minute exercise routine. The busiest people have 2-minute time blocks free every day, plenty of them. This tip helps your mind and body, as it boosts energy levels naturally, improves balance and flexibility, and “wakes up” your brain. Treat yourself to 2 minutes of stretching, running in place, performing deep knee bends or exercising your arms, neck and back. You will quickly develop a healthy addiction to this simple but effective health booster.



5 – Appreciate the stratus, cumulus, and stratocumulus in your life. When you were a child, did you ever look up at the clouds and see all kinds of wonderful shapes? One cloud looked like a dog, another like a dragon. This is still an enjoyable break to reward yourself with during a hectic day. If you can, lie on your back in a grassy field and let the ever-changing shapes of the clouds push your imagination to creative possibilities.



6 – Be present. Look around you. But this time, REALLY look. There is so much wonder and amazement around us every day, and sometimes we don't take the time to let it fill our hearts and minds. Don't just plow headlong through the day, anxious to reach the end. Life is all about enjoying the journey, not just reaching the destination.

7 – Be goofy. Yep, you heard that right, have some fun, be silly, cavort, chuckle and act the fool. The incredible power of smiling and laughing to heal and energize has been scientifically proven. Use this free practice several times daily to instantly and positively change your outlook and mood.

8 – Delegate or outsource menial tasks. Have your children clean the table and load the dishwasher after meals. Pay a neighborhood kid to cut your lawn. Carpool so you can relinquish driving duties a few times every week. Find small, time-robbing tasks you really don't need to be doing and let someone else handle them.

9 – Enjoy a selfish “just because” moment. Sometime today, do something just because you feel like it. This doesn't mean eating an unhealthy 2,000 calorie dessert every day. That would end up negatively affecting your health and well-being. Just make sure to take some time out to be the “you” that is uniquely you, and enjoy a spontaneous, fun action every day.

10 – Try something new and uncomfortable. How does discomfort lead to better mental and physical health? Scientists studying human behavior and achievement note that growth comes just outside your comfort zone. Step just outside your comfortable behavior zone to enjoy some mental stimulation.

11 – Skip the morning coffee, or at least cut out the sugar. Coffee is wonderful, and actually healthy at a 1 cup-a-day level of consumption (not that 55-gallon super-mug you drink out of). However, the artificial creamers, sweeteners and sugar many put in their coffee are certainly unhealthy. Go coffee-only, or skip it altogether, to start your day with a new first step.

12 – Unplug for 1 hour. Trust me, ignoring your Facebook updates, Twitter tweets and in-box for 1 hour is not going to cause the end of the world. What you will find is that you enjoy these daily hours of escape from the intrusions of technology, and you'll possibly begin to appreciate the “real world” even more.

13 – Spend some time with an old friend you have not seen in a while. We all have very busy lives. We promise to keep in touch with someone special, and a day becomes a month becomes a year, with no contact. Stop what you are doing and reach out to that old friend or family member that always makes you smile. Not only will this positive experience help you, but it may be just the right time to help pick the other person up as well.

14 – Feel your feelings. It is okay to be sad, happy, or somewhere in between. Ignoring your emotions is like telling yourself that your feelings are “wrong”. You are uniquely you, and no person ever created before or after you has that honor. Recognize your feelings, letting them live. Give them their due, then return to your responsibilities.

15 – Forgive yourself. It is often stated, but just as often ignored, that you are sometimes your own worst enemy. There is no such thing as perfection in human endeavors. Stop giving yourself grief about every little underachievement or past behavior. You are beautifully human, and that means mistakes will happen. The power of forgiveness is incredibly powerful. Give that gift to yourself.

16 – Soak up the sun. Just 10 to 15 minutes of exposure to the sun's rays does something wonderful for your body and mind. That small amount of time the sun hits your skin begins a vitamin D creation process in your body that gives you enough of that essential nutrient for 24 hours. Besides, the warmth of the sun on your skin just feels good.



17 – Jam to your favorite tunes. Whether Bach or the Beatles, Hard Rock or Handel, enjoy the mental and spiritual boost you get from your favorite music at least once a day.

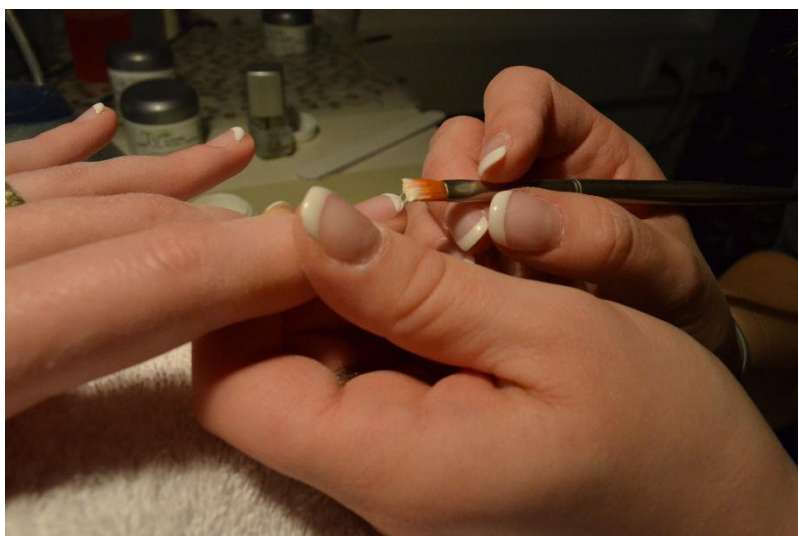
18 – Kick the emotional vampires to the curb. You have a short enough time here on the planet as it is. Don't spend another second having your energy and spirit drained by that Debbie Downer or Sad Faced Sal that always leaves you emotionally and mentally spent after interacting with them.

19 – Play with some kids. Children have not yet developed many of the hang-ups and stressors we adults suffer from. Spend some time playing outdoor, physical games with smiling, laughing kids and re-invigorate your inner child.

20 – Stop watching TV. Give yourself a no-TV day once a week. Many people that do this end up with no-TV weekends, and some stop watching altogether. Instead, spend that time doing the things on this list. You might be surprised to find you feel better about yourself and the world you live in when you shut off the device termed "The Idiot Box" in the 1950s.

21 – Quit listening to that ceaseless inner voice. It never stops, does, it? It keeps you from falling asleep at night, keeps you from focusing, and never shuts up! That constant chatter that goes on inside your mind can totally control your life ... if you let it. Recognize it is there, but don't give too much credence to your monkey-mind input.

22 – Pay for a manicure, pedicure, shave or a haircut. Pamper yourself. Get your nails done. Hit the day spa. Have an old-fashioned straight razor shave with heated shaving cream. Get your hair done. Enjoy some physical treat that pimps your appearance every now and then. You deserve it.



23 – Stop with the analysis paralysis. Over-thinking is a brutal waste of time and mental energy. Some things just don't require that much thought. Look at a situation, judge it, take the appropriate action, and then move on.

24 – Fix one small problem/distraction/situation that constantly bothers you. You listen to that squeaky door every day, and do nothing about it. You are frustrated with the clutter on your desk, but have not de-cluttered. Look for “small win” areas in your life where very little effort could produce a smile and less mental stress and anxiety.

25 – Turn off notifications. Do you really need to know every time you receive an email, a Facebook update, a multimedia message or a text? The answer is a resounding ... NO! Turn off notifications during work and important “me time” periods, and let those important to you know about this practice.

26 – Walk for 20 to 30 minutes. You can do this on your lunch break, or first thing in the morning. It “gets your juices flowing” and eases stress. This simple daily practice is recommended for overall health and well-being, in both mind and body.

27 – Give your sniffer a treat. Certain scents produce positive emotions. Cinnamon sharpens your mind, pine alleviates stress, and lavender helps you sleep. Fresh cut grass boosts your happiness, and citrus scents energize you. An aromatherapy diffuser and the right scent for your situation can quickly improve your mood.

28 – Be of assistance. Volunteer. Help someone. Give someone else a small dose of help, and you will be amazed at how good it makes both of you feel. Do this for a total stranger and this simple act of kindness can multiply itself far beyond the receiver of your charitable action.



29 – Connect with strangers, and be upbeat. Your mailman, the barista at the coffee shop, and the checkout guy at your grocer all provide opportunities for outreach. The few words you share with them remind them they are appreciated, and make you feel good as well.

30 – Play with an animal. People with pets live longer and have dramatically lower levels of stress and stress-related health conditions. Pets you can touch and cuddle with are the best, of course.

