



## **4 Steps to Make Self-Care Part of Your Routine**

If you, like most red-blooded millennials, spend the majority of your time online, then you've probably stumbled upon the internet's collective obsession with "self-care." Basically, the concept of self-care refers to making time to take care of yourself without feeling guilty. Methods can range widely, and activities like yoga, reading or taking a relaxing bath all fit the bill.

Being able to take a moment for yourself in order to hit the reset button is something we all need to do every once in a while. But here's the thing: Taking a timeout to give yourself a moment of respite or relaxation or indulgence is only part of the battle. We carve out time for happy hour, but it ends up being less than happy because you're thinking about the last couple of emails you didn't get to in order to be there. How can anyone binge-watch Netflix stress-free with piles of dirty laundry lurking next to the TV? Can you really go to town on that box of salted caramels knowing you haven't been to the dentist in 18 months? Or when you still haven't ordered a wedding gift for your college roommate and it's been two years since the wedding?

One of the surest ways to let that self-care time shine is to make sure you're not stressing about miscellaneous, small-ball to-do's while you're trying to check the eff out. Get yourself sorted so that your "me time" can be as effective as possible.

### **Step 1: Make a plan.**

Randomly tackling tasks after a long day of work can make for utter chaos. Instead, start the process by simply creating a plan. First, make a to-do list of everything that really needs to get done (work orders for the landlord, smog-testing your car, sorting mail, etc.).

Next, whip out your planner—that nice one you bought specifically for this purpose and never use—to pencil in time to complete everything. And really stick to it; don't cancel if better (aka any) plans come along. Pick a day at lunch to call your doctor, a Saturday to make it to the bank, and a whole Sunday to purge your closet. Just make sure to physically write it down rather than type it for a better chance at actually completing these tasks.

### **Step 2: Execute.**

Do it. It won't take that long and you know it. Think of how much you can get done in a day at the office. Treat these chores like your job and you'll be done in no time.

### **Step 3: Reward.**

While the satisfaction of a job well done should suffice, feel free to set a reward. One you can actually enjoy now that you have nothing hanging over your head. You might even be able to actually clear your mind during yoga class because you won't be stressing about a dozen little things that need to get done. Plus, giving yourself a reward for hard work is a great way to form healthy habits.

### **Step 4: Repeat.**

While some tasks will be one and done, a lot of them will pop back up again. So make sure to set aside time each week to tackle everything important before it all piles up. Once you know how good it feels to not be stressing about a late credit card bill or that you'll run out of contact lenses, you might even start to look forward to your weekly "adulting" sessions.

