



Put Yourself First This September: Two Opportunities for Self-Care

Self-Care September: Register Now for Webinars and Sessions

Get ready to put yourself first during [Self-Care September](#), which features 14 virtual webinars to help you jumpstart your journey into self-care! Browse the offerings and sign up today!

Each week, Level Up will raffle off the following:

- **Self-Care Book (a new book each week!)**
- **\$50 Panera Bread Gift Card**
- **Sherpa Blankets**
- **Electronic Diffuser**

To be entered into the random drawing each week, **you must register and attend at least one (1) class scheduled for that week**. Prize winners will be announced during the weekly Wellness Wednesday articles.



Work of Art: Register by Sept. 3

And, for the artists and emotional well-being fans, we have created a 4-week online challenge—[Work of Art](#)! This creative challenge will help you enhance resilience and cultivate happiness. If you're interested in the online challenge, please register by Friday, Sept. 3.

Participate in the Work of Art online challenge and you could win big!

Individual winners will receive:

- **1st Place – Apple iPad Mini**
- **2nd Place – Fitbit**
- **3rd Place – \$50 Target Gift Card**



Team winners will receive:

- **\$50 NIKE Gift Card for each team member**

Self-Care: Why Does it Matter?

Managing day-to-day life, and the many stressors it brings, can be a challenge. It makes sense that we need to take care of our own well-being in order to deal with them most effectively and be at our best. Yet, it's often the case that the more stressed we are, the less able we are to prioritize our own needs. Understanding the wide-ranging value of self-care may help you approach it differently.

What is self-care?

Generally, you can think of it being good to yourself in ways that help you feel stronger, healthier, more grounded, and balanced. Life and ongoing stress can deplete our emotional, physical, and spiritual resources – the strengths, abilities and mindsets that help us stay well, productive, and happy. Self-care is a way to build and maintain those resources.

What does it look like?

Core self-care moves address basic life functions—eating, sleeping and being active in ways that help you feel strong and healthy. But self-care is more than that. It is also about supporting our emotional well-being, being compassionate with ourselves, managing our stress, and being engaged in life – growing, learning, and connected in meaningful relationships. It can involve managing our financial well-being, investing in career development, or pursuing a sense of purpose and spiritual connection.

The power of self-care...

Life pressures trigger our built-in stress response. This can be helpful in the short-term, but when it stays “on” indefinitely, it creates tension and co-opts our energy, focus, and mood. The physical impact can lead to pain, obesity, reduced immune function, and damaging inflammation that can increase the risk for chronic diseases. Emotions can be “tense” too. It can be hard to concentrate, sleep, make decisions, and be creative. The impact can be felt in our mental wellbeing, our work, and our relationships. Self-care is a way of helping us undo these negative effects and proactively promote positivity, strength and resilience.

How does it work?

All aspects of our being—mind, body, and spirit—are connected and influence one another. Stress and unhealthy ways of coping, such as drinking or overeating, strain this system, making it harder to be strong and well. Self-care can reduce the impact of stress and prime us to be more resilient and better able to manage challenges going forward. It can:

- **Release tension:** We can be held hostage by our hard-wired, tense stress response. Physical tension can increase emotional tension and vice versa. Self-care can help release the grip of tension to free up our resources and disrupt this pattern.
- **Renew health:** The calming actions of self-care dial down the stress response and shift us into a restful rejuvenating state. This can strengthen the immune system, reduce inflammation and support mental health.
- **Restore calm:** Thoughts and worries can be a sneaky way for stress to grow. Self-care allows us to develop a different relationship with external and internal stressors by helping us feel more in control and able to tap thoughtful, measured responses.
- **Replenish energy:** Like the gas in our cars, our energy, focus and motivation runs down. Overloaded lives can lead to exhaustion and burnout. Healthy self-care is a way to “plug in” and refuel.
- **Recharge spirit:** Life challenges can spark negativity and gradually erode our spirit. When we treat ourselves with care, it reinforces the sense that we have value and worth, boosting self-esteem. This can help us be more engaged in our relationships, the world, and our own potential.

Be sure to check out these free weekly webinars, [Navigating the Next Normal](#) sponsored by Kaiser Permanente. Attendees will learn how to build resilience, adopt healthy habits and prevent burnout. This is open to all employees and runs through Thursday, Oct. 7.

Additional Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)
- [INOVA Employee Assistance Program](#) (*username: prince; password: george*)

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