

Tiny Self-Care Ideas for the Mind

1. **Start a compliments file.** Document the great things people say about you to read later.
2. **Scratch off a *lurker* on your to-do list,** something that's been there for ages and you'll never do.
3. **Change up the way you make decisions.** Decide something with your heart if you usually use your head. Or if you tend to go with your heart, decide with your head.
4. **Go cloud-watching.** Lie on your back, relax, and watch the sky.
5. **Take another route to work.** Mixing up your routine in small ways creates new neural pathways in the brain to keep it healthy.
6. **Pay complete attention to something you usually do on autopilot,** perhaps brushing your teeth, driving, eating, or performing your morning routine.
7. **Goof around for a bit.** Schedule in five minutes of "play" (non-directed activity) several times throughout your day.
8. **Create a deliberate habit,** and routinize something small in your life by doing it in the same way each day—what you wear on Tuesdays, or picking up the dental floss before you brush.
9. **Fix a small annoyance at home that's been nagging you—a** button lost, a drawer that's stuck, a light bulb that's gone.
10. **Punctuate your day with a mini-meditation** with one minute of awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations; one minute of focused attention on breathing; and one minute of awareness of the body as a whole.
11. **Be selfish.** Do one thing today just because it makes you happy.
12. **Do a mini-declutter.** Recycle three things from your wardrobe that you don't love or regularly wear.
13. **Unplug for an hour.** Switch everything to airplane mode and free yourself from the constant *bings* of social media and email.
14. **Get out of your comfort zone,** even if it's just talking to a stranger at the bus stop.
15. **Edit your social media feeds, and take out any negative people.** You can just "mute" them; you don't have to delete them.

Tiny Self-Care Ideas for the Body

- 1. Give your body ten minutes of mindful attention.** Use the body scan technique to check in with each part of your body.
- 2. Oxygenate by taking three deep breaths.** Breathe into your abdomen, and let the air puff out your stomach and chest.
- 3. Get down and boogie.** Put on your favorite upbeat record and shake your booty.
- 4. Stretch out the kinks.** If you're at work, you can always head to the bathroom to avoid strange looks.
- 5. Run (or walk, depending on your current physical health) for a few minutes.** Or go up and down the stairs three times.
- 6. Narrow your food choices.** Pick two healthy breakfasts, lunches, and dinners and rotate for the week.
- 7. Activate your self-soothing system.** Stroke your own arm, or if that feels too weird, moisturize.
- 8. Get to know yourself intimately.** Look lovingly and without judgment at yourself naked. (Use a mirror to make sure you get to know all of you!)
- 9. Make one small change to your diet for the week.** Drink an extra glass of water each day, or have an extra portion of veggies each meal.
- 10. Give your body a treat.** Pick something from your wardrobe that feels great next to your skin.
- 11. Be still.** Sit somewhere green, and be quiet for a few minutes.
- 12. Get fifteen minutes of sun,** especially if you're in a cold climate. (Use sunscreen if appropriate.)
- 13. Inhale an upbeat smell.** Try peppermint to suppress food cravings and boost mood and motivation.
- 14. Have a good laugh.** Read a couple of comic strips that you enjoy. (For inspiration, try Calvin and Hobbes, Dilbert, or xkcd.)
- 15. Take a quick nap.** Ten to twenty minutes can reduce your sleep debt and leave you ready for action.

Tiny Self-Care Ideas for the Soul

1. **Imagine you're your best friend.** If you were, what would you tell yourself right now? Look in the mirror and say it.
2. **Use your commute for a "Beauty Scavenger Hunt."** Find five unexpected beautiful things on your way to work.
3. **Help someone.** Carry a bag, open a door, or pick up an extra carton of milk for a neighbor.
4. **Check in with your emotions.** Sit quietly and just name without judgment what you're feeling.
5. **Write out your thoughts.** Go for fifteen minutes on anything bothering you. Then let it go as you burn or bin the paper.
6. **Choose who you spend your time with today.** Hang out with "Radiators" who emit enthusiasm and positivity, and not "Drains" whose pessimism and negativity robs energy.
7. **Stroke a pet.** If you don't have one, go to the park and find one. (Ask first!)
8. **Get positive feedback.** Ask three good friends to tell you what they love about you.
9. **Make a small connection.** Have a few sentences of conversation with someone in customer service such as a sales assistant or barista.
10. **Splurge a little.** Buy a small luxury as a way of valuing yourself.
11. **Have a self-date.** Spend an hour alone doing something that nourishes you (reading, your hobby, visiting a museum or gallery, etc.)
12. **Exercise a signature strength.** Think about what you're good at, and find an opportunity for it today.
13. **Take a home spa.** Have a long bath or shower, sit around in your bathrobe, and read magazines.
14. **Ask for help**—big or small, but reach out.
15. **Plan a two-day holiday for next weekend.** Turn off your phone, tell people you'll be away, and then do something new in your own town.



About Ellen Bard

Ellen Bard's mission is to help you shine more brightly at work and in life. She has a fancy degree, works with those who are too tough on themselves, and loves all things that sparkle. For the free cheat sheet: 5 Unusual Ways to Take Care of Yourself, click over to EllenBard.com.

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