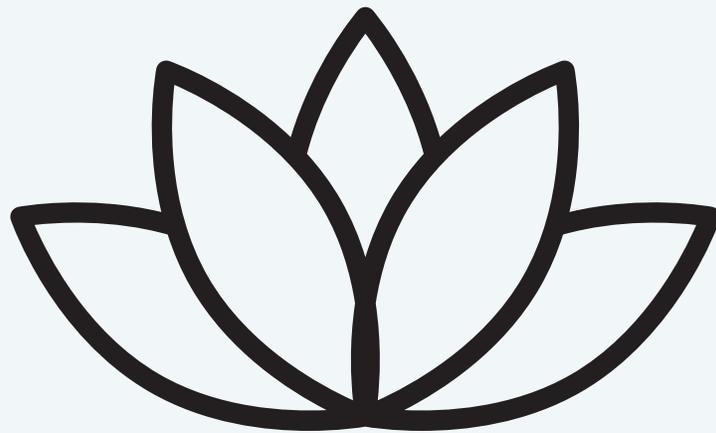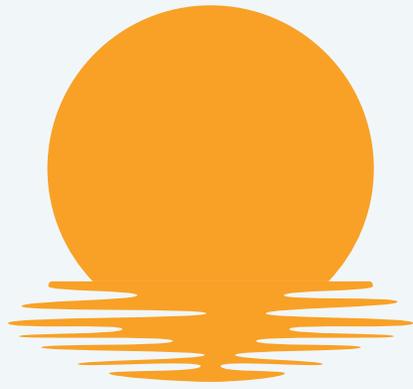# Self-Care Tips for Busy Parents

Finding time to take care of your own needs can be a challenge for busy parents and caregivers. But it's key for maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health.

Here are a few simple activities to try whether you have just a few minutes to focus on you or longer.

IF YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES

Enjoy a Moment of Music
Put on your favorite song! If your space allows you might even dance and sing along.

Hydrate to Feel Great
Take a break and have a glass of cold water. Getting enough water daily helps our brains and bodies stay healthy. It'll help you feel energized and ready to take on whatever comes next.

Pause and Praise Yourself
Take a moment and think about something that went well recently. What was it? How did it make you feel? Noticing and celebrating small victories helps us to thrive.

Take a Breath Break
Pausing to stretch and breath can clear your mind. Inhale a big breath and shrug your shoulders. Exhale and let your shoulders fall. Try again, this time reaching up with your arms as you inhale and letting them fall as you exhale. Try it a few more times.
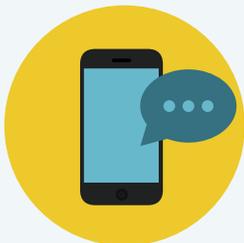
Send a Terrific Text
Sending kind words or just sharing them with someone you care about is good for you too! Giving compliments helps us to notice and appreciate the good things that are happening all around us.

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IF YOU HAVE 10-15 MINUTES

Read to Relax
Get comfortable and pick up something to read. It can be anything, as long as YOU find it enjoyable.

Have a Cup...
Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and sit down to enjoy it. Take a moment to think about something that made you happy or laugh recently. Was it something your child did? Maybe something a friend said?

Clench to Calm
Learning how to relax your body can help ease tension in stressful moments. Start seated or standing. Take a deep breath, clench your lower body and press your feet into the ground. As you exhale, relax your feet and legs. Continue to work your way up your body, inhaling and tightening and exhaling and releasing groups of muscles. After you have relaxed all your muscles, take a few deep breaths. Enjoy the feeling.

Take a Walk
Getting outside and moving your body is a great way to help your mind reset. It's especially helpful if you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. A quick 10 minute walk around the block or in a park can help you feel more energized too.

Write it Out
Spend 10 minutes just writing about whatever is on your mind. Putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper can be great for dealing with worry, stress, and anxiety. You might also note times you got through stressful situations in ways you felt good about. What helped?

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES OR MORE

Phone a Friend
Having a conversation with someone you care about is a powerful coping tool. Connecting with others can lead to feeling less stressed, overwhelmed and alone. Reach out via phone or set up a video call.

Water is Wonderful
Take an unhurried shower or a bath. Enjoy the calm and quiet of the water as you take a few deep breaths and relax.

Sleep
Whether it's taking a short nap or going to bed a little earlier, getting enough sleep is key for overall mental and physical health. Sleep recharges our brains and bodies. We are better able to cope with whatever comes our way.

Laugh!
Laughter actually creates positive physical changes in your body. Spending half an hour watching anything that makes you laugh like a show, movie, comedian, or reading a comic can ease stress. Home videos or funny photos can be great too. Try keeping a laughter journal. You might write about things your child did or said that made you laugh.

Helping Others Helps You
Volunteering your time or donating items you don't need anymore helps others. It can boost your own sense of happiness and well-being. Feeling connected to your community in a meaningful way can be a great happiness booster.

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