



Take Care of Yourself

It's easy to focus on your responsibilities to your partner, children and employer and forget about taking care of yourself. You can improve your self-care habits if you:

Cultivate a Positive Attitude

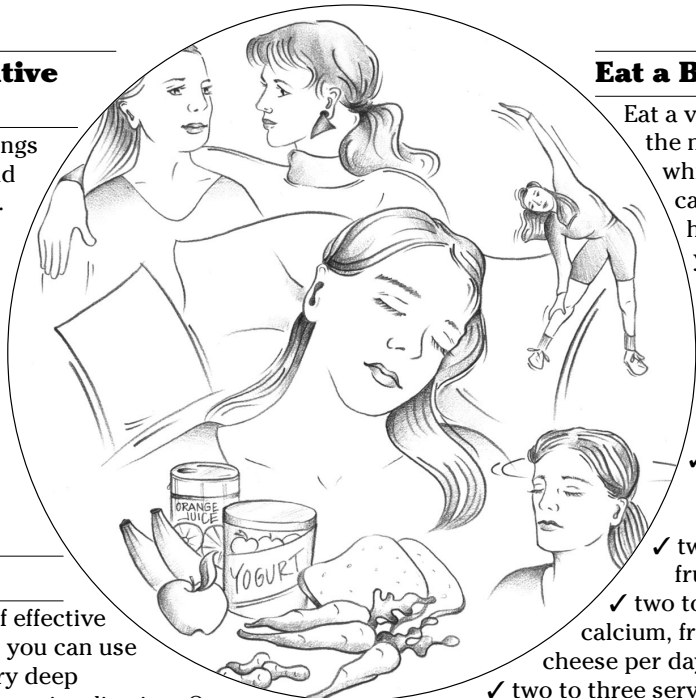
Focus on the good things you see in yourself and act on your strengths. Recognize that you have the capacity to turn unsatisfying situations into more rewarding experiences. Believe in your ability to influence people and circumstances. Learn to enjoy—rather than fear—change.

Relax

There are a number of effective relaxation techniques you can use to quiet your mind. Try deep breathing, meditation or visualization. One simple visualization technique is to imagine you're in a peaceful spot in a forest, by a river or near the ocean. Hear the waves crashing on the beach or the wind rustling through the trees. Smell the crisp, cool air and see the beautiful vistas. To learn more relaxation techniques, purchase books and audio tapes or join classes at community and recreation centers.

Establish an Exercise Routine

A regular exercise routine—whether it includes jogging, walking, swimming or bicycling—helps keep you physically and emotionally hardy. Exercise builds the heart, burns pent-up energy and gets endorphins—those “feel-good” hormones—circulating through your body. Try to get at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week. Try swimming, running, biking or dancing. Nonaerobic exercises, such as yoga, can also improve your health by stretching and relaxing the muscles and inducing deep relaxation and a state of mental well-being.



Eat a Balanced Diet

Eat a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need while limiting your calories to maintain a healthy weight. Take your cues from the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. Eat:

- ✓ six to 11 servings of bread, cereal, rice and pasta per day.
- ✓ three to five servings of vegetables per day.
- ✓ two to four servings of fruits per day.
- ✓ two to three servings of calcium, from milk, yogurt and cheese per day.
- ✓ two to three servings of protein, which can come from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs or nuts, per day.
- ✓ fats, oils and sweets sparingly.

Get Plenty of Rest

Are you getting enough sleep? Most adults need seven or eight hours of sleep a night. If you have trouble sleeping:

- ✓ increase your exercise routine.
- ✓ take a warm shower before bed.
- ✓ avoid bringing work-related materials into the bedroom.

Develop a Solid Support System

A sense of belonging is good for the body and spirit. People with strong support systems tend to be healthier, happier and better able to tolerate stress. Our friends, family members and coworkers provide valuable feedback, help us confront difficult situations and encourage us to meet our goals.