



## Personalizing Your Self-Care Journey to Wellness

Prioritizing self-care is important for mental and physical well-being. Knowing how and where to start, though, can be a challenge as busy adults with a multitude of responsibilities. Here are five ideas from holistic health coach, Catherine Canadeo for self-care techniques and her descriptions of how to develop a self-care journey for yourself.

## 1 | Connect the Brain and the Gut

Mental health is closely connected to physical well-being. Our stomachs have nine nerves that are connected to our brains. This is why when we are feeling nervous or stressed, our stomach can start to cramp.

“Practicing balance is key to keeping our brain and gut healthy,” said Canadeo, an integrated nutritionist and CEO of Catherine Canadeo Health and Wellness. We can do this by eating well and managing our stress, anxiety, and depression.

“When our brain is feeling healthy, we make healthier choices,” she said.

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## 2 | Incorporate Daily Stress and Anxiety Management

A great way to have a positive mindset each day is to set aside time to give gratitude. By vocally stating the three things you are grateful for, you can self-reflect and think about the good things in your life, which can improve your self-esteem and put you in a happy mood for the day.

“Keeping a state of gratitude and being thankful for yourself first really rewires your brain,” she said.

Another way to reduce stress and anxiety is by taking deep breaths and stating self-affirmations. By repeating these affirmations throughout the day, we can properly manage our anxiety and lower cortisol. Canadeo recommends stating, “I am safe, I am secure, I am healthy, and I am loved.”

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## 3 | Reset the Body and Mind

Cultural and societal factors can affect a person’s perception and response to self-care tactics such as diet, exercise, and alcohol intake. For example, in Mediterranean culture, it is common to take a mid-day nap to reset after a long day. They also value taking formal breaks to sit down and enjoy coffee. Similarly, those in Asian cultures frequently take a break to enjoy tea in the afternoon, which provides a moment to gather, communicate, and feel connected according to Canadeo.

These types of self-care practices are ingrained in their cultures. It allows them to silence the noise and prioritize their own mental and physical well-being. Regardless of our cultural backgrounds, we can adopt similar strategies to help us take a short break to reset our bodies and minds.

Our sex is another factor that can impact our ability to relax our minds. Women tend to have a harder time decompressing because of the number of active regions in their brains. “The woman’s brain has five active regions on 24/7, while the man’s brain only has two,” says Canadeo.

Because of this, women’s thoughts are almost always running, and when combined with their tendency to take care of others before themselves, women may deprioritize their own well-being. As a result, women need to set aside time for themselves to breathe and decompress without feeling guilty for doing so.

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## 4 | Make Caring for Yourself a Habit

It is common when embarking on a self-care journey to feel like you are being selfish for putting yourself first, but one must establish boundaries to preserve health. Some people tend to try to please others at the

expense of their happiness. Consequently, we can begin to build resentment for others because our needs are being delayed or ignored.

Canadeo asserts that this type of behavior is not sustainable in the long run as it can become a pattern. Instead, commit to self-care practices so that these activities become a part of your regular schedule.

“When you’re doing things that will sustain your life on a daily basis, it becomes part of your lifestyle,” she said.

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## 5 | Engage Technology

Finally, to better manage your self-care, you can download various wellness apps, such as Calm, which is a great resource for meditation and sleep. It offers various programs geared toward helping manage stress and anxiety and to live mindfully. Noom is another app for nutrition and exercise.

These companies have subscriptions for individuals as well as through employers so check to see if your company benefits offer access to these apps.

Listen to the interview with Canadeo on a [recent episode of the podcast Keeping the Well in Well-thy](#) or look for the podcast on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or YouTube.



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