

Self-Care During This Stressful Time

It's a pretty stressful time on the planet. Developing and practicing healthy coping strategies will help you be successful in this environment and move past it.

Adults, teens and children are all faced with a significant amount of stress. I myself am finding that I need to recommit to my self-care in order to perform my job, support my students and take care of my family. Now we're all cooped up with our families in a way that we haven't been before. We're trying to create a normal schedule and routine in unfamiliar circumstances. That adds extra stress to our home life.

According to Psychology Today, there are many ways you can practice self-care. Here are a few of them.

1. Create a routine or make it a habit. Carve out 15 or 20 minutes a day for self-care. Pick one or two of the ideas below. Set a goal and commit to something for the next week. Then reevaluate and continue or try something new next week. It usually takes 21 to 30 days to create a new habit.
2. Meditation or mindfulness: Even a brief mindfulness meditation can "change the structure and function of the brain, and it's a fabulous way to promote relaxation while reducing anxiety, depression, and stress." There are plenty of YouTube videos and apps that can help you with this. Or, just use your phone and sit quietly for 3 to 5 minutes and breathe.
3. Get some activity into your day:
 - a. Yoga: "Yoga and other types of Eastern methods of activity involve stretching, improving flexibility, connecting mind and body." Any of these practices that include Tai Chi, Qigong, etc., have been around for thousands of years and are shown to reduce stress and increase well-being. Again, there are YouTube videos and free apps to help you begin a practice.
 - b. Exercise: again, just moving every day will help alleviate stress. Use YouTube or search online for something you can do within the space you have at home. When it's appropriate, get outside for a walk, run, bike ride, skate or skate board. Involve family and learn something new!
4. Make sure you're getting enough sleep. Our bodies use sleep to reset and distress. It can be hard, but make sure you're getting the sleep and rest you need. Please try to use the strategies discussed here to improve the quality of your sleep. Cut off screen time for 8 hours over night, and for 30 to 40 minutes before the time you want to go to sleep. Set a schedule and stick to it, sometimes it can take some time for your body to adapt.

These are just a few ideas and are the most important. Tomorrow we'll have some other ideas. Stay tuned.

Adapted from Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inside-out-outside-in/201912/11-self-care-tips-teens-and-young-adults>