

4 Self-Care Tips for Senior Adults

Self-care might sound like a millennial buzzword. But it's a practice worth prioritizing. Especially as an older adult.

The baby boomer and the silent generations are least likely of all age groups to invest in their mental health. Maybe because it's been conditioned to believe that self-care is selfish.

But looking after yourself is actually selfless and the best gift you can give to both yourself and others. When your cup isn't full, you can't fill up others.

Before we explore the four self-care tips for seniors, let's see what self-care even looks like.

What Does Self-Care Look Like?

Self-care is different for everyone. It can be anything from taking a relaxing bath to going for a walk outdoors. What's most important is that it makes you feel good and helps you recharge your batteries.

Generally, it's comprised of six elements:

- Spiritual — devoting time to the beliefs and values that shape who you are
- Psychological — being a lifelong learner, cultivating interests, pursuing your passions
- Emotional — managing, expressing, and nurturing your emotions
- Social — feeling connected with your support network, having meaningful interactions
- Physical — healthy nutrition, sufficient exercise and sleep, preventative medical care
- Financial — living within financial means, creating a budget



As for specific activities, self-care runs the gamut. Just a few examples that come to mind, and some that crossover across categories:

- Spiritual — Praying, meditating, journaling, self-reflecting
- Psychological — Learning, studying, reading, writing, teaching, experiencing, creating
- Emotional — Journaling, talking, expressing, writing, being affectionate
- Social — Socializing, playing, sharing, helping, traveling
- Physical — Exercising, breathing, eating, drinking, moving, sleeping
- Financial — Spending, saving, budgeting

What's key here is to pay attention to the activities that naturally energize and rejuvenate you. There is an endless list of activities that can help you recharge

your batteries and it's likely unique to you. Now that you have a few ideas about what your self-care activity looks like, let's dive into how to make it happen regularly.

Self-Care Tips for Senior Adults

#1 Make the Time

You've heard it before, but self-care is important. It's the one thing that will help you age gracefully and live a long, happy life. But it's not easy when you're always busy with other things that are demanding of your time.

That's why including self-care in [your morning routine](#) — even if it's just 10 minutes, is important. Because if you don't plan for it, it likely won't happen.

It's so important to be intentional about including at least one self-care activity that nourishes you *every day*. This is the tiny stuff in the background that most people don't take the time to prioritize, that will give you the most energy cumulatively over the long term.

And if you do this every day, your life will change in one of the best ways possible. However, do be careful not to overschedule your calendar. A set of studies found that [scheduling leisure activities takes the fun out](#) and makes them feel like obligations.

The most vital thing is to prioritize what energizes you the most, and to be consistent with it, which brings us to tip #2.

#2 Start with the Basics

If you make a huge change in your lifestyle, you probably won't stick to it. Start by choosing just one self-care practice per week to weave into your [daily retirement routine](#). Observe any positive changes and add in more when you feel ready.

Self-care can take on many forms, but it always promotes you and your health. Pay attention to what naturally lights you up, and follow that spark.

In sum: Once you have your daily self-care activity in place, observe any positive changes, and you can add in more when you feel ready. The gist here is to keep it simple and take it one micro-step at a time.

#3 Keep Track of What Works

It's tough to create new habits, even if they're beneficial for you. Research also suggests that the habits that are initially difficult to stick to become easier to maintain.

The key is to repeat an action consistently in the same context and keep track of what works – this is how you'll turn your desired behaviors and actions into more than just sporadic activities.

**Frequently
monitoring
progress toward
goals increases
chance of success.**



Not only will it make you feel more accomplished, but you'll also get a better understanding of what works for *you*.

This awareness that comes with tracking and logging your progress is huge. By becoming more conscious of your thoughts and feelings during these activities, you'll have a better understanding of how they impact you.

And it's truly important to understand which activities energize you and which deplete your energy.

#4 Learn How to Say No

One of the most difficult aspects of self-care is knowing when to say no.

Saying no is a critical life skill. And equally as critical, it's important to know *when* to say no. A simple litmus test — say 'no' to what drains you and 'yes' to what energizes you. Energy above all.

The trick to saying no without hurting anyone's feelings is being honest with yourself about your needs and priorities. It's important to set healthy boundaries, instead of worrying about coming off as rude.

Plus, you can always find a respectful, kind way to vocalize boundaries — not only to other people, but also to yourself.

For instance, researchers examined [the difference between saying "I can't" and "I don't"](#). "I can't" feels like a restriction that strips us away of our personal power. "I don't", on the other hand, feels like a choice.

You don't have an infinite amount of energy and you deserve to spend it on the things that matter to you. So it's worth learning to say "I don't want to", instead of "I can't" without feeling guilty.

Take Care of Yourself

Taking care of yourself is an important part of [aging well](#). And it shouldn't be ignored. So let's recap the 4 best self-care tips for seniors:

- #1. Make the time for it and literally put it into your calendar as you would any other appointment
- #2. Start with the basics and incorporate one self-care practice into your daily life
- #3. Keep track of what works (and what doesn't work). Logging your progress makes all the difference
- #4. Respect your boundaries and practice saying NO (in a kind, respectful way, of course)

If you're feeling lost, take a step back and think about what's really important. You are unique and so are your needs. Every day is an opportunity for growth, you just have to put in the effort to take it.