

# Practicing Self-Care and Self-Calming

You probably spend a significant amount of time every day doing things to ensure your physical health and to prevent illness. But how much time do you take each day doing things to improve your mental health? This worksheet is designed to help you develop habits which are important to your mental *and* your physical health. By practicing self-care and self-calming you can develop a more positive attitude towards life, control your anxiety, and feel calmer and more at peace. Studies also tell us that these practices will contribute to better physical health including improved circulation, a stronger immune system, an improvement in your ability to tolerate pain, and more.

Self-care behaviors address your basic lifestyle. These habits have an almost immediate effect on your physical and mental well-being. They include:

- Getting at least ½ hour exercise each day.
- Getting 8-9 hours sleep each night.
- Eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet, preferably low in sugar and food additives with multiple portions of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Consuming alcohol and caffeine in moderation.
- Spending time each day in the company of people who care about you.

Self-calming techniques are planned and conscious behaviors that trigger your parasympathetic nervous system. These techniques slow your breathing, relax your muscles, and also lower your heart rate and blood pressure. These techniques simultaneously increase the brain chemicals associated with a positive mood and decrease the brain chemicals associated with stress. Self-calming techniques include:

- Progressive Relaxation
- Deep breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Yoga
- Walk in Nature
- Mindful Meditation
- Massage

But none of these techniques can help you if you don't do them. Use the chart on the next page to keep track of using your self-care and self-calming techniques for 21 days. Researchers tell us that this is the amount of time it takes for behaviors to become a habit.

Day	Rate Yourself on Your Self-Care 1=Poor 10=Excellent	What Did You Do to Improve Your Self-Care?	What Self-Calming Techniques Did You Use?	Time Spent in Self-Calming Exercises
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				
Day 7				
Day 8				
Day 9				
Day 10				
Day 11				
Day 12				
Day 13				
Day 14				
Day 15				
Day 16				
Day 17				
Day 18				
Day 19				
Day 20				
Day 21				