

Self-Care Made Simple

25 EASY WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF
YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL



FRANCES LARGEMAN-ROTH



Self care is a hot topic these days — and for good reason.

Our worlds are driven by technology, which is great for many things (like staying connected to our loved ones on social media), but it also adds a lot of extra pressure to our already busy lives. We're always "on" — or at least expected to be. We're easily distracted by the latest influencer or binge-worthy show. We're consuming so much (often conflicting) information that we can start to doubt our decisions and ourselves. And we may end up in a seemingly never-ending cycle of stress as a result.

Sound familiar? If you can relate to any of this and want to reduce overwhelm by taking better care of yourself, *Self-Care Made Simple* is for you. This practical guide has 25 easy ways to calm your mind, body and soul, so you can maximize your long-term health and well-being. And because we all have our own definition of self-care, I've got something for everyone across four self-care pillars, including:

- FOOD: Eating for Self-Care — p. 3
- FITNESS: Breaking a Sweat for Self-Care — p. 5
- SLEEP: Snoozing for Self-Care — p. 7
- COMFORT: Stress Relief for Self-Care — p. 9

Here's to taking better care of ourselves today and every day,

Eating for Self-Care

How to nourish your body and stay in balance with the right foods

What we eat is vital for self-care. Physical health aside, food and drinks can lift us up and nourish us, or bring down our moods. Every ingredient has an effect—and everyone is affected differently. Fortunately, there are simple food choices you can make right now that will promote long-term health and leave you feeling your best self—even if that means indulging in a piece of chocolate. Here's how:

1. Eat more plants every day

Stock your fridge and pantry with plant-based foods, like colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, beans and lentils. They provide vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber PLUS the phytonutrients that science has shown will help us live our longest, healthiest lives.

2. Have dessert...

If you've got a sweet tooth, don't ignore it. Depriving yourself never works in the end. So if you want a piece of chocolate, have one and enjoy it! I particularly love [Fran's Chocolates](#) because they're crazy delicious and they use cocoa that is certified Fairtrade, which means the cocoa farmers got a fair deal. Grab an assorted box and savor one per day for the ultimate dessert fix!



3. ... but be smart about your sugar intake

Avoid obvious added sugars and calorie-free sweeteners in things like coffee or oatmeal. A little milk (which has natural sugars, plus calcium and vitamin D to boot) should be enough to sweeten your morning cup and a handful of fresh or dried fruit is all you need in oatmeal. Got a real taste for the sweet stuff? You can cut back gradually over time until your taste buds adjust.

4. Add variety to your plate

If you're eating the same foods every day, it's time to change things up. Even if you're a novice in the kitchen, you can whip up flavorful meals and snacks that give you the nutrients and variety your body needs for long-term health. Start by prepping easy things like [overnight oats](#), [salads](#) or grain bowls.

5. Promote a healthy gut

Your gut health impacts so many parts of your overall health. To boost your gut health and keep you feeling your best, work in probiotic-rich foods like kimchi and fermented cabbage, plus prebiotic fiber to help those good bacteria thrive (like bananas, green veggies or whole grains). As a starting point, add my [Gut Health Grain Bowl](#) to your regular food rotation.



Self-Care Insight

Frances Largeman-Roth, nutrition and wellness expert and mom of 3

"As a mom, I'm often running out the door without having had breakfast, but I always make time to sit down and eat once I've dropped off the kids at school. I create something that appeals to my palate, as well as to my other senses, like a fruit-topped yogurt bowl or overnight oats. It's a way for me to nurture myself and it gives me a positive start to the day."

Breaking a Sweat for Self-Care

Why fitness is good for the soul — plus how to easily work in some form of movement every day

Running. Yoga. HIIT classes. Taking the stairs. No matter how you move, increasing your cardiovascular activity and giving your muscles a workout has a world of benefits for your well-being. Sure, you'll burn calories and manage your weight, but you'll also just feel better. Exercise releases endorphins that interact with receptors in the brain, helping to reduce stress, pain, anxiety, even depression. But I get it — finding time to exercise on a regular basis is hard and often gets de-prioritized among life's other commitments. These simple tricks can help you make it a priority:

1. Prep ahead

Lay out your gym clothes before bed and put them on as soon as you wake up (even before you brush your teeth!). If you're ready, you're more likely to follow through. You can also prep by filling your water bottle and packing a [healthy snack](#) in your gym bag so you're ready to go.

2. Upgrade your fitness wardrobe

Speaking of workout clothes, the cuter they are, the more likely you'll be to show them off. Invest in outfits that are comfortable to move in (like [this pullover from Brooks](#)) and that make you feel confident.

3. Pre-book your classes

If you sign up for a class in advance, you'll be more invested in showing up. Especially if your gym of choice has cancellation fees!



4. Get a workout buddy

Accountability is key when it comes to establishing an exercise routine, which is why working out with friends—or your pup—can be all the motivation you need.

5. Find time to play

If you've got kiddos, get moving with those little balls of energy! It's easy to rest on a bench when you're at the playground, but they'll love it (and you'll feel better) if you engage them in a game of hide and seek or chase. And there are plenty of fun, seasonal outdoor activities to try with or without kids, like ice skating, snowshoeing or just walking to see the holiday lights.

Self-Care Insight

Meaghan B. Murphy, Executive Editor, Good Housekeeping magazine and mom of 3

"I frontload my day with self-care instead of waiting until after work to 'unwind.' For me that means a 4:47AM wakeup and a 5:15AM workout with a @goodvibetribe of gym buddies. I'm home by 6:30AM to a quiet(!) house—the kids and the dog sleep until 7:15—so I can sip my coffee in peace and do a little writing. (My book *The Fully Charged Life* is due to Penguin-Random House in April!) Nothing stands in the way of this morning ritual, which sets the tone for a YAY day!"



Snoozing for Self-Care

Why rest is crucial for your mind, body and soul — plus how to get more of it

Our brains simply can't function properly without sleep (if you've ever had a newborn, you know what I'm talking about 😊). When we're sleep-deprived, we expose our bodies to a host of mental, physical and emotional health problems. While it can sometimes be hard to go to bed early, there are tricks to get more rest and optimize your Z's.

1. Establish a sleep routine

Try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (even on weekends!) —the consistency allows our brains to process and balance the two types of sleep we need to function properly: deep sleep and REM sleep*.

2. Have a bedtime ritual

To help your body wind down, so you can get to sleep at or close to the same time every night, establish a nighttime ritual that you consistently follow (for example, taking a shower or bath, reading or journaling for 15 minutes, etc.).

3. Ditch your screens

Many of us crawl into bed at a reasonable hour and then wind up in a social media rabbit hole for hours. Not only does this keep us up later than planned, but the stimulation from the screen's blue light affects the quality of sleep we get. Before bed, turn off your phone, set it to "Do Not Disturb" or leave it in a different room. Kick your TV out of the bedroom and opt to read a good old-fashioned book in bed instead.

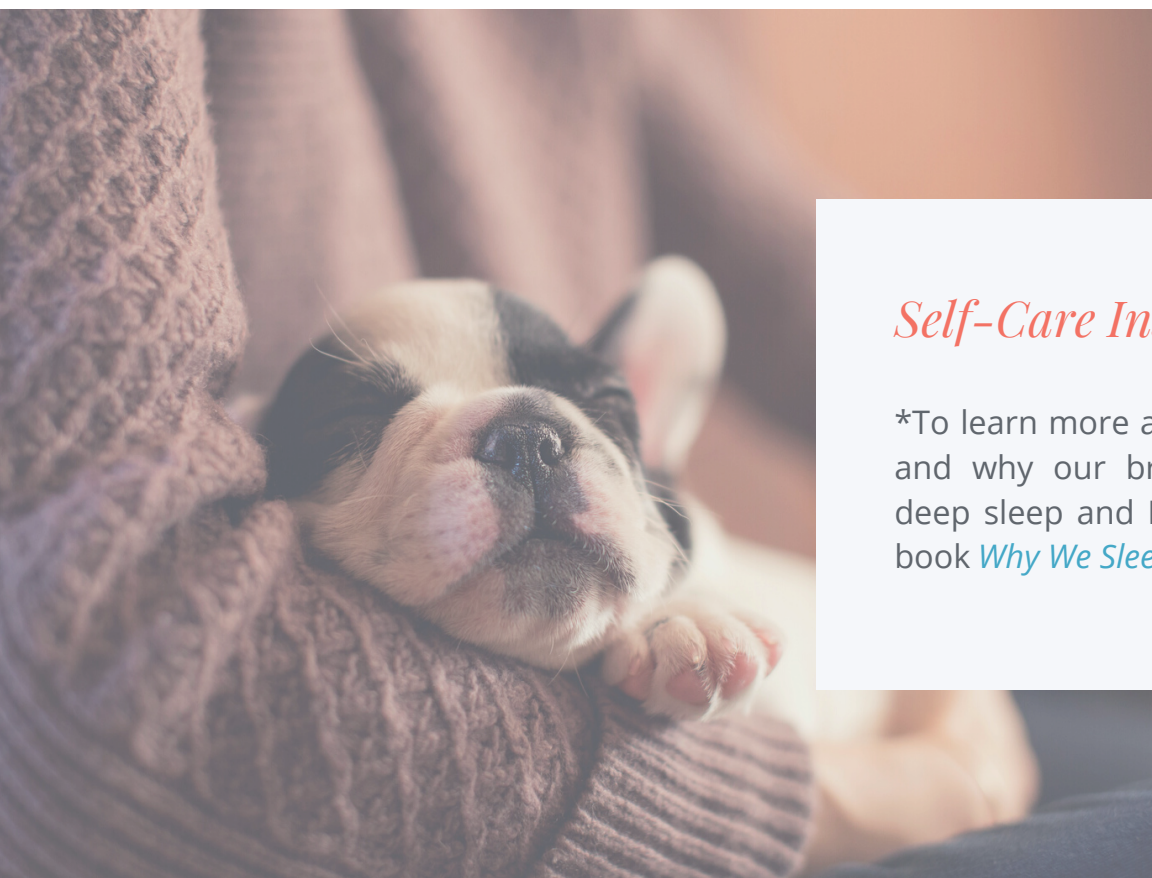


4. Get yourself a hotel-worthy bed

There's a reason we sleep so well in hotels. From the sheets and blankets, to the pillows and blackout shades, hotel rooms just invite sleep. Recreate that luxurious experience in your bedroom—and while you're at it, invest in a comforting weighted blanket (we love [this one from SHEEX](#)).

5. Try melatonin supplements

Swap your afternoon coffee for herbal tea to fall asleep faster, but if that doesn't work, opt for melatonin supplements, like [Olly's Sleep gummies](#), instead. They may help support our body's own production of melatonin and regulate our sleep cycles in the process. Just use in moderation so your body doesn't become dependent on them.



Self-Care Insight

*To learn more about the science of sleep and why our brains need a balance of deep sleep and REM sleep, check out the book [Why We Sleep](#) by Matthew Walker.

Stress Relief for Self-Care

Simple ways to free your mind of overwhelm and feel your absolute best

When we're stressed, we're just not ourselves. In fact, stress can often lead to anxiety, panic attacks, and depression.

Unwind with these simple stress-relieving tricks:

1. Say "no"

The next time someone asks you to do something that doesn't make you jazzed, just say "no" and feel okay doing so. We often want to please everyone, but commitments that don't feel good just weigh you down.

2. Meditate

Simple breathing techniques help us clear our minds, re-center and focus. If you're a meditation newbie, get started by using an app like Headspace.

3. Take a bubble bath

Slip into a hot tub with a soothing bath bomb (I love the ones from [Life Elements](#)), sprinkle a few drops of calming essential oils, burn a stick of palo santo, dim the lights and close your eyes.



4. Drink calming tea

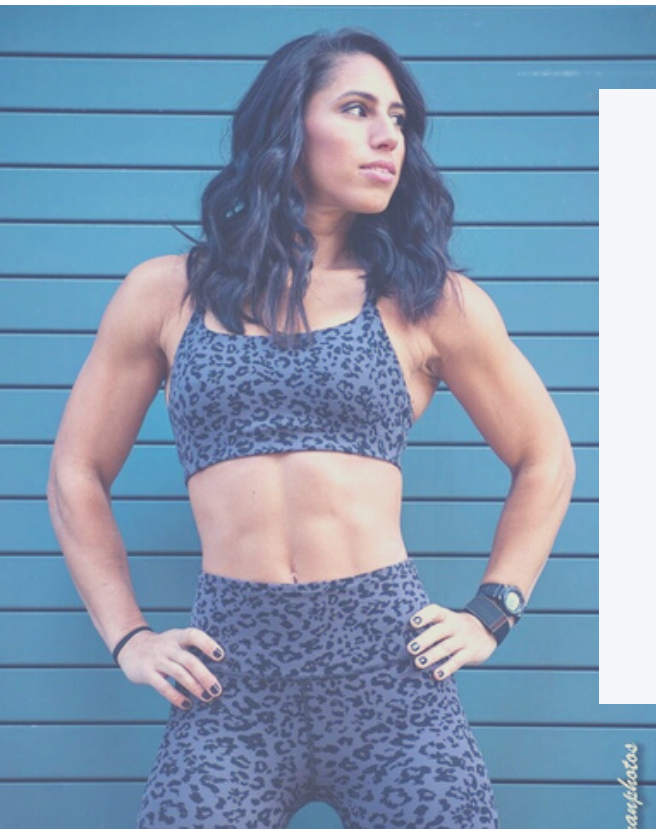
Fill up your reusable tumbler with a fresh pot of herbal tea, like [Teavana's Peach Tranquility tea](#), and just...do nothing.

5. Write it down

Journaling is a great opportunity to regain focus and clarity amidst life's chaotic moments—and many journals these days make it easy with writing prompts and reflections.

6. Clear your calendar

Cancel all your plans, move your meetings and have a day with fewer interruptions so you can focus on doing what you want and/or need to do to get centered.



Self-Care Insight

Angela Gargano, strength coach and 3x American Ninja Warrior

"Journaling every morning. Writing down my thoughts, stresses and gratitude. Shifting my negative thoughts to positive. By just taking these five minutes to myself each morning has drastically changed my life and made me more productive and happy."

7. Get outside

Being in nature has a way of calming the chaos of life. Studies show that spending time outside reduces stress, promotes happiness, boosts self-esteem and increases productivity.

8. Have a cozy night at home

Spend an evening at home focusing only on YOU. Not sure where to start? Try [Paper Source's Big Night In Kit](#), which has everything you need for a restorative night in.



9. Re-engage a fave hobby or get a new one

Love to knit? Used to paint? Always wanted to try photography? Finding an outlet for your creativity, imagination, or self-expression is a great way to reduce stress. We love to bake, but don't always have the time to do it from scratch. The mixes from [Miss Jones Baking Co](#) are responsibly sourced and produce delicious results every time.

10. Talk it out

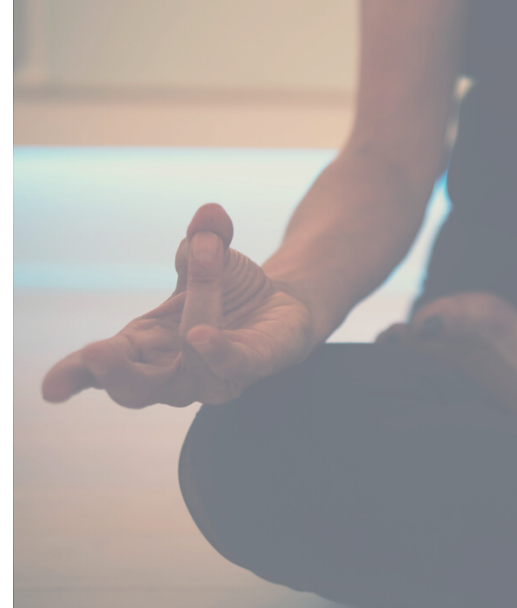
Seek professional help if you're experiencing a debilitating amount of stress and anxiety, feel out of control, or just want someone impartial to talk to. Find a mental health professional near you by going to [Mental Health America](#).



Self-Care Insight

Elisette Carlson, Founder of SMACK! Media and mother of 2

"I am lucky enough to have a fabulous deep tissue massage therapist and prioritize getting a massage every 2-3 weeks. This keeps my body as healthy as possible, and it's a wonderful way to relax as well, despite it being deep tissue!"



Ready to take the first step toward caring for yourself?

I challenge you to incorporate one of these tips into your life every day (post it and tag me!). A small daily investment in your self-care will have lasting effects on your overall health and wellness.

No matter how you choose to practice self-care, make it a routine that works for you and celebrate small wins along the way.

For more healthy living inspo and real food recipes that will have you feeling your best, visit www.franceslargemanroth.com and follow me on Instagram at [@franceslrothrd](https://www.instagram.com/franceslrothrd).



About the Author

Frances Largeman-Roth, RDN, is a *New York Times* best selling author and nationally recognized nutrition expert. Frances is the author of *Feed the Belly: The Pregnant Mom's Healthy Eating Guide* and *Eating In Color: Delicious, Healthy Recipes for You and Your Family*. She is also the co-author of the bestselling *The CarbLovers Diet*.

Frances is a freelance writer and recipe developer for numerous publications, including *Today.com*, *Parents*, *MindBodyGreen*, & *Parade*.

Frances and her family live in Brooklyn, NY.