

7 Ways to Practice Self-Care When It's Difficult



Real self-care for mental health is not bath bombs and luxury massages. Effective self-care takes discipline, but what should you do if you don't even have the energy to get out of bed?

We want to encourage you to make little adjustments to practice self-care from the comfort of your own home.

1 Get off social media or put down electronics altogether.

Social media is made to be addictive to your brain. Heavy social media use has also been [linked to higher rates of depression](#). If putting down your phone completely will cause you stress, take a break by playing a virtual game like solitaire.

2 Try paced breathing.

Taking deep breaths into your stomach helps reset your system. To do paced breathing correctly, breathe in for five, hold for three, and breathe out for six. Try to make your exhale longer than your inhale.

3 Open the blinds or curtains.

If you don't have the energy to get outside, let the sun in through your window. [Sunlight has been proven](#) to help release feel-good chemicals.

4 Journal, draw, or color your feelings.

Expressing yourself creatively is a great way to get all your confusing and negative feelings out. While it isn't a cure for any mental illness, it's a wonderful, low-energy coping technique. You can later share what you wrote/drew with your therapist or a loved one.

5 Turn on music that makes you happy.

Fight the urge to listen to sad songs that will make you more upset. Get on Pandora, Spotify, or YouTube and put on a playlist that's full of feel-good tunes. You might just feel like dancing out of bed.

6 Call a loved one to catch up.

If you live alone or spend lots of time isolated from others, this is a critical step. Connecting to those you love can make all the difference when it comes to making a bad day good. You don't even have to talk about how you're feeling, just talk.

7 Let yourself have a bad day.

A lot of well-intentioned people will encourage you to "stay positive" or "think happy thoughts." But you know it's not that easy when you are going through a rough patch or when you have a mental illness. Be kind to yourself if you can't get out of bed—just maybe you'll get a foot on the ground tomorrow.

Together, let's take a small step every day.
Mental Health Month • May 2020

Steps4
Mental
Health
cardinalinnovations.org