

Self Care for Parents

Stress causes wear and tear on a person, inside and out. When you take time for self-care, you are better able to care for your child—and even a few minutes of “you time” can help you recharge so that you can parent at your best. Remember, you are doing a great job by doing the best you can. Keep these tips in mind when you’re feeling overwhelmed:

Stay (virtually) social. Spending more time at home than usual can take a toll. Reach out to loved ones and friends with a phone call or video chat. Keeping social distance from others doesn’t mean you need to go it alone.

Sleep. When your little one lays down to rest, try to do the same. If he’s having trouble settling down, sing him a quiet song that you loved when you were small, one that calms you down, too.

Take a ten-minute vacation. As you’re bathing your child, soak your hands in the warm water and give her a little massage, taking long deep breaths as you do so. Or take a break by listening to a favorite song, reading a few pages of a new book, or doing some energizing stretches.

Keep a journal by your bed. Before you fall asleep, remember something funny, kind, or surprising that your child did today. Write a few lines that capture the memory. If you are feeling down, you can read through your memory journal.

Fill your cup. Get a nice big glass of water and find a comfy spot to sit. Let your child know, “I’m just going to sit and (read/think/breathe) while I drink this glass of water.” Explain that you’ll be available once the glass is empty. Children have difficulty keeping track of time—this is a concrete way to help them understand that you are taking a few minutes to yourself.

Turn on the tunes! Never underestimate the power of music to change the mood. Put together a playlist of songs that make you feel good. You might create different playlists for different moods (one to relax, one to energize, and so on).

Get moving. Taking movement breaks throughout the day can help alleviate stress and keep you well. Even if you’re stuck inside, try a few small-space, body-weight exercises like squats, lunges, arm-raises or yoga.

