

*Helping  
you to help  
your child*

# **Self-Care Ideas for Busy Parents and Carers**

7 strategies for parents, carers and other  
supporting adults who are better at looking  
after others than themselves




When we neglect self-care, we put ourselves at risk of burnout


## Introduction

Self-care tends to get neglected when we're busy looking after others, but we neglect it at our peril. If we don't make a little time and space to look after ourselves, it's hard for us to continually be the adult that our children need and we put ourselves at significant risk of burnout.

In this guide, I've shared a few ideas for self-care which can realistically be shoe-horned into an already very busy schedule. I hope you find these ideas helpful. Remember, you matter too!



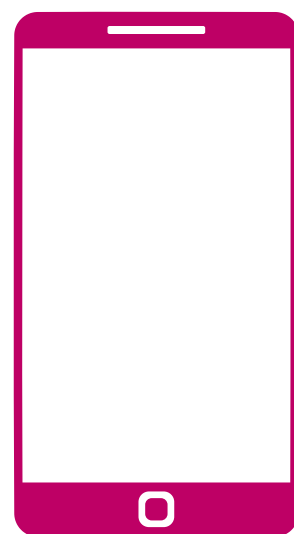
*When you take better care of yourself, you're also providing excellent role modelling to the children in your care*



# Good Night Phone

I often suggest to people that they try to create a few minutes of golden time for themselves each day, these minutes can be used for anything that makes you feel good. You might read or journal or meditate or exercise or paint or sing or, or, or... you get the picture.

But where do you find the time? The best answer I've found is to give your phone a bedtime a little ahead of your own and to put it to bed in a different room to you. That time you used to spend doom scrolling and news checking can become your own golden time. You'll get to bed no later but with a few minutes just for you.



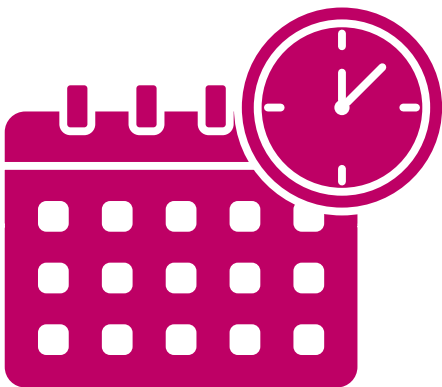


## Schedule Quality Time

One of the things that can make us feel good is spending meaningful time with people we care about and trust. It can be difficult to find the time, but with a little forward planning, we can build this time in ahead before the diary fills with other things.

It can be helpful even to schedule to spend quality time with the people you live with. A date night with a partner or an hour of promised golden time with a child can be hugely restorative. This is a double win because quality time with us is something our loved ones are grateful of too.

It can help to add a few rules to this time; perhaps you'll be screen-free and promise not to talk about work or school for example.



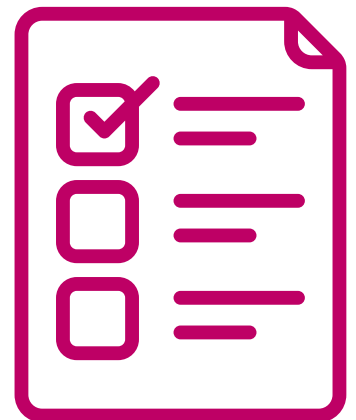
# Write a To-Don't List

We're pretty familiar with to-do lists, you probably have one as long as your arm, but have you ever written a to-don't list?

I'm a big fan of a to-don't list. The idea is simply to cast our mind over all the things that we regularly do and consider which of these we could lose... we then do so with no sorrow or regret and create just a little more time in our lives.

Good candidates for your to-don't list include other people's to-dos, unnecessary meetings, things that can be done online instead of in-person and stuff you do out of habit and you can't really remember why anymore. Finally, you might choose to lose things you simply do not WANT to do...

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## Upgrade Your Sleep Space

If we can take small steps towards improving our sleep, it can make a big difference in how we feel day-to-day. One of the simplest ways of doing this is to think about the environment in which we're sleeping and consider whether there are little things we can do to improve this environment.

Consider:

- Is your room dark enough for sleep?
- Do you have comfortable bedding and nightwear?
- Is your room at a good temperature?
- Is it clean and tidy?
- Is it a safe zone away from work?



# Make Mindful Moments

Finding mini moments of mindfulness can help us to have a bit of a mental declutter and take a break. We don't have to invest in long periods of meditation or mindfulness to feel a difference here, but instead, ride on the coattails of everyday activities that you're already engaging with and turn them into mindful moments.

You can do this by really focusing in on your senses and allowing all other thoughts to pass on by. You could drink a mindful cup of tea, take a mindful shower or mindfully brush your teeth, really noticing how the toothpaste tastes and the feel of the bristles, rather than zoning out of the task and into the many other things on your mind.



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## Just Add Music

Another way to help ourselves to feel good day-to-day, without needing to find extra hours in the day, is to add music to everyday tasks to turn them from chores into something a bit more lighthearted and fun.

Adding music to your commute, boogying as you cook or bopping along as you get on with the hoovering are all little ways you can add a little joy to the day-to-day.





# Hobby Alongside

Finally, consider whether there is a hobby that you could engage in alongside your child. Investing time in activities that you both enjoy and especially if you can enjoy these activities together is a great way to both invest into your relationship with your child and also to invest a little time in yourself.

You don't need to be good at something and it's great if there's no pressure and the stakes are low. Instead, look for something that sparks a little joy and makes you smile.

If your child is happy for you to join their hobby rather than vice versa, it can be a great opportunity for them to wear the mantle of expert and for you to role model your willingness to learn new things.



# Works Best When

It's important that you find the way that works best for you and your family when trying out new strategies, but a few things that can really help include:

Do what makes YOUR heart sing. Not what works for others

## - Small -

Try to start small, think about what feels manageable and take little steps towards a different way of doing things rather than trying to take giant leaps.

## - Smile -

Adapt these ideas to do the things that make your heart sing. We're all different and what sparks joy for one person may trigger dread in another. Do the things that make YOU smile.

## - Sustain -

When you are trying new things, don't give up on them too soon. Try to sustain them for a couple of weeks before deciding whether they're a good investment of your time and energy.

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- Thank You! -

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Pooky x

