

THE SELF-CARE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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With the holiday season upon us, let's talk about how we can create peace for ourselves during stressful times. There is a lot going on in the world around us, our communities, and our own lives. Taking time out for ourselves allows us to take a step back and assess what is happening in our body, mind, and surroundings. Taking care of ourselves allows us to better serve others. Here are three self-care gifts you can give yourself this year.

The Gift of R&R: Rituals & Routines

Part of practicing self-care is developing our own rituals and routines that support our health and wellness. Rituals are the little things we do for ourselves that have a BIG impact, and a routine is how frequently we do the ritual. One example of a ritual and routine that you may have already established is having a cup of coffee or tea before starting your day.

Give yourself a gift this holiday season by adding more healthy rituals to your current routine and prioritizing self-care. That may start with setting boundaries around your availability and accessibility to others. It could mean redistributing your time, realistically managing expectations (our own or others), and setting priorities around our days. This is a system I personally use to establish daily priorities:

1. What is the #1 thing I want to accomplish today?
2. What is something I would like to get done today, but it's okay if happens another day?
3. What is one thing I can do for myself today that brings me JOY?

Start by adding one small ritual to your day doing something that you enjoy and makes you feel relaxed. Here are some easy ways to get started with a self-care routine:

- Have a cup of coffee, tea, or water in a distraction-free setting first thing in the morning, mid-day, or before bed.
- Do a brain-boosting puzzle such as a daily crossword or sudoku.
- Read from a book or magazine for 30 minutes before bed.
- Go for a walk on your own, with a friend, or with a pet.
- Take a warm shower or bath.
- Personal hygiene such as developing a skin care or dental care routine.

The Gift of an Attitude of Gratitude

Another gift we can give ourselves is gratitude. The ability to focus on the positive and feel connected is essential to our mental well-being. Changing your thoughts from negative to positive will bring you more peace. How can you show gratitude for yourself and others?

- Spend time with the people you love and tell them why you love them.
- Text important people in your life and tell them you're thinking about them.
- Keep a gratitude journal and list things or people you are thankful for each day.
- Surround yourself with positive people – or strive to be the positive one in the group.
- Practice positive self-talk – if you notice a negative thought creeping in, how can you change it to be more positive?





The Gift of Healthy Habits

One final gift to give yourself this season is the gift of new healthy habits. We want to practice self-care and gratitude, but don't forget to show your physical self some love. Remember to incorporate things like movement, good nutrition, and sleep. How can we create more healthy habits in our routine? Here's a hint: start by focusing on ONE thing you can do for yourself each day.

To add more movement:

- Take the stairs anytime and as often as you can.
- Do chores like vacuuming, washing dishes, and folding laundry.
- Walk while talking on the phone or texting with friends.
- Work out at your desk by doing some squats, lunges, and even push-ups.
- Park far away anywhere you go so you'll get more steps.
- Try walking a different route to work or around the office.
- Walk the dog – maybe even consider more than one walk in a day.

To encourage good nutrition:

- Invest in a refillable water bottle – something that is easy for you to take everywhere.
- Try flavoring your water with fresh fruit (current holiday favorite: pomegranate and fresh lime with a sprig of rosemary).
- Have grab and go snacks handy such as fruit and veggies, yogurt, nuts/seeds, and dips.
- Cook your protein and veggies in bulk so you have extra for other meals.
- Aim to cook at least three meals at home per week, and try to make extra for leftovers.

To get better sleep:

- Establish a consistent bedtime by going to bed and waking up the same times daily.
- Put electronic devices to bed at least one hour before your bedtime.
- Invest in a real alarm clock and keep your phone out of reach from the bed.
- Find relaxing activities to do at the end of the day to help you unwind, like spending time with family, reading, or writing in your gratitude journal.

Kindness for yourself can be contagious. The more we do for ourselves, the more it inspires others to make themselves a priority as well. Let's start this holiday season by spreading the joy of love and self-care and bring it with us into the new year.

Want to learn some new ways to give these gifts to yourself, employees, and colleagues? Contact Wellness Concepts to learn about our Stress Management Series at well-concepts.com.



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