

The little book of  
SELF-CARE



30 days of self-care tips from  
Penny Brohn UK

May you be happy  
May you be free from suffering  
May you be healed  
May you be at peace



# Self-care doesn't have to be selfish

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We all need to take a break sometimes from the challenges that life throws our way. It can be very easy to put this off, feeling that we are being selfish in taking time for ourselves.

**Here are some suggestions on how to avoid feeling this way:**

- Book in time to catch up with an old friend that you have wanted to see for a while. Making time for the people we care about can help to lift our spirits.
- Spend just five minutes when you are getting ready in the morning, thinking about the things that make you happy.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Give yourself a break

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We understand that it can be hard to find the time to take a break sometimes. But taking time to relax isn't a luxury – it's a necessity.

## Here are some of our suggestions:

- Try using our self-care permission slip to allow yourself the time to look after yourself.
- Consider all the hours that you have spent doing things for others this week. Giving yourself some attention might not feel so difficult after all.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Believe in the power of talking

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Never underestimate the power of talking. Talking through your concerns can help to improve your mood and quality of life, alleviating anxiety and depression.

## Here are some of our suggestions:

- Call up a friend- even if just for 10 minutes- and have a good chat about anything, especially something that makes you laugh.
- If you don't feel you can speak to your friends or family, it might feel safer talking to a counsellor. If so, give us a call.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Cancel your unnecessary plans

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We know it's easily done, but making unnecessary plans can be a cause of stress. Why not take the pressure off and cancel any unessential plans for the coming week?

## Here are some suggestions on how to deal with this:

- If you're concerned about offending a friend, try writing them a letter to explain why you need to rest. They'll feel appreciated and hopefully understand your reasons.
- Try to avoid making too many plans for one day. You're more likely to go to the ones you do make and will feel less overwhelmed.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Smile at as many people as possible

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A smile is one of the easiest and simplest ways of practising self-care and can lead to better health and wellbeing.

## Here are some suggestions on how to get yourself smiling:

- Think of something that you can use as your “smile cue.” You might choose a sound, like a phone ringing or a visual such as seeing someone laughing. Try to smile every time you encounter your cue this week.
- If this feels too straight-forward, perhaps try a laughter workshop like laughter yoga.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Find one positive goal to look ahead to

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Creating positive goals is a great way to put self-care into action. By considering what you want to achieve, and then committing to it you can give your confidence a boost when you achieve these goals. Make sure you don't punish yourself. Simply take positives from the progress you have made.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Take some time today to note down one or two positive goals to look ahead to this year.
- Try scrapbooking your progress, or- if you are a social media buff- you could post your progress online.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Notice your feelings without judgement

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Stop punishing yourself for having feelings. The mind's ability to generate unhelpful self-judgments is very powerful but it can be damaging to our emotional wellbeing.

## Try out our tips for limiting self-judgement:

- Centre yourself in the present. When a negative thought comes into your head, just note it, without reacting and bring yourself back to what you are doing right now.
- Try documenting your feelings in a journal, helping you to better understand patterns in your thought processes.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Use one of your strengths in a new way

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Take some time today to ask yourself what your strengths are. Is there a new way you could use them?

## Try our suggestions for using your strengths for self-care:

- Stop forcing yourself to do things that don't feel natural to you. Meditation might not suit you, but reading a history book might! Find out what works for you.
- Not sure what your strengths are? Trying new things might push you a bit outside your comfort zone but will allow for new experiences, friendships and opportunities.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Give yourself permission to say no

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It is very easy to feel obligated to do everything that is asked of you, but giving yourself permission to say no to requests from others is important for your own wellbeing.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Know when you have taken on too much. If you explain your plans to others and suggest rearranging for some time in the future, they will understand.
- There are ways to say no, without feeling rude. Try something along the lines of: 'Thanks for thinking of me, but I have too much on my plate right now'.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Find a calming phrase to say to yourself

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Since being self-critical is often an automatic response to a disappointment it is the self-compassion that is less well known. Self-compassion works best if practiced intentionally.

## Here are some suggestions on how to avoid feeling this way:

- Create yourself a self-compassion mantra. When it is difficult to speak kindly to yourself in your mind, a mantra can be helpful. Repeat this over and over to yourself.
- Make a list of what you like about yourself. Close your eyes and remember doing something that turned out well.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Find yourself some headspace

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Brilliant things happen in calm minds. Gaining headspace through meditation isn't about becoming a different person, or even a better person. It's about getting a healthy sense of perspective on your thoughts and feelings.

**Here are some suggestions on how to avoid feeling this way:**

- There are tonnes of apps you can use for mindfulness and meditation, including Headspace, Calm, Buddhify and more. Explore what works for you.
- Struggling for time? Just think, it could be that 1% that shifts the other 99% of your day in a more positive direction.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Be thankful for the small things

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Gratitude is self-care gold. But sometimes, gratitude feels downright impossible. Think of something that you are thankful for today, big or small, and make a note of it.

## Here are some suggestions on how to achieve this:

- Dentists recommended we brush our teeth for at least two minutes—ample time to do a mental gratitude practice.
- Turn tech-loading time into gratitude time. Whether it's an Instagram feed or opening an email, use it as a cue to think of just one thing you are grateful for.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Revisit your favourites

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Don't feel pressured to socialise every day. If you don't feel up to going out, try revisiting some of your favourite relaxing pastimes to show yourself some care and consideration.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Cosy up with a film that never fails to make you smile. Whether it is a feel good classic or a slapstick comedy, revisiting your go-to movie will help boost your mood.
- Curl up in your favourite chair with a book. If you're reading something new and you're not enjoying it; put it down!

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Be a tourist in your own city

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How well do you know your local area? Why not take the opportunity to be a tourist in your home town today. You might be surprised what you see that you've never noticed before!

## Here are some suggestions for what to do:

- Visit a museum- perhaps of local history- and learn some interesting things to tell your friends when they visit.
- Take a stroll around the city and instead of rushing, or looking down at your phone, look up and around, making an effort to notice new things about the locality.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Wear something that makes you feel good

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Never wear something just because other people are wearing it or because you think you should. Feeling fashionable will never outweigh feeling comfortable and confident.

## Struggling to know what to choose?

- There's nothing quite like getting a compliment to give your self-esteem a boost. Why not wear something you've received a compliment about before.
- Whether you've had something complimented or it is simply the comfiest thing you own, if you love it, wear it.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Cook your most loved meal

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When we're feeling low, it can be hard to motivate ourselves to do even the simplest of things, such as cooking and eating a healthy meal. But eating well can make all the difference to our wellbeing.

## Here are our suggestions on eating well despite how you feel:

- On a better day, cook a big batch up and freeze it, so that even on your bad days, you can still eat well by simply defrosting and reheating your favourite meal.
- Ask a friend over to cook with you. This might give you the motivation you need to cook something delicious.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Speak to a loved one

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Understand that the real connections in our lives run deep, deeper than external opinions and attitudes. If you are feeling vulnerable, take some time to voice it to a loved one.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Invite someone you trust over for dinner and at the right time, vocalise how you are feeling in a relaxed way. Voicing your problem may be all you need.
- If you're short of time, or you find face-to-face a little intimidating, just pick up the phone.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Get outdoors for some fresh air

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Even in the coldest months, getting some fresh air can do wonders to clear your head and can be a great way to practice being mindful in the present moment.

## Here are some suggestions on what you could do:

- Feeling energetic? Try going for a short jog or bike ride (or a long one if you are able). Exercise is a great way to boost your endorphins and help you out of a low mood.
- Can you try walking to work instead of driving? The fresh air may help you to kick off your day positively!

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Try out something new

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It is easy to get stuck in a rut, doing the same things day in, day out. If you're feeling stuck, why not try something new? If you don't enjoy it you can stop but if you love it, all the better!

**Here are some suggestions on how to avoid feeling this way:**

- Feeling the need for a challenge? Why not start learning a new musical instrument or take an online course? It might be the learning curve you've been craving.
- Not sure if you're ready to commit to something long-term, organise a daytrip to a climbing centre or trampoline park.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Turn off your phone

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In a digital age where we are constantly fed images of other people's 'perfect' lives, sometimes you need to turn off Twitter, forget Facebook, ignore Instagram, and get on and live.

## Here are some suggestions for what to do instead:

- Write a postcard or letter to a friend you haven't seen in a while. Pop to the postbox and send it. Receiving post is likely to make them smile and you might get one back!
- Start that project you've wanted to tackle for a while. Begin by simply writing a few notes and plan what you need.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Listen to some great music

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Music is an art form available to almost every human being. Anyone can explore safe and appropriate ways in which music can lift their mood.

## Here are some suggestions on using music for self-care:

- Exercise releases endorphins. A play list of suitable tracks can energise people - try planning yours now.
- Music can also be used to calm your mind after a busy day. Have you tried listening to some relaxing tracks to help you drift off?

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Try out a new board game

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Board games are generally designed to be played with others. Having a regular group of people to play with can help reduce loneliness and build positive relationships.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Invite some friends over for a board games evening after work. It'll create a nice social break in the week.
- Feel like heading out the house? Look out for you nearest board game friendly pub or cafe. You may be able to take one with you and some places may even have their own.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Protect yourself against illness

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It can be hard to protect ourselves from the various germs flying around but there are ways we can improve our emotional wellbeing by looking after our bodies and vice versa.

## Here are some suggestions on how to avoid getting ill:

- Keep germs at bay by following good personal hygiene habits and preventing spreading them to others.
- Get the best quality sleep you can. Try to go to bed at roughly the same time each evening, and prepare yourself for sleep with a proper bedtime routine.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Always have something to look forward to

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We all need to take a break sometimes from the challenges that life throws our way. It can be very easy to put this off, feeling that we are being selfish in taking time for ourselves.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Look forward to meeting new people and seeing their characteristics for the first time or seeing old friends and learning more about them.
- Write a list of things you really enjoy and make sure you regularly plan them into your schedule.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Treat yourself today

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Remind yourself that you deserve to lead a happy life and enjoy yourself on a regular basis. It's the little pleasures that get us through the everyday grind. So go ahead, treat yourself.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Buy a seriously decadent treat. Whether it is a bouquet of beautiful flowers or a good quality bar of chocolate, treat yourself and really enjoy it.
- Put off the chores until tomorrow and have an early night, just because you feel like it.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Do something just for you

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In today's constantly connected world, finding solitude has become a lost art. But seeking solitude can actually be quite healthy and there are many benefits to spending time alone.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Go and see a new movie by yourself during a weekday afternoon. There's something relaxing and peaceful about seeing a film alone in a quiet cinema.
- Don't spend your lunchtime at your desk or running errands, and don't think that it always has to be spent with others.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Recognise that you are doing fine

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It can be all too easy to be our own harshest critic. Most of us are so busy trying to make something big happen, we forget to pause and appreciate all our little victories.

## Here are some things you can try out:

- Ask a trusted friend to write down what they admire or like about you and read it when you are having doubts.
- Don't judge your past failures as an indication of your future potential. Your past has given you the strength and wisdom you have today, so celebrate it.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Allow yourself to be still

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The very centrepiece of all meditative technique is the simple practice of being present for experience. Being fully here, right now. In the body. In the breath.

## Try these options and work out what is best for you:

- Take 10 minutes today to sit still and breathe. There are loads of exercises you can find online to help you practice.
- Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes. You may even want to invest in a meditation chair or cushion to help your mind to recognise that you are about to meditate.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Make sure you get enough sleep

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The length and quality of our sleep has a huge impact on both our physical and mental wellbeing. Experts suggest that adults get 7-9 hours of sleep a night but it is often the thing we find hardest when we are under pressure.

## Here are some suggestions on how to get the rest you need:

- Set a regular bedtime. Your body craves consistency, plus you're more likely to get enough sleep if you schedule rest.
- Drinking caffeine during the day can keep you up at night. Try resisting coffee in the 6-8 hours before bed.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**



# Show yourself forgiveness

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Would you criticise a friend for not achieving all the things on their list? Whether you have achieved 10 things or nothing at all from this booklet, forgive yourself.

## Tips for forgiving yourself:

- Before you can move forward, you need to acknowledge and process your emotions. Recognise them and welcome them.
- If something is too much, tell yourself you are putting it aside for now and will return to it when it will benefit you.

**What have I done?**

**Did this work for me? (Colour in your rating out of 10)**





**Penny Brohn UK**  
Living Well with Cancer