

## Self-Compassion and Self-Care



### Importance of Self-Care:

Self-Care is important to maintaining a healthy relationship with yourself. It means doing things to take care of our minds, bodies, and souls by engaging in activities that promote wellbeing and alleviate stress. Doing so enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care often reminds you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.

Ideally, we're all engaged in regular self-care, doing activities that make us feel cared for mentally, physically, and emotionally. But this doesn't always happen, and we may need to stop and take the time to remind ourselves that we are important, too.

### Self-Care and Exercise: Love Yourself Enough to Exercise.

It's important that we love and value ourselves – and a regular exercise regimen is one of the best gifts of self-love that we can offer. Taking time away from ourselves for our busy lives and engaging in physical activity is essential to a happy, healthy and well-balanced life.

### Emotional Benefits of Exercise:

- **Improves Overall Mood:** Exercise increases your brain's production of endorphins. Endorphins are the "feel-good" neurotransmitters that are responsible for the coveted "runner's high." This is the sense of well-being and euphoria that many people experience after exercise.
- **Increases Confidence:** Setting, working on, and achieving a set of goals helps build a sense of personal accomplishment. With each accomplishment, you can continue to work on building larger goals. It feels great to accomplish something new.
- **Improves Sleep:** Sufficient sleep is connected to quality of life and overall health. Because exercise reduces anxiety, depression, and stress, it can also lead to improved sleep quality.

### Self-Compassion:

Compassion is the ability to show empathy, love, and concern to people and self-compassion is the ability to direct these same emotions within, and accept oneself, particularly in the face of failure. Self-compassion is the ability to turn understanding, acceptance, and love inward. Many people are willing to extend compassion towards others but find it difficult to extend the same compassion toward themselves.



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### **Self-Compassion and Exercise:**

There is potential for self-compassion to help you self-regulate physical activity behavior with less fear of failure and emphasis on being perfect. Amidst our hectic lives, it is important to remember to be kind to ourselves, to engage in self-care, and to have self-compassion for yourself and others. Check out the [Giving Yourself Grace: Mindfulness/Self-Compassion](#) blog for more information.

### **3 Elements of Self-Compassion by [Dr. Kristin Neff](#):**

1. Self-kindness or refraining from harsh criticism of the self.
2. Recognizing one's own humanity, or the fact that all people are imperfect, and all people experience pain.
3. Mindfulness, or maintaining a non-biased awareness of experiences, even those that are painful, rather than either ignoring or exaggerating their effect.

### **Practicing Self-Compassion:**

[Self-Compassion Guided Meditations and Exercises](#)