

FIVE WAYS TO PRACTICE DAILY SELF-CARE

in 5-minutes or less

Nour-ish-ment: *the food or other substances necessary for growth, health, and good condition*

I like to re-frame "other substances" as self-care. This aspect of nourishment plays an important role of how your body absorbs, circulates, and utilizes the nutrients you take in. Self-care can look like many things and can take as little as 10-seconds. When practiced regularly, self-care has the power to reduce stress which is often associated with symptoms like chronic inflammation. Below are simple practices, backed by science, recommended with your busy mommy lifestyle in mind.

1. Dry Skin Brushing

Dry skin brushing is a simple self-care technique with a multitude of benefits. The best part is, it can be practiced every day before getting in the shower, taking anywhere from 10-seconds to 5-minutes. This practice specifically benefits the body's lymphatic system, aka the defense system, which is located just under our skin. The lymphatic system is responsible for cleansing the body of toxins and circulating nutrients. By stimulating your skin you will increase the energy flow, leaving you feeling refreshed and energized. With a natural or vegan (versus synthetic) dry skin brush, simply start at your feet and make gentle circles with the brush over all areas of your skin. *Always brush towards your heart.*

For more insight into dry skin brushing and further instructions visit:
<https://wellnessmama.com/26717/dry-brushing-skin/>

2. Grounding

Simply put, grounding is putting your bare feet on the Earth. The Earth is full of electrons that act as anti-oxidants in our body when our bare skin connects with nature. Otherwise known as Earthing, grounding has been shown to reduce pain and inflammation. More so, mothers have found colic to subside when holding baby while standing barefoot in the grass.

For more insight into the history and benefits of grounding, check out the following video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSNnlg2cVjc> Light a candle

3. Deep Belly (*Pranayama*) Breathing

By breathing in your nose and filling your lower abdomen to its max capacity, the air will gently activate your lumbar parasympathetic ganglion (aka your rest and digest system), resulting in lower blood pressure and increased blood flow to your digestive tract. This practice is often referred to as pranayama breathing and can be as simple as inhaling for 4 seconds, holding for 4 seconds, and slowly exhaling for 4 seconds. You may consider taking deep breaths before a meal, upon waking, or before falling asleep. Placing a sticky note reminder on your kitchen table or night stand is a great way to remember!

For more insight into the history and benefits of pranayama breathing, check out:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f654/bcf17bb5d6ee0359f0db8ecb47dcf0c19b33.pdf>

4. Keep a Gratitude Journal

The act of journaling, specifically journaling about gratitude, has an interesting science behind it of increasing a person's well-being and life satisfaction. Writing in itself requires mindfulness, and you may find helps you to balance emotions. Keeping a gratitude journal can be as simple as waking up and writing down three things you are grateful for. Not interested in a journal? Try writing down one thing that brings you joy each day on a sticky note and place it in your kitchen, nursery, or car for daily reminders.

For more insight into the benefits of practicing gratitude, check out:

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/gratitude-journal/>

5. Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is an effective tool to enliven your senses, shown to reduce anxiety, stress, and the postpartum blues. Popular ways to use aromatherapy include adding a few drops of an essential oil to your loofa in the shower, a diffuser in your home, nursery, or office, or with self-massage before bed. Scents such as chamomile, rose, lavender, vetiver, and frankincense are among the most recommended to promote relaxation and grounding.

For more insight into the benefits of aromatherapy check out:

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/>

<https://naha.org/explore-aromatherapy/about-aromatherapy/>