

PERSONAL SELF-CARE STRATEGIES TO TRY



Make gratitude post-its. Start your day by writing three things on a post-it that you are thankful for. Gratitude is linked to increased happiness, contentment, and hope and can also make us more willing to help others.

Eat a well balanced breakfast. Breakfast is the fuel that gets the body going. Without food early in the day, the body runs out of gas late in the day and craves food which can lead to choosing less healthy options and sugar spikes. Aim for any meal being well balanced with protein, plenty of fruits and vegetables and wholegrains. For tips see the [Canada Food Guide](#)

Stay hydrated. Being hydrated helps reduce fatigue, improves movement and aids in digestion. Make water your drink of choice. Herbal teas, decaf coffee, carbonated water are all good choices. Learn more about meeting your hydration needs [here](#).

Walk briskly for 10 minutes a day. Make the most of your commute to work or across campus. There is strong evidence that vigorous physical exercise is beneficial in regulating mood¹. Help banish negative emotions and stress in combination with your workout.

Improve your sleep hygiene: Go to bed at the same time each night and wake at the same time each morning to help your body develop a routine; develop an evening routine that encourages your body to relax and prepare for sleep; reserve your bedroom for sleeping and intimacy and refrain from using the room for other activities, such as doing work.

Discover your 'positive significant distraction'. With hobbies, we have control of the involvement and outcome; the domain is manageable; and the task is fun, interesting, and absorbing. They feed our need for completion, progress and success and help take the focus away from professional demands.

Take five deep breaths counting to five on each inhale and to five on each exhale. Practice these methods to reduce your own physical body response of over arousal and stress.

Sources:

The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for Helping Professionals, Skovholt & Trotter Mathison, 2011.

Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization, Pearlman & Staff, 1996.

¹ Penedo, FJ & Dahn, JR (2005) Exercise and well-being: a review of mental and physical health benefits associated with physical activity. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 18,2,189-193