

Selfcare Ideas for Teenagers

1. Practice compassion for yourself... remember:

You are allowed to make mistakes

No one is perfect...

Your feelings matter



2. Create your own self-care tool kit

- a. Fluffy socks
- b. A favourite book
- c. Tasty snacks
- d. Photos of you and a friend
- e. Bath bomb
- f. Face mask
- g. Yummy drink or herbal tea



3. **What matters to you?** Circle the values that you value the most. Are there any missing. Add them at the bottom of the page. Our values change over time, so in a few years you may find some of the values you would choose might change.



Curiosity	Adaptability	Respect	Creativity	Caring
Spirituality	Friendship	Resilience	Cooperation	Adventure
Patience	Loyalty	Reliability	Self respect	Love
Forgiveness	Family	Kindness	Fun	Gratitude
Knowledge	Authenticity	Generosity	Humour	Bravery
Fairness	Acceptance	Excitement	Freedom	Open-mindedness
Wisdom	Challenge			

4. **Listen out for the good...** sometimes with everything going on we focus on what is not going right, so try to listen out for the positives too, no matter how small. They are important. When someone says 'thank you' for something you have done or helped with etc. Write them down!



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5. The full spectrum:

Being human means we experience the full range of emotions. Sometimes many in a day. Our emotions help us connect with one another and tell us about what we need. Sometimes though words don't do the feelings we experience justice. For example, you might say 'I'm upset' but what does being upset mean to you? For one person it might mean sad, and for another it might mean frustrated, lonely or angry. The word upset can mask a lot of useful information. Having the words to express how we feel accurately helps us to acknowledge our experience and recognise our needs. This exercise is all about getting to grips with that vocabulary.



Choose one of the words below and focus on it. Is it familiar or new to you? Do you have a sense of what it is like to experience that feeling? What other words do you associate with that word? Now look at the other words and try it with them. Are there any words missing? Write them down!

Happy	Hopeful	Invisible	Ashamed	Moody
Joyful	Angry	Furious	Small	Stupid
Calm	Confident	Frustrated	Lonely	Vulnerable
Content	Guilty			

6. Tune In...

Use as many words as you can to describe how you are feeling RIGHT NOW – see the example below! Use sentences if single words are not doing the job. Fill a page, use more if you need to. As you write down the words try not to judge how you are feeling. Just notice which words make you think this way and carry on writing. Now go to 'Happy all the time is not a thing'.



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7. **Happy all the time is not a thing.** No one is happy all the time. No one. Not one single person ever. People are not designed that way. We are surrounded by messages from social media, advertising, and TV telling us we should be happy all the time 24/7. When we are surrounded by these messages, we can begin to feel as if we shouldn't feel the way we feel, and we are doing something wrong. We might try and ignore these feelings or put on a brave face – fake it until we make it – and this can cause problems and have the opposite effect. It is not that you shouldn't do things to cheer yourself up, it is more that you shouldn't judge yourself for being down in the first place. Try not to think about emotions being 'good' or 'bad' there is a spectrum of them after all. The next time you find yourself beginning to struggle take it as an opportunity to tune in and take care of yourself. The next exercise next is a good place to start.
8. **Say nice things to yourself!** Sometimes we say negative things to ourselves. Things like 'I'll never understand this....' or 'everyone will think I am stupid...'. This is about our thinking patterns. Read below and see if you recognise if you are using one of these, because they are not helpful and it is good to be aware of them! Sometimes it is just about changing what you say to yourself. E.g. instead of saying 'I'll never understand this...' say 'I'm going to keep trying...'

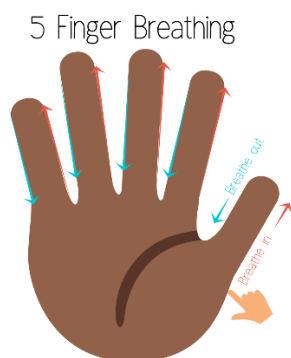
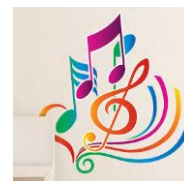
Some common unhelpful thinking patterns are:

- **mind-reading**, or expecting other people to have a bad opinion of you – for example, 'They think I'm stupid', 'She thinks I'm no good at anything'
 - **thinking things will always go wrong** – for example, 'Things never work out for me', 'Everyone is always against me', 'I'll never be able to ...'
 - **labelling yourself** – for example, 'I'm no good', 'I'm stupid', 'I'm hopeless'
 - **absolute thinking** – for example, 'I have to do it this way – I have no choice', 'This will never work'
 - **fortune-telling** or expecting the worst – for example, 'I'm sure to mess this up', 'It's not going to work out anyway', 'I'm going to feel awful when it doesn't happen'
 - **all-or-nothing thinking** – for example, 'He does everything right, and I always get it wrong', 'It has to be perfect', 'If only I had done it that way, it would be OK'
9. **Pictures**
Words are not the only way to express yourself. Think about colours, and shapes, and where on a page you could begin. Take a blank page and start with a shape and go from there.
10. **A mindful approach.** www.smilingmind.com.au and take a break by filling a page of paper with different colours using whatever you have – coloured pencils, textas, paint etc.
11. **Keep a mood diary...** use different borders around each mood



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12. **Sometimes life doesn't go to plan...** Helpful and unhelpful thinking.... Is it real? Is it true?
13. **Focus on music** – create a couple of playlists to bring you up, or to de-stress yourself.



14. **Breathing.** There are different ways to breathe to gain some calm. Five finger breathing is just one easy way to do five deep breaths. Another is to try breathing slowly in and out, using colour i.e. breathe in calm blue and breathe out angry orange.
15. **Don't forget to nourish yourself.** There are lots of ways both physical or emotional... Snacks, hydration, go outside and get some fresh air or have a chat with someone you would like to catch up with.
16. **Power up and Recharge!**
Try some exercise or brisk activity. It doesn't need to be a big run. It can be a brisk walk around the block, skipping, biking, dancing, swimming, kickboxing, skating etc. This is a great way to get some energy back and help yourself feel better. Think about working something that works for you into your daily schedule. Make a list of things that you could try. It could be something tried and true, or something new.
17. **Stretch!!** There are loads of different stretches you can do!
- **Muscle tightening and relaxing** – helps loosen tension in muscles. Work your way from your toes up your legs, to your stomach, bottom and back, then up to your neck. Think about these muscles in one particular area, as a muscle group.
Breathe in and tense the first **muscle** group (hard but not to the point of **pain** or **cramping**) for 4 to 10 seconds.
 - Breathe out, and suddenly and completely **relax** the **muscle** group (do not **relax** them gradually).
 - **Relax** for 10 to 20 seconds before you work on the next **muscle** group.

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18. **Think about some of your habits** – things you always do. List some of them below: E.g. brushing your teeth, but maybe not always flossing or to do with how often you use your laptop/device.

Is there something you would like to change about your habits or something you would like to add to your routine? E.g. tweak your phone or internet use, alter your bedtime, make a small change to the food that you eat. By the way, did you know that eating more fruit and vegetables and things like chickpeas and mexi beans helps your brain make the neurotransmitters to help you stay happy! Junk food as the opposite effect. Try limiting your junk food!

So how do we make a change to habits?

Start small. Make a plan. Try it for a couple of weeks. Remind yourself to build it in to your routine and involve others in it if you can! Be prepared for slip ups – it takes time and some effort. Reward yourself!



19. **5 minute anti-procrastination blitz**... If you are putting off doing something, try this. Choose one small thing you have been meaning to do. It might be putting something away or finding something... Set your phone timer for five minutes and go for it! When you have finished, take stock of what you have achieved. It's amazing what can be done in 5 minutes!

20. **Grow something**... in a pot, in the garden, sprouts in a jar! You could even re-pot a plant that has outgrown its pot.



21. **Make something**. Clay, wool, wood, playdough, fabric, paper origami or another project. Be **creative** and feel great.
22. **Be curious** about something and take a couple of steps to find out more. Maybe you have always wanted to know what something is, or how it works, or how to do something specific. Look it up!

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23. Sleep Better:

Think about and create a bedtime/evening time routine to help you sleep better. It can mean a much better sleep because a routine is a way of preparing to be in a restful sleep!

Teenagers need more sleep than adults because of all the body and brain changes happening. It is those brain changes that can alter your sleep patterns for a while. It does settle down.



Things like a combination of these ideas:

Try to go to bed around the same time each night. Sort out your room so it feels like your very own sanctuary; turn your phone or device off at least an hour before bed; take a hot shower or bath to relax you; have a hot drink; have a book handy; listen to some relaxing music; try to avoid anything with caffeine in it like coke or coffee, as that makes it harder to sleep. Avoid energy drinks in the afternoon as they hype you up and make it harder to sleep. On a school night, have your school things packed and ready to go before you go to bed so you can just pick the bag up and go! (Regular exercise helps you sleep better too).

24. To Do List.

If you are trying to sleep and are worrying about something try this - make a to do or to remember list of what you need to do, so you can deal with it later.



25. **Keep in touch with your friends...** connections are very important.

26.



Animal Magic. Spending time with pets and having a quiet time or a fun time with them can really help us feel loved, and 'in the moment'. Patting and grooming an animal, evening spending time with them helps us feel calmer. If you don't have an animal, try and see if one of your close neighbours or friends has one that you can interact with.









27.

Laugh – watch something that makes you laugh, find new jokes, YouTube videos, funny memes, a funny movie. Laughing gives us some of the feel good.

28. **Show kindness** to someone who needs it. Helping someone or showing support can help us feel good too and builds relationships. It could be a stranger, and you showing kindness to them helps them have a better day.

Kindness
is
Magic

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29.  **Smile at people!** Use their names! Basic but helpful and makes everyone feel good.
30. **Practice really listening to others.** It is a bit of a science but not hard when you think about it.
Be an active listener – so that means focusing on the speaker, not interrupting with questions, making eye contact, being respectful, and don't check your phone or answer it, avoid jumping in or commenting until the end. Use open ended questions – that is – not questions that only give a yes or no answer, like... 'and what happened then?...' and don't be tempted to fix a problem! Just listen. Remember your body language... be open, and nod your head to show you are understanding.
31. **The power of 'NO'.** It is great to say yes to things, but sometimes if you have too much to do, or something is just not going to work for you, be ready to say no to help yourself. It is ok to say no to things that you have a choice about. 
32.  **Write a list of all the things you are grateful for** in your life. They may be big or small, and this one is about the people in your life, chances, what you have learned, and all sorts of other reasons.
33. **Make a wish list** of the things you would like to achieve/do/experience in the next five years. Think about what you could start to do towards one of them! 
34. **Letter to your future self.** You could also write a **letter to your future self** about what you would like to be like or achieve by the time you reach a certain age. Put it away and check it out in the future!
35. **Try yoga!** 
36. **Shoot some hoops!** 
37. **Go for a walk with friends** and explore somewhere you have not been for a while.
38. **Sort out your photos** on your phone! It helps you remember the good times and maybe even to reconnect and share the fun ones.

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39. **Look up at the clouds** and see if you can find some shapes you recognise, such as animals, or objects.
40. **Start writing a journal** about your days, your feelings, and anything interesting you want to. It can also be about how you cope with different things or didn't cope. It might give you clues to what works for you and what doesn't. If a written journal isn't your thing, consider a sketching or doodling journal and try to do it every day!
41. **Game or Movie Afternoon/Night.** Organise a game or movie afternoon/night with your friends.
42. Plan a sleepover with snacks.
43. Offer to help someone with a job they need doing and share the load.

