

Fall Self-Care Guide





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Foreword

The season of fall brings about a time of change. The air gains a chill, the leaves fall, the sun sets earlier – not to mention the changes that happen in your personal life! The children’s schedules have changed as they adjust back to school, and you are doing your part as a caregiver to make sure they have the tools necessary to make this transition. You can do the same for yourself! Approach changes as a new beginning to make a lifestyle adjustment, break old habits, or try out a new hobby. Whatever you choose to do, know that you deserve to spend time and energy on yourself!





Mindful Change



Use mindfulness to increase awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and actions. When you recognize how certain actions are making you feel, this can show what to keep in your life and what to get rid of. A good way to track can be through writing!

- Journal with prompts, “What do I want to let go of?” like falling leaves, and “What do I want to feed and nurture?”
- Make a sleep diary to track how many hours you’re sleeping, the actions you are doing before bedtime, and how you feel when waking up the next day. Are there any adjustments you can make to better your sleep and rest time?
- Make an activity diary to track the different types of physical activity you do (e.g., stretches, walks, yoga) and how it makes you feel during and after. Can you add in any activities to your daily routine to help you feel better physically and mentally?



Don't Let the Dark Get You Down

With the sun setting earlier and rising later, less sunlight can impact our mood and energy levels. Engage in self-care and take these extra steps to get ahead of this.

- Keep your curtains/blinds open during the day and sit near the window when possible – maximize what daylight there is. We get Vitamin D from the sun, which boosts mood and helps to regulate our sleep patterns.
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule. The dark may make us feel more tired but it's better for your body to keep a good sleep routine.
- Try to go outside within 1 hour after waking up. Being exposed to the sunlight (even if it's a little cloudy) will help to improve your mood and increase your energy levels.
- Limit exposure to electronics, especially before bedtime. The blue light that comes from screens makes it harder for our brain to wind down.





Feed Your Sensory System



Use these sensory strategy suggestions to get cozy, help your body feel more regulated, and engage in some self-care.



- Make yourself a “cozy corner”: Wrap up in a fuzzy, heated, or weighted blanket with your favorite book or show.
- Bake and drink fall treats: Baking pumpkin bread, apple crisp, or spiced muffins fill your home with all the good smells. Sipping on a warm cider, pumpkin spice latte, or chai tea can be calming too.
- Create an at-home fall spa: Take a warm bath with essential oils like cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg. Light a pumpkin or pine scented candle.
- Take a slow, mindful walk: See the changing colors and hear the crunching leaves while getting some fresh air.



“Fall” Into Some Fun Activities



Participate in fall-themed activities, whether it's for some solo time, with family, or with friends!

- Decorate your space for the season: You could thrift items or collect them from nature – use pinecones, acorns, or small gourds to give your home a fall feel.
- Have a cozy night-in: The possibilities are endless to make it a fun night-in! You could do pumpkin carving, make soup, watch your comfort movie/show, or play board games.
- DIY fall crafts: If you enjoy crafting and creating, you can make a leaf wreath or paint pumpkins.
- Go to your community for some fun: Check out your local farmer's market, apple orchard, or pumpkin patch.
- Spend time in nature: Going on hikes, camping, or glamping can be a fun way to be in nature while appreciating the changing seasons.



Conclusion

Fall being a season of change means it is a great time to reflect and identify where change can occur in your personal life. As a caregiver, you do so much for your loved ones and support them on their journeys. Pour that time and energy into your own journey too, because you deserve to have beautiful and meaningful life transitions as well!

