

# Holiday Self-Care Guide





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## Foreword

While the holidays are full of joy and cheer, it can feel like a very busy time and bring up intense emotions related to family. It's important to take the time to care for yourself and make sure your cup is full! This guide includes a variety of strategies for self-care and emotional coping to support you during this time.

Give yourself grace during this holiday season, and we encourage you to find the bright spots to enjoy with your loved ones and yourself!



## Meet Your Basic Needs

If you realize you are not functioning at your normal level, take a moment to ask yourself:

- Have I gotten enough sleep?
- Have I eaten enough?
- Have I drunk enough water?
- Have I gotten any fresh air?
- Have I moved my body?
- Am I in comfortable clothing?

The first step is making sure your basic needs are being met!



## Take Advantage of the Cold

In moments of stress, it can be hard to bring yourself back to the present moment. We can change the state our body is in to adjust to the emotions we are feeling. Try using the cold to reset! Exposure to cold temperatures can cause your body to release endorphins and improve alertness, mood, immune system health, among other benefits. Some suggestions:



- Holding an ice cube
- Splashing face with cold water
- Taking a cold shower
- Stepping outside into the cold weather

## Calm the Senses

After an overwhelming moment or day, our body may feel like it's still in “fight or flight” mode. We can use sensory strategies to regulate our bodies and help us to feel calmer. Some suggestions:



- **See:** Watch slow-moving visuals and use dim lighting. You could keep all the lights off and just have candles (from the Menorah or Kinara) going. If you celebrate Christmas, spend time in the room your tree is in with just the tree lights on.
- **Smell:** Light a candle that has a calming scent (like lavender, chamomile, pine, vanilla) or savor the scent of freshly baked cookies if you participate in holiday baking.





## More Sensory Suggestions

- **Hear:** Listen to calming music, nature sounds, or a crackling fireplace.
- **Taste:** Drink a warm beverage like coffee, tea, cider, or hot chocolate. Treat yourself to your comfort food.
- **Feel:** Spend some time in a comfy seat and wrap up in a cozy blanket or pile on the pillows. Take a warm/hot shower and apply lotion after.
- **Internal:** Use a rocking chair if you have one to rock back and forth (there's a reason they are used to put babies to sleep). Use a weighted blanket if you have one or give yourself a gentle massage - deep pressure is calming to our bodies.

## Engage in Mindfulness

Mindfulness is when we practice being fully aware of our thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and the environment. Some ways to be mindful:

- Journal about how you're feeling or what you're thinking.
- Do a body scan (think about how each part of your body feels).
- Notice things you can see, feel, smell, and touch in your environment.
- Meditate or practice deep breathing.

### The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique



What are **5** things you can see?



What are **4** things you can touch?



What are **3** things you can hear?



What are **2** things you can smell?



What is **1** thing you can taste?





## More Mindfulness Activities

- Engage in yoga or stretching (think about how your body feels with the movements).
- Engage in mindful listening with a podcast or your favorite music.
- Engage in mindful cooking, baking, and/or eating (think about the texture and taste of each bite).
- Take a mindfulness walk (recognize how your body feels and acknowledge what you see on your walk).
- Take part in your favorite hobby, whether it's reading, drawing, writing, and recognize how it makes you feel.

## Conclusion

All year round, you support and care for your loved ones. You play many roles and wear many different hats. You show up. You persevere. And most importantly, you love. During this holiday season, take the time to show love for yourself too.

Happy Holidays!

