

The 8 Types of Self-Care

Self-care isn't about indulgence or escape — it's about tending to the parts of you that make it possible to show up in your life with steadiness, clarity, and presence. Especially in midlife, when your roles, hormones, energy, and identity are shifting, self-care becomes less of a luxury and more of a foundation.

There are many ways to care for yourself, and each one supports a different part of your wellbeing. Understanding the different types of self-care helps you see where you're nourished, where you're depleted, and where you might need a little more support.

The eight types of self-care include:

- **Physical** — caring for your body and energy
- **Emotional** — making space for your feelings
- **Mental/Cognitive** — protecting your focus and bandwidth
- **Social** — nurturing supportive relationships
- **Spiritual/Meaning-Based** — connecting to purpose or grounding
- **Practical/Environmental** — reducing stress through organization and structure
- **Relational/Boundary** — protecting your time, energy, and emotional space
- **Restorative/Nervous System** — helping your body return to steadiness

Each type matters. Each type supports a different part of you.

And each type becomes especially important in midlife, when your capacity, needs, and rhythms are changing.

Self-care isn't about doing more — it's about caring for yourself in ways that feel honest, compassionate, and sustainable for the season you're in.

Take some time to look through this worksheet and reflect on what best supports you. This sheet doesn't need to be done all in one sitting. Think of it as a gentle check-in with yourself — something you can return to in small pockets of time, adding insights as they arise, rather than a task to “finish” perfectly in one go.

1. Physical Self-Care

Supporting the body so it can support you.

Includes:

- Rest and sleep rhythms
- Nourishing meals
- Gentle movement
- Hydration
- Medical appointments
- Stretching, mobility, warmth

In midlife, energy fluctuates. Sleep changes. Recovery takes longer.

Physical self-care becomes foundational, not optional.

2. Emotional Self-Care

Making space for feelings without judgment.

Includes:

- Naming emotions
- Journaling
- Therapy
- Crying when needed
- Emotional boundaries
- Self-compassion practices

In midlife, irritability, grief, tenderness, and clarity all rise to the surface.

Emotional self-care helps women stay regulated rather than overwhelmed.

3. Mental/Cognitive Self-Care

Supporting your mind, focus, and cognitive load.

Includes:

- Reducing multi-tasking
- Creating mental "off" time
- Limiting overstimulation
- Planning and organizing
- Learning something new
- Saying no to unnecessary commitments

In midlife, brain fog, cognitive fatigue, and overwhelm are common.

Mental self-care protects bandwidth.

4. Social Self-Care

Nourishing relationships that feel reciprocal and grounding.

Includes:

- Time with supportive people
- Asking for help
- Saying no to draining dynamics
- Community spaces
- Honest conversations

In midlife, women often outgrow old roles and seek deeper, more authentic connection.

5. Spiritual/Meaning-Based Self-Care

Connecting to something larger than the daily grind.

Includes:

- Nature
- Meditation
- Rituals
- Gratitude practice
- Creativity
- Stillness
- Values-based reflection

In midlife, identity shifts often spark questions of meaning, purpose, and alignment.

6. Practical/Environmental Self-Care

Reducing stress by tending to your environment and responsibilities.

Includes:

- Decluttering
- Meal planning
- Financial Organization
- Tidying your space
- Creating supportive routines

In midlife, women often carry the invisible load.

Practical self-care lightens the mental burden.

7. Relational/Boundary Self-Care

Protecting your energy, time, and emotional wellbeing.

Includes:

- Saying “not today”
- Setting limits
- Delegating
- Clarifying expectations
- Choosing where you invest your energy

In midlife, this is often the most transformative category — and the hardest.

Boundaries become essential for sustainability. Boundaries aren't about building walls – they're about *keeping relationships sustainable*.

8. Restorative/Nervous-System Self-Care

Supporting regulation, safety, and steadiness.

Includes:

- Slow exhale
- Grounding
- Sensory breaks
- Warmth
- Quiet time
- Gentle movement
- Co-regulation with safe people

In midlife, hormonal shifts make the nervous system more sensitive.

Restorative care becomes non-negotiable.

Reflection:

Which type of self-care is calling for attention right now?

*With care,
Christine*

New Paths Counselling

