



CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR LIVING

# **Self Care Toolkit Pocket Guide**



**AFFIRMATIONS**

Affirmations are positive statements that reinforce a specific intention, and they can help to establish positive and nurturing thoughts about ourselves and our life situations.

Examples:

I am grateful for all that I have in my life.

I face anxiety with courage and strength.

I take care of myself even when it is difficult to do.

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A photograph of a dense forest of tall evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, with their tops reaching towards a pale, overcast sky. A large flock of birds, possibly geese or swans, is captured in flight, scattered across the upper half of the image. The trees in the foreground are dark green, while those further back catch the light, appearing a golden-brown color. A white rectangular box with a thin black border is centered horizontally, containing the text "DEEP BREATHING" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**DEEP BREATHING**



Breathing is an automatic function of the body, and when we feel stressed, our breathing rate and pattern changes as part of the fight-or-flight response.

Fortunately, we also have the ability to deliberately change our breathing. Scientific studies have shown that controlling your breath can help to manage stress and stress-related conditions.

Shallow, upper chest breathing is part of the typical stress response. The stress response can be reduced by consciously breathing using the diaphragm. Abdominal breathing helps to control the nervous system and encourages the body to relax, bringing about a range of health benefits.

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A close-up photograph of several white daisies with bright yellow centers, set against a dark, blurred background of more flowers and green foliage. The lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate petals. A white rectangular box is centered horizontally across the middle of the image, containing the word "GRATITUDE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**GRATITUDE**

Research shows that people who intentionally incorporate a practice of communicating their gratitude (through journaling, meditation, prayer, communicating appreciation, etc.), report experiencing more joy in their lives.

Look around you. Pay attention in your day to day. Say thank you for the small and ordinary. How happy ice cream makes a child. A dog greeting you at the door. Those seemingly insignificant events that occur throughout our day that we don't notice but that leave a void when they are gone. Even pausing at the end of a busy day to share one sentence of gratitude can change the way you feel and perceive the world.

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**GROUNDING**

Grounding, whether being outdoors barefoot or indoors connected to an earthing product, has a natural diffusing effect on stress.

The surface of the Earth contains a natural electric charge, felt by some people as a pleasant tingling when walking on wet grass in the morning or along the wet sand at the beach. Research suggests that direct contact with the Earth's electrons stabilizes and rejuvenates the body by recharging and thinning our blood, enhancing immune function, and powerfully and dramatically reducing inflammation, pain, and stress.

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**MEDITATION**

Spending even a few minutes in meditation can restore your calm and inner peace. Anyone can practice meditation. It's simple and inexpensive, it doesn't require any special equipment, and you can practice it wherever you are.

During meditation, you focus your attention and eliminate the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. This process may result in enhanced physical and emotional well-being.

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The background of the image is a close-up, high-resolution shot of teal-colored water. The surface is covered in small, rhythmic ripples and waves, creating a textured appearance. The lighting is even, highlighting the natural sheen of the water.

**HYDRATION**



Staying hydrated by drinking enough water is an important, often undervalued, aspect of good mental health.

Dehydration quickly affects how we feel and think. Drinking water regularly throughout the day is an effective step to take in our efforts to be as mentally healthy as possible.

A steady supply of water keeps your circulation flowing smoothly and allows you to feel less tension, confusion, and fatigue.

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# **SELF COMPASSION**

## Three Components of Self Compassion

**Self Kindness:** Being gentle and understanding with ourselves, rather than harshly critical and judgemental.

**Common Humanity:** Feeling connected with others in the experience of life, rather than feeling isolated and alienated by our suffering.

**Mindfulness:** Holding our experience in balanced awareness, rather than ignoring exaggerating our pain.

We must achieve and combine these three essential elements in order to be truly self compassionate. When we experience warm and tender feelings toward ourselves, we are altering our bodies as well as our minds. Rather than feeling worried and anxious, we feel calm, content, trusting, and secure. Self-kindness allows us to feel safe as we respond to painful experiences, so that we are no longer operating from a place of fear.



**SLEEP**

Sleep is closely connected to mental and emotional health, and disrupted sleep has demonstrated links to depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and other conditions. Both sleep and mental health are complex issues affected by a multitude of factors, but here are a few steps you can take toward improving your sleep:

- Having a set bedtime and maintaining a steady sleep schedule
- Finding ways to wind-down as part of a standard bedtime routine, such as quiet reading or a few minutes of deep breathing
- Avoiding caffeine or stimulants too close to bedtime
- Dimming lights and putting away electronic devices for an hour or more before bed



**MINDFULNESS**

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.

Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

The regular practice of mindfulness promotes better stress management as well as long-term mental and physical health.

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A scenic view of a lake with a forested shoreline under a blue sky with white clouds. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. The sky is a vibrant blue, dotted with fluffy white clouds. The shoreline is covered in dense green trees, and a small island or peninsula is visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**



Emotions are embedded in our physical body, and physical activity helps us get emotions moving through and out. This allows us to process and release negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Whether you prefer running, walking, dancing, working out, hitting a punching bag, or yoga, there are countless ways to work exercise into your life.

Move your body, and your mood will move too.

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A vibrant field of yellow flowers, possibly mustard or rapeseed, stretches across the frame. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing distinct petals and centers. The background is a clear blue sky with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, suggesting a sunny day in a rural or natural setting. The word "YOGA" is centered in the middle of the image, overlaid on a white rectangular background.

**YOGA**

Mind-body techniques such as yoga help you increase awareness of sensations in the body and stay more focused on the present moment.

Yoga helps relieve stress and offers countless health benefits by reducing the stress response of the sympathetic nervous system and reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol. The practice enhances resilience and improves mind-body awareness, which can help people adjust their behaviors based on the feelings they're experiencing in their bodies.

Yoga is often mistaken for complicated poses that require flexibility and a specific body type, but it can be practiced by any one in any body.

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A close-up photograph of a plant branch with vibrant green, glossy leaves. Heavy rain is falling, creating a dense curtain of white streaks across the entire frame. The background is a soft-focus mix of green and purple hues, suggesting other foliage and flowers in the distance. The overall mood is serene and refreshing.

# **RAIN**

**A Practice of Radical Compassion**

The acronym RAIN is an easy-to-remember tool for bringing mindfulness and compassion to emotional difficulty. Taking some moments for RAIN can give you access to clarity and openheartedness. By intentionally bringing attention to our inner experience, we can move from trance toward healing.

1. **Recognize** what is going on inside you.
2. **Allow** the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations to be there without trying to fix or avoid anything.
3. **Investigate** with interest and care: call on your natural curiosity and direct a more focused attention to your present experience. What feels most difficult?
4. **Nurture** with self-compassion: Send a gentle message inward to directly address what you need.

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# **EPSOM SALT BATHS**

Research shows that magnesium plays an important role in our parasympathetic nervous system, which is also known as our "rest and digest" response. In addition, studies have shown that magnesium can help combat insomnia.

Magnesium can be absorbed through the skin by soaking in a warm bath with two cups of epsom salt for 15 minutes.

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**MUSIC**



Music can be a source of pleasure and contentment,  
but there are many other psychological benefits as well.

Music can relax the mind, energize the body, and even help people better manage pain. Research shows that listening to music has an impact on the human stress response, particularly the autonomic nervous system.

To boost music's mental-health benefits in your life, try using this simple technique used in music therapy called "deep or active listening".

Instead of putting on music as background noise, set aside time to concentrate on what you hear, taking note of the feelings, memories, and bodily sensations (whether that's a slowing of your heart rate or the urge to get up and dance) that arise as you listen.

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A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a vibrant turquoise lake nestled in a valley. The lake is surrounded by lush green fields and small settlements. In the background, majestic mountains with patches of snow rise against a bright blue sky filled with fluffy white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

# EFT TAPPING

Tapping, also known as EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), is a stress relief technique based on the combined principles of ancient Chinese acupressure and modern psychology.

The basic Tapping technique requires you to focus on a negative emotion and use your fingertips to tap 5-7 times on specific meridian points of the body.

Tapping on these meridian points sends a calming signal to the brain, letting your brain know it's safe to relax. Studies have shown that Tapping decreases cortisol (often called the stress hormone) in your body.

Learn more at: [www.thetappingsolution.com](http://www.thetappingsolution.com)

[www.lifelinesolutionsllc.com](http://www.lifelinesolutionsllc.com)

A serene night landscape featuring a dark, silhouetted mountain range under a deep blue sky filled with stars and the Milky Way. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the celestial scene and the dark land. The word "PRAYER" is centered in a white rectangular box with a black border.

**PRAYER**

Praying is a spiritual practice that offers an opportunity to connect with a higher power, oneself, or nature. One does not need to be religious to see the transformation that reaching out to something greater than ourselves can bring humans. It can give an anchor to ground us, help us let go of worries, and trust that we are supported and guided. Facing life's challenges with this perspective can provide clarity, peace, and increased ability to cope.

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A close-up photograph of a tree trunk in a forest. The tree trunk is covered in thick, vibrant green moss. The background is a soft-focus view of a dense forest with many green leaves. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word "THERAPY" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

**THERAPY**

Sometimes self care can feel overwhelming and unhelpful. It is okay to ask for help. There is great power in feeling heard and believed and knowing you aren't in it alone.

Therapy can help you learn about what you're feeling, why you might be feeling it, and how to cope. Not only do you work through past and present issues, but you can develop the tools you need to face future challenges that inevitably arise along the way.

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