

# Self-Care, When you Just Don't Care: 3 Self-Care Tips to Help Fight Depression

Self-care refers to engaging in daily activities to care for our physical well-being and health, as well as activities to mitigate emotional stressors. When a person experiences depression they may experience symptoms of appetite loss, fatigue, sleep irregularity and/or loss of interest in activities that once brought them pleasure, [click here to learn more](#). These symptoms can make practicing self-care difficult for many people affected by depression. But I want to share 3 self-care tips to help fight depression.

## Why Self-Care is Essential for Depression

While in undergrad, when I would experience a depressive episode that led me to a state of disorder. Getting out of bed to brush my teeth, let alone go to class, seemed like a journey to Mars. I would either spend my days in bed without a meal or overspend ordering take-out because just thinking of what to make was too much. To add to the disorder, my room would always become a junkyard, as I simply kicked books, clothes, or food boxes off my bed onto the floor. Unfortunately, this always drove me deeper into depression and left me doing tedious work on my good days.

## How to Practice Self-Care

Over time, I began to find self-care solutions that worked for me, but 2 years ago I was able to work with my last therapist to create "daily minimums". Daily minimums are essentially simple depression self-care activities needed to maintain physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual well-being. My daily minimums included: daily prayer, eating at least 2 meals a day, texting a friend, tackling one upcoming task and taking walks when overwhelmed. These activities helped me to maintain physical health, but also provided emotional outlets and feelings of closeness on days when I just wanted to give up on life.

## Try these 3 Self-Care Tips to Help Fight Depression:

1. Meal-Prep: It can be so daunting to cook when you are going through a depressive episode, but you have to eat. It can be so easy to overspend on eating unhealthy take out or eat almost nothing all day, but both options are unhealthy for your mind and your body. One trick I love is to meal prep. There are many ways to achieve this: cooking for 3-4 days one or twice a week, spending one day cooking a month's worth of meals to freeze or doing all the prep work to easily cook multiple meals with minimal effort during the week.

- On your good days make your favorite home cooked meals and freeze for a healthy microwave meal on your bad days.
  - Keep ready to eat staples on hand: Microwavable rice, steam vegetable packs, canned beans, frozen pre-cooked chicken or oatmeal packets. These make for fast and convenient meal options.
  - Use a crockpot to meal prep for 3-4 days. Just dump it, set it and forget it. Then eat of course.
2. Have a Routine: Having a routine will give your day structure and help you to transition through your day. Even if you can't fall asleep try laying in bed at the same time each night and waking up at the same time each morning. Set times throughout your day to do the necessary things and things that bring you joy: a time for quiet time alone, a time to eat a meal, a time to go to for a walk... etc. This will help you to not leave your self-care subject to your mood.
  3. Get Ready for the Day: Many days the small things like picking an outfit, doing your hair or showering might make seem like daunting tasks that prevent you from getting out of bed. To mitigate this plan ahead so you can get ready for each day every day.
    - If showering is just TOO MUCH, clean the most important parts of your body, brush your teeth and try an invigorating face wash. This will help you feel fresh with minimal effort.
    - Have at least 2 easy go-to hairstyles that even your unwashed hair looks good in.
    - Before you go to bed or at the start of the week pick out one or more simple outfits that will make you feel beautiful when you wear it. This will give you something to look forward to in the morning and help you feel your best that each day.

Do you have to accomplish all of these? NO. However, each one you accomplish may help you maintain a sense of normalcy and more quickly overcome your depressive episode. If you are suffering from severe depression, please [find a qualified therapist](#). A qualified therapist can provide you with a diagnosis and help you develop an appropriate treatment plan. Please let me know which of these 3 self-care tips to help fight depression has helped you most.