

The Self-Care Checklist



YOUR SELF-CARE GOALS	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

How to Use this Checklist

For some people, especially for those of us who LOVE to-do lists and checklists in general, this is a simple and inexpensive way to encourage long-term adoption of new, healthy habits. While we normally use these sorts of lists to make sure we take care of our errands and work tasks, I have found it to be incredibly helpful for self-care tasks as well. Here's how to make the most of it.

The idea is simple: create a list of 4-6 small health habit goals that you can tackle daily, **put this list somewhere where you'll see it often**, and check off your accomplishments every day! This gives you a wonderful visual way to represent your hard work and progress, and it can be very satisfying to make those checks and see them add up over the week. Keep your goals for several weeks, and only switch or modify them once you feel confident that the original goal has truly become an easy-peasy habit. Slow, steady change is the target here.

It is important to understand that this is not an all-or-nothing process. **Aim to complete 70—80%** of your goals each day. As these practices become more habitual, you'll notice that you might get pretty close to 100%! Self-compassion is an important part of this process. Know that there will be days that go really well, and probably a few that won't, and that's ok! As long as you stick to it over the long term and keep trying, you'll get there.

Goal Guidelines

Your goals should be:

1. **Achievable and Realistic**. Set smaller, easily attainable daily goals, rather than big ones at which you're less likely to be successful. For example, if you're not very active, but want to be, setting a goal to get 10 minutes of exercise a day will be much more achievable than saying that you want to run 10 km every day. You can always do more than 10 minutes if you feel up to it, and as you see continued success with this goal, you can increase the target. Set yourself up for success by making the goal something you know you can do for several weeks.
2. **Specific**. Try to avoid vague goals, such as "get more exercise". You can be more specific by setting an amount of time (for example, the 15 minutes a day mentioned above), or by describing the type of activity you want to do (e.g. walking, or doing a fitness or yoga class).
3. **Tailored to You**. Pick goals that fit your personality, preferences, and health concerns. For example, if you want to get more active, but hate running, don't make running 5 km one of your goals. This may seem obvious, but it's important to make sure your goals are things that you want to do, and can see being a part of your life for a long time.

Some Goal Categories and Examples

These are merely a few ideas to serve as inspiration. This is by no means an exhaustive list, so get creative! Feel free to make these even simpler, or more involved, depending on where you're at right now. If you're unsure what goals to set, your Naturopathic Doctor can help!

Dietary Goals

- Drink 8 cups of water a day (or start lower if you currently don't drink much water)
- Have a source of protein with each meal and snack, or get ___ grams of protein a day (if you like numbers!)
- Eat a vegetable with each meal

Exercise Goals

- Walk/run/bike/etc. for ___ minutes a day (depending on your current fitness level)
- Do 10 minutes of stretching a day (be specific about the muscles stretched if you have a particular problem area)

Lifestyle Goals

- Go to sleep by ___ pm each night
- Watch no more than ___ minutes of TV a day.
- Spend ___ minutes outdoors in nature

Other Health Goals

- Take your medications and/or supplements as directed (you can even break these down into multiple goals, especially if you're taking different things at different times (e.g. "Take your fish oil" and "Take your probiotics" can be separate goals)
- Engage in ___ minutes of mindfulness/meditation practices (this can even be a single 60 second mini meditation to start)
- Journal once a day

Joy and/or Relationship Goals

- Spend ___ minutes a day doing something you love (reading, knitting, playing an instrument, or anything else that brings you joy!)
- Spend ___ minutes of quality time with someone you love (this can even include cuddling or playing with your pets!)