

# Self-Care Strategies for Parents When You Have No Time for Yourself



By [Natasha Burton](#) on November 2, 2020 — Fact checked by [Jennifer Chesak, MSJ](#)

[1 minute](#)   [5 minutes](#)   [10 minutes](#)   [30 minutes](#)   [1 hour](#)

We include products we think are useful for our readers. If you buy through links on this page, we may earn a small commission [Here's our process](#).

**How we vet brands and products**



Whether you can only sneak away for 1 minute or 1 hour, there are ways to claim that time as a moment for you.



Kristen Curette & Daemaine Hines/Stocksy United

These days, time for yourself may be close to nonexistent. Yet, to be [fully](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



oxygen mask on first. Ideally, we'd all have time to engage in meaningful hobbies or at least get a solid break to check out every now and then.

But right now, you may have to steal whatever time you can get for yourself — even while you're taking care of your kids all day (and potentially [trying to work](#), too). Here are some ideas for self-care no matter how tight you are on time.

ADVERTISEMENT

## If you have 1 minute

### Light a candle

Candlelight makes everything feel a little more soothing. Stick a candle near your kitchen sink and on your bathroom counter. That way, when you're making meals, doing dishes, showering, or just sneaking away to pee, you can have a brief moment of Zen.

### Practice box breathing

[Box breathing](#) is an easy-to-learn technique proven to help people de-stress. Basically, you exhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, inhale for 4 seconds, and then hold your breath for 4 seconds, slowing your blood pressure and helping you feel calm. [This app](#) can help guide you and remind you to take a minute to do it each day.

ADVERTISEMENT



Do whatever you need to do to LOL — watch silly cat videos, look at memes, find a clip from your favorite comedian. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), laughing can relieve stress and even boost your immune system.

## Take your vitamins

A daily multivitamin gives your body the nutrients it needs and helps you feel like you're really taking care of yourself.

If the state of the world — or your household — is taking a toll on your stress level, look into taking a [magnesium supplement](#), which can help with anxiety.

The options from [Natural Vitality](#) are great, as you can take them as a pill, gummy, or mixed into a drink. (Of course, clear any supplements you want to take with your doctor first.)

## Hug someone

Grab your partner or kid and give them a big squeeze. Hugging just feels *good*. And we could all use some of that. Plus, it may have some [benefits](#).

## Drink a glass of water

Staying [hydrated](#) has mental and physical benefits. Plus, drinking water helps you from feeling over-caffeinated or mindlessly grabbing a handful of your kid's Goldfish crackers.

Taking this minute for yourself can give you a necessary pause to be mindful of what you want to put into your body.

## If you have 5 minutes

### Text a loved one

Check in with your partner, a friend, or family member who always

ADVERTISEMENT



## **Amp up your showering routine**

When you have the time to actually take a real shower, use those extra minutes to [exfoliate](#) your body, deep condition your hair, or [moisturize](#). These things may give you a moment to feel rejuvenated.

## **Blend a smoothie**

Give your body some fuel and nourishment by mixing fruit, some greens, and protein powder so you're not starving and hangry when it's mealtime. Make extra to sip on throughout the day or share with your kids.

## **Listen to your favorite song**

Take a break from Sesame Street to [listen](#) to something you actually want to hear. Pop in your earbuds while you're cleaning up toys or making lunches, and pump yourself up with your favorite jam.

## **Sit in the sun**

Sunlight is a natural mood-booster. When you can steal a few minutes, grab yourself (and your coffee), and sit outside to literally bask in the sun.

## **Clean something**

Maybe your sticky counters are giving you anxiety. Or perhaps your spider-web-ridden porch irks you every time you pass it. Grab a sponge, broom, or whatever have you, and feel the sweet sense of accomplishment that cleaning something often brings.

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT



## If you have 10 minutes

### Play a game

Whether you play Candy Crush on your phone or dive into the world of Animal Crossing, gaming can challenge your brain while giving your mind a virtual vacation. Play with friends or family to make the experience social.

### Get your heart rate going

Moving your body will do wonders for your mental state. Not sure what to do exactly? Download an app that provides workouts of various lengths ([Peloton](#) and [The Sculpt Society](#) are two great ones) to easily fit in a mini sweat sesh.

### Put a face mask on

No, not *that* kind of face mask. Give your skin spa-caliber treatment by putting on a mask that you don't need to wash off immediately.

That way, you can technically wear one while feeding your kids lunch and then remove it without missing a bite. Check out the bamboo sheet masks by [Edible Beauty](#) for a super hydrating, botanical experience.

### Meditate

Checking in with your breathing and clearing your mind can help you reset on even the most stressful days. Search [YouTube](#) for free guided videos or download an app like [Headspace](#) if you're ready to commit to the practice.

WATCH VIDEO



## Metta Meditation for Mother's Day

Today's meditation is a Buddhist Metta meditation that will help you explore the idea of loving kindness. Happy Mother's Day!

### **Walk barefoot**

Feeling your feet on the ground can make you feel more, well, grounded. Walking outside on grass or dirt is even considered therapeutic.

That said, your kitchen floor or bedroom carpet will do just fine. Feel your toes on whatever material they're on, and center yourself with your connection to the ground in the present moment.

### **Write in a journal**

Getting your thoughts on paper can have a restorative effect on your mental state. Write about what you're grateful for, what you're struggling with right now, and your hopes for the future — or whatever comes to mind.

### **If you have 30 minutes**

#### **Do your nails**

Soak your toes, moisturize, and give yourself an excuse to put your feet up. Indulge in this little beautification moment, and you'll feel rejuvenated,

ADVERTISEMENT



your kids, check out [Sophi](#) polishes, which don't smell or contain any harsh chemicals.)

## **Make yourself a meal**

When you're strapped for time, it's easy to just grab a [bar](#) and call it a lunch. However, if you have a window of free time, [make yourself something](#) you actually want to eat (or if you really want to splurge, pick up something you're craving from your favorite local restaurant). Eating real food will give you a mental and physical pick-me-up.

## **Declutter a room**

Some people feel invigorated by clearing a space. This makes sense, as being around clutter can make you feel more stressed.

Grab an empty box and pick up everything that doesn't belong in a given room, then go around your home and put all those things in their place. Think of it as a reverse scavenger hunt, and get your family in on the task if organizing isn't something you like to do solo.

## **Watch something indulgent**

Put on your favorite reality TV series, a documentary you've been waiting to dig into, or your favorite sitcom. Whatever it is, choose something that will lighten your mood.

## **Read a book for fun**

SUBSCRIBE

a great book. If you're having a hard time finding something, check out "[Untamed](#)" by Glennon Doyle for a powerful journey about selfhood.

## **Take a power nap**

ADVERTISEMENT



doesn't do itself.)

Nevertheless, taking a [quick nap](#) — regardless of whether you still have a baby who does the same — can reset your day and give you some much-needed rest. Even if you just lie in bed for 20–30 minutes, you'll at least feel some relief.

## If you have 1 hour

### Listen to an inspiring podcast

Even if your “free” hour is spent cleaning the house or pushing a stroller during nap time, you can multitask in a soulful way. Try Brené Brown's [Unlocking Us](#) or Oprah's [Super Soul Conversations](#) for insightful, thought-provoking topics and interviews.

### Pamper yourself

Really go all out here. Pour a glass of [wine](#), if you so choose. Take a bath with frills (bath bombs, bath salts, bubble bath — you get the idea), and give yourself permission to soak it all in, literally. Let your partner earn some brownie points by giving you a much-needed foot massage afterward.

### Do an online yoga class

Get into your body and out of your head by moving, stretching, and flowing. If you can't get an hour to yourself, get the family involved and do a class together. (Kids of all ages will love this [Chi mat](#) that turns yoga into a game.)

### Spend time with a friend

Do a socially distanced hang with a pal so you can bond, vent, and feel somewhat normal again. If you can't meet up with someone IRL, spend



## Bake something delicious

Whether you whip up brownies from scratch or pop open a premade can of cinnamon buns, the act of creating something in the oven will brighten your day, as well as everyone else's in your household (that is, if you decide to share).

## Go for a walk

Maybe you go on a hike. Maybe you walk to your local coffee shop and treat yourself to a caffeinated drink that you didn't have to make yourself. Getting out of the house and getting some new scenery can be a big mental boost.

---

*Natasha Burton is a freelance writer and editor who has written for Cosmopolitan, Women's Health, Livestrong, Woman's Day, and many other lifestyle publications. She's the author of [What's My Type?: 100+ Quizzes to Help You Find Yourself – and Your Match!](#), [101 Quizzes for Couples](#), [101 Quizzes for BFFs](#), [101 Quizzes for Brides and Grooms](#), and the co-author of [“The Little Black Book of Big Red Flags.”](#) When she's not writing, she's fully immersed in #momlife with her toddler and preschooler.*

Parenthood Life

## How we reviewed this article:

 **SOURCES**  **HISTORY**

Our experts continually monitor the health and wellness space, and we update our articles when new information becomes available.

 **Current Version**

ADVERTISEMENT



Natasha Burton

Edited By

Sara McTigue

Fact Checked By

Jennifer Chesak, MSJ

Copy Edited By

Christina Guzik, BA, MBA

---

Share this article



---

## READ THIS NEXT

# Prebiotics vs. Probiotics: What's the Difference?

Medically reviewed by [Alan Carter, Pharm.D.](#)

READ MORE

# Probiotics and Prebiotics: What's the Difference?

Medically reviewed by [Grant Tinsley, Ph.D., CSCS,\\*D, CISSN](#)

Both probiotics and prebiotics help keep your gut bacteria healthy but serve different functions. Here are the functions and benefits of each.

ADVERTISEMENT



[READ MORE](#)

## The 15 Best Supplements to Boost Your Immune System Right Now

Medically reviewed by [Sade Meeks, MS, RD](#)

No supplements will cure or prevent disease, including COVID-19, but some may help. Here are 15 supplements known to offer immune-...

[READ MORE](#)

## Vitamins for Kids: Do They Need Them (and Which Ones)?

You may wonder whether your child should take vitamin supplements. This article tells you everything you need to know about vitamins for kid...

[READ MORE](#)



ADVERTISEMENT



Filter out the noise and nurture your inbox with health and wellness advice that's inclusive and rooted in medical expertise.

Enter your email

SIGN UP

Your [privacy](#) is important to us

[About Us](#)

[Medical Affairs](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Content Integrity](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Privacy Settings](#)

[Advertising Policy](#)

[Health Topics](#)

© 2023 Healthline Media LLC. All rights reserved. Our website services, content, and products are for informational purposes only. Healthline Media does not provide medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. See [additional information](#).

[About](#) | [Careers](#) | [Advertise with us](#)

#### OUR BRANDS

[Healthline](#)

[Medical News Today](#)

[Greatist](#)

[Psych Central](#)

[Bezy](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT

