

The Self Care Wheel

A well-rounded life is important for fatigue management. Getting a proper amount of sleep, every day, is the primary way to avoid fatigue. Many people find it challenging to get the sleep they need in order to be truly alert in their waking hours. Stress, irritability, poor concentration, and poor job performance are the results of sleep deprivation. Creating healthy sleep habits and seeking treatment for potential sleep disorders may help relieve these symptoms.

Is sleep the only solution to fatigue? There are many other factors that can contribute to feelings of fatigue. Those who have developed good health habits find that their ability to deal with the daily grind becomes a little easier. Taking good care of your self is the best form of preventative medicine.

There are several key components to consider when seeking to build your overall health and reduce the effects of fatigue. Look at the self care wheel:

- Get plenty of restful sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Socialize with family and friends
- Maintain a positive mindset
- Protect yourself from negative influences
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Eat nutrient dense foods
- Have some fun – laughter is the best medicine!

Each of these components in the self care wheel contributes to well being and reduces stress. Let's discover some of them. Sleep, of course, is our priority for reducing fatigue and stress. During the various phases of sleep, certain chemicals wash away toxins from within our brain allowing us to think more clearly when we wake.

Physical activity cleanses toxins from our tissues and organs and increases levels of endorphins – the “feel good” hormone. Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, help cleanse our respiratory system of toxin buildup. When your body is relieved of these harmful chemicals, it relaxes and functions at an easier pace.

Relationships affect our mental and physical health as well as our mortality risk. Adults who are more socially connected are healthier and live longer than their peers. What if some of those relationships have a negative influence on you? Be proactive and less reactive. Proactive people are influenced by external stimuli, but their response is a value-based choice, rather than an emotional reaction. Practicing forgiveness and gratitude are two of the most impactful ways to change our thoughts, which in turn creates a more positive outlook.

Eating nutritious food, in small portions throughout the day, maintains your insulin level and keeps energy flowing smoothly. Make sure each portion includes some protein. Water is our most important nutrient. Drink lots of water every day to maintain good hydration.

If you find yourself lacking in one or more of the components of self-care, think of one thing you can do to improve. Go ahead and do that one thing today! Evaluate the outcome and make adjustments if needed. The key is to be intentional and take action. Practice the one new thing until it's incorporated into your life. Practicing the action will create a habit over time. Eventually, life begins to change. You and those in your circle of influence will be changed. Side effects include: increased laughter!

