**What Self-Care Is and Isn’t**

Although self-care is a term branded around a lot these days, there’s still a surprising amount of confusion over what it actually involves.

Many people have a misguided view on what counts as self-care. The trouble is, if you focus on the wrong things, you’re not going to get the benefits it can deliver.

If you’re trying to take better care of yourself, it’s important to have a good understanding of what self-care involves. Here, you’ll discover what self-care is and perhaps more importantly, what it isn’t.

**What is self-care?**

The definition of self-care is any task which helps us to take care of ourselves. It can relate to emotional wellbeing, our relationships, our physical health or our mental health for example.

When you practice adequate self-care, every aspect of your life can be improved upon. However, while it’s a simple enough concept, it can be difficult to put into practice. It’s also easy to confuse what self-care is. Put simply, it’s treating yourself well and giving the body what it needs.

So, now you know what self-care is, let’s take a look at what it isn’t…

**What isn’t self-care?**

There’s a lot of misconceptions over what self-care is. A common mistake people make when they adopt a self-care routine, is indulging in something that’s bad for them.

For example, you may think self-care isn’t denying yourself the things you want. So, you might start to eat a little more chocolate or indulge in daily treats. While indulgence can be a great occasional self-care practice, on a daily basis it’s going to do more harm than good.

So, it’s about finding a balance and not over-indulging in anything just because you think you deserve it. You might want to live off a diet of chocolate and cake, but the body needs healthy nutrition to function properly.

Self-care also isn’t doing things you think you should do. It’s about making improvements for you, not your parents, partner or whatever the media tells you to do. It’s an individual practice that’s different for everyone. When you add self-care to your routine, it should be focused solely on your own desires for change.

**Following a basic checklist**

In order to ensure your self-care routine is effective, it’s a good idea to follow a basic checklist. Think about:

* What you want to improve
* Why you want to improve it
* The type of self-care you need most
* Creating a no list
* Starting out gradually

Figuring out what you want to improve first and why you want to improve it is a crucial step. Remember, self-care only works if you’re doing it for you and nobody else. This doesn’t mean it’s a selfish act, however. It simply means you care about yourself enough to put yourself first, so you can be more effective and useful to those around you.

Think about the type of self-care you need to focus on first. Physical and emotional self-care tend to be the most common types to start with. So, look at ensuring you’re getting enough sleep, eating healthy and exercising regularly.

Creating a “no” list can also help you to get started. This allows you to determine the things you don’t want to do or don’t like doing. It can include tasks such as not checking your phone right before bed or switching off from technology for an hour a day.

Finally, you’ll want to make sure you’re starting out gradually. It’s tempting to try and address everything with your new self-care routine. However, this can become overwhelming so it’s best to focus on one or two things at a time.

As you can see, self-care isn’t just about doing what you want. You need to focus on the things your mind and body needs. Knowing the difference between what self-care is and what it isn’t, will help you to establish the most effective routine.