

# 29 keeping your water bottle full with the self-care tracker

## for you to know

*New York Times* best-selling author and speaker Mandy Hale offered a great reminder: “It’s not selfish to love yourself, take care of yourself, and to make your happiness a priority. It’s necessary.” Often, people put everything and everyone in their lives first and neglect themselves. Doing things for yourself is not selfish; it is essential to stay alive, function, and be healthy. Neglecting yourself is a type of self-harm. Think of a seed in the ground—without the proper nutrients, water, and light, it wouldn’t grow. When you take care of your body and your mind, giving them the proper “nutrients,” you are making it possible to not only be healthy and grow properly but also to be happy, flourish, and have a more meaningful life—to be a survivor and thrive.

## keep your water bottle full

*Self-care* is defined as giving attention to your physical and psychological well-being. A helpful way to think about the importance of self-care is to imagine you are a water bottle and the water inside is your “energy.” You pour yourself out all the time into many “cups” representing everything and everyone requiring your time, your attention, your energy: friends, school, family—the list goes on and on. Your water bottle would constantly be empty if you didn’t refill it regularly. When you engage in self-harming behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, it’s like poking holes in your water bottle that cause the water to drain out. Think of self-care activities as the opposite: as ways to refill your bottle.

## self-care activities to keep the water flowing

Below are some examples of self-care activities you can do to keep your water bottle full and take care of yourself:

- Get outside and move.
- Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques.
- Spend time with an animal (walking your dog, for example).
- Do something for yourself that you often do as a kind gesture for someone else.
- Say something kind to yourself.
- Play one of your favorite positive songs (maybe even dance around or sing).
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Laugh.
- Take a nap.
- Exercise.
- Practice a grounding technique.
- Write in a journal.
- Write a thank-you note to yourself.
- Write down three to five things you're grateful for.
- Call someone who cares about you instead of just sending them a text.
- Create something, like art, to express yourself.
- Watch the sunrise or sunset.
- Look up at the stars at night.
- Cook a healthy meal, maybe with someone who fills you up.
- Go on a walk, maybe with someone who is supportive in your life.
- Take a short break, pause, or step away from someone or something that is stressful.

activity 29 \* keeping your water bottle full with the self-care tracker

- Take a bath or shower.
- Smell something pleasant (a flower, essential oil, a spice, perfume or cologne)

Which of these do you already practice?

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Which of these would you like to try?

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Is there anything else you do or want to try that isn't on the list? Write down any other ideas here.

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## self-care tracker

To start filling up your water bottle on a regular basis, commit to doing one *quick-and-easy* activity every day that takes up to ten minutes. Then, commit to doing a *long-and-strong* activity once a week that takes at least one hour.

Use this self-care tracker to track these activities; you can also download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/43676>. Record what activity you did in each category on each day. Use the extra-credit column for additional activities you may have done on a specific day. For example, on Tuesday, maybe you listened to your favorite song (quick and easy), did an hour-long yoga class (long and strong), and then went on a walk with your best friend (extra credit).

### *Self-Care Tracker*

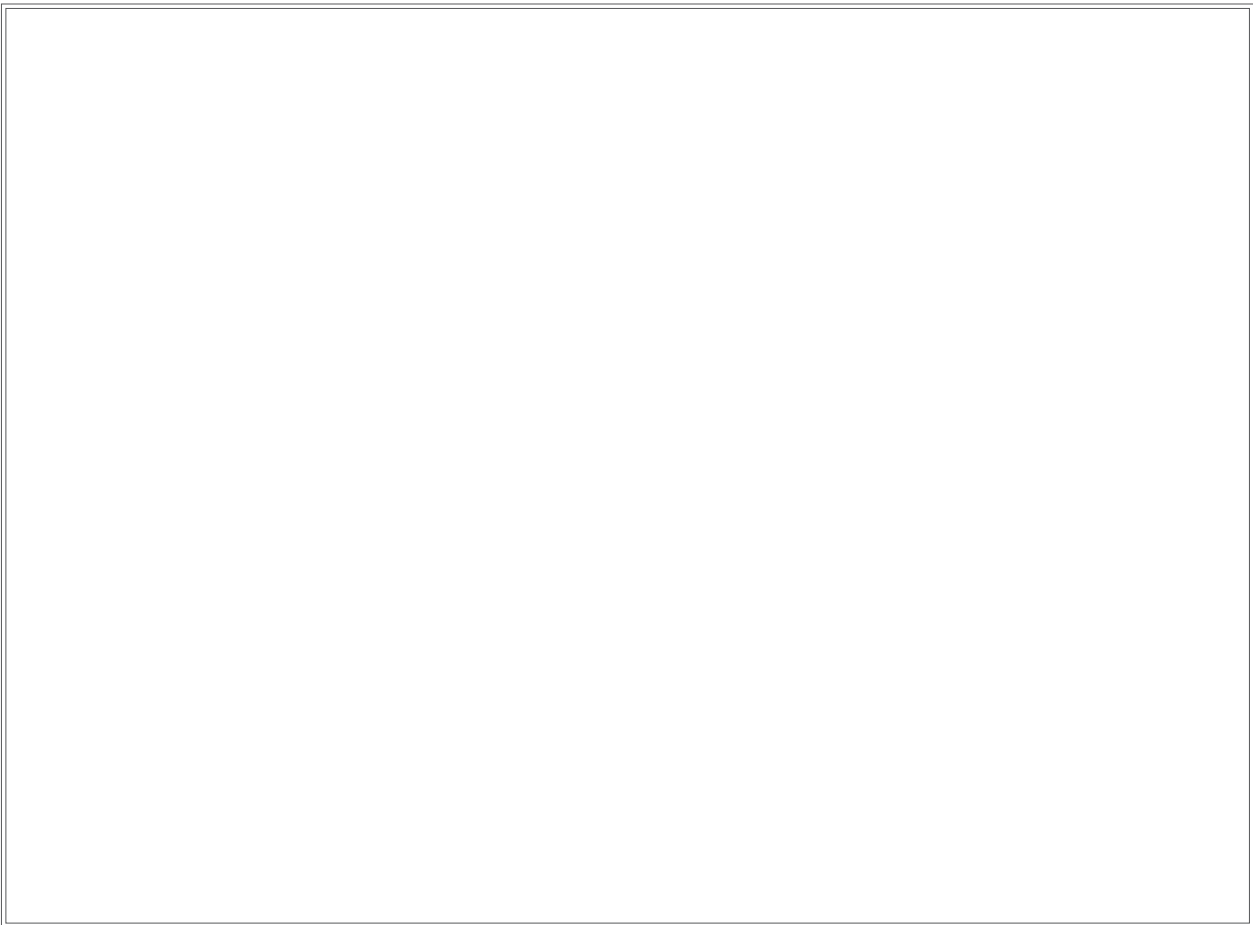
|                | Quick and easy                      | Long and strong          | Extra credit                    |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Example</i> | <i>Listened to my favorite song</i> | <i>1-hour yoga class</i> | <i>walk with my best friend</i> |
| Monday         |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Tuesday        |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Wednesday      |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Thursday       |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Friday         |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Saturday       |                                     |                          |                                 |
| Sunday         |                                     |                          |                                 |

At <http://www.newharbinger.com/43676>, you'll find *Creating Your Mantra*, an additional activity on self-care and rising strong.

**mindful takeaway in the moment** You can't pour from an empty water bottle! To stay balanced and healthy, and to be able to help yourself as well as others, it's essential to take care of yourself. Self-care is not selfish; it is necessary. Try to do more self-care activities in your daily life that keep your water bottle full and reduce the self-harming behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that poke holes in your bottle.

## your water bottle and cups

Draw a picture of your "water bottle" below and indicate your current "water" (energy) level. Is your bottle mostly empty? Mostly full?



Do you feel nourished or drained right now? Explain more below.

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Remember, you can engage in the activities above to add more water to your bottle.

Next, draw cups *below* your water bottle and label them with all the draining things you are pouring *out* of your water bottle—all the activities, people, places, or situations that you regularly put time and energy into that drain your water bottle. You might draw one cup and label it “school” and another one “family,” for example. Or you can be more specific—for example, “My teacher always gives us tons of assignments and homework with short deadlines.”

Now draw cups *above* the water bottle and label them with all the nourishing things you could be doing more of or spending more time on—whatever you could pour *into* your water bottle to help your water level rise. You might draw one cup and label it “painting” and another one “time with best friends,” for example.

What do you think about bringing more activities into your daily life that will fill you up rather than drain you?

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activity 29 \* keeping your water bottle full with the self-care tracker

What can you do to make sure that your water bottle stays full and that you don't pour out all of your water? List specific examples here.

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