

## Live Well, Be Well

### Let's Talk about Holistic Self-Care: Summer Edition

Welcome everyone! My name is Renee Dell'Acqua and I'm here with Zarah Rubio. We are Health Educators in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, we'll be discussing a topic that we've discussed in the past but we're going to be putting a bit of summer twist on it. And that topic is holistic self-care: summer edition!

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

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**R: So Zarah and I have basically decided that after all that we've collectively been through this year, this summer should be dedicated to relaxing, recharging, and refocusing, and a primary way of achieving this is through the daily practice of holistic self-care. While it may sound daunting or even unattainable at first, self-care can become habitual in nature and a part of our daily routine just like brushing our teeth or taking a shower. It just takes time, practice, and intentionality. And what better time than now is it to figure out how to weave in self-care into our daily lives. This summer can be spent working on transforming the way we view and practice self-care. We can change our perceptions surrounding self-care from being something that we reserve for special occasions or as a reward for getting our work done -- to making it a part of our daily routine, and knowing that when we prioritize taking care of ourselves, we maximize our ability to devote time and energy to the people in our lives and the responsibilities that we hold.**

**R: So let's jump into this episode by first defining what self-care means to us. Zarah, I'll let you start. What does self-care mean to you?**

Z: For me, self-care is taking the time to listen to my body for what it needs. Do I need to hydrate, eat, step away from my computer? And what do I need in that moment to help give my body the energy it needs again. Is it to cook food so I can fuel my body, journal so I can meditate on my thoughts, or watch tv because I just don't want to think about anything else at that moment? Sometimes I get caught up in the action of getting things done that I forget when my body is crying out for help. Pay attention to the signs your body is giving you to take a break. This could be as easy to detect as feeling tired or sleepy, or it can be small subtle signs like headaches, getting constantly sick, tense muscles, irritability. So when you listen to your body, you're more likely to catch when you need to pause and practice self-care.

R: I love what you just said Zarah, you've really emphasized the need to practice self-checks by strengthening our self-awareness, and really listening to what your body is trying to tell us -- in terms of what it needs and what it wants. I think that's so important! And just to add to what you've mentioned, because your explanation was totally spot on, is that the way that I think about self-care is I think about our bodies, minds, and hearts the way I do our cell phones. And what I mean by that is that our phones need to be recharged daily, especially if we've been using it a lot throughout the day. And when we charge our phones, we really capitalize on it's full potential. So just like our phones, we must also recharge our bodies, minds, and hearts, especially if we've been navigating through heavy situations and circumstances, which has been the case for many, if not all of us. And holistic self-care is one way we can do just that.

Z: Exactly! We all need to recharge too! So this summer we're going to be sharing strategies and tips on when you need to recharge your body, minds, and hearts with our Summer Self Care Series. Starting with this episode, we'll be talking about practicing self-care in a holistic way by breaking down little things

you can do to make the most of your summer. And throughout the next couple of weeks we'll be highlighting more strategies from summer essentials and recipes to coping strategies and practicing self-love.

**R: So since we'll be releasing content on our social media page throughout the summer, today we'll share just a few tips, tricks, and strategies for practicing holistic self-care this summer! So Zarah, I'm going to pass it along to you, what are some things you would like to share today when it comes to practicing self-care?**

**Z: Let's start with the basics, like moving, fueling, and protecting our body. I know the summer weather can make it impossible to move around without getting drenched in sweat.**

**R: Seriously!**

**Z: Try these tips! Choose to exercise or move during cooler times in the day like early morning or just before sunset. Plus you may find that the crowds disappear during this time too so you can still practice physical distancing! Choose activities that you enjoy so it doesn't feel like a workout or chore. Try riding a bike around your neighborhood, gardening in your backyard... I know rollerblading is making a comeback! Moving our body can give you more energy, boost your mood, and help you feel stronger. And if you're spending time outdoors, don't forget about prevention and sun protection... wear your mask, put on sunscreen, and throw on a hat and sunglasses. Apply sunscreen 2 hours before you go outdoors and make sure it is at least SPF 30 that blocks both UVA and UVB rays. And remember to reapply at least every 2 hours... even if it is cloudy. When you're done moving your body, let's fuel it with nourishing foods that make you happy and satisfied. Choose whole foods and be mindful of the**

amount of processed foods you consume. The summer season offers so many delicious produce that you can whip up for a refreshing and fun treat, like berries, corn, and bell peppers. Personally I love a good berry smoothie and adding in a handful of greens to trick myself into eating my veggies. Also, I enjoy whipping out the grill and barbecuing corn and making bell pepper with zucchini skewers! I also want to say that treating yourself to ice cream is not a bad thing, in fact it can be a good treat for yourself to make you feel happier. The important thing is to remember everything in moderation. Lastly, don't forget to hydrate! Carry around a water bottle wherever you go and have it next to you whenever you're working. Personally, a little trick I do is to use a really cute water bottle and have it in plain sight. I find that gives me motivation to drink more water and it makes me happy just looking at it!

**R: Those were some excellent examples of the simple yet effective ways we can show love to our physical selves! Now in terms of mental and emotional selves, some ways to practice self-care include:**

(1) Since we're home now more than ever, the way many or most of us stay connected with others and receive news is very much dependent on social media and technology - and while it's great that we have this platform to stay connected and informed, it can be a lot and it can be emotionally draining. I mean even trying to keep up and participate in trends on platforms like Tiktok can be a lot to manage so it's important that each day we take the time to disconnect from technology and social media and give ourselves the mental, emotional, and even visual break that we need.

(2) In line with social media, it's important that we take the time to curate our social media feeds. If you find that certain accounts are making you feel down or bad about yourself, or you get bombarded with content that make you feel nothing but negative emotions, then it may be time to

reconsider whether following them is worth it. And if you're not ready to unfollow someone, especially if it's a friend or family member, you can always use the mute function where you don't see what they're posting. In conjunction with that, start filling your feed with accounts that lift you up or post content that resonates with you. For example, I love to follow accounts that post quotes, messages, and advice on things that matter most to me like positivity, self-love, and motherhood. So when I go to IG or FB, the first things I typically see are posts that make me feel good or that give me a sense of connection with others.

(3) Be more aware of the way you're speaking to yourself — are you being supportive, loving, and compassionate towards yourself? This summer, let's begin to examine our self-talk and if you find that you tend to speak more negatively to yourself, which is unfortunately pretty common, let's aim to reframe our thoughts from the negative to the positive. This takes time and practice so be kind to yourself!

(4) Lastly, this summer explore and discover ways to relax and recharge that work for you. This could be things like meditation and mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises, expressing gratitude to people, things, or experiences, and finding creative outlets like painting or photography. And keep in mind, the Zone, which is our student lounge for health and well-being, offers many outlets for stress management, including art DIYs and yoga, that are ready for your viewing on our Health Promotion Services Youtube channel. So this summer, find stress management strategies that work for you! Everyone is different and methods that work for some may not work for others so it's important to explore different methods and find the ones that work for you personally.

**Z: Absolutely! I think you've brought to light that self-care isn't just about physical aspects but also incorporating other elements that make us who we are like our**

mental and emotional well-being. And I'm definitely going to be implementing those in my personal life. I really do think this summer is the perfect opportunity for growth and exploration so we can recharge ourselves and be ready for the next academic year. By taking care of yourself now and being aware of what holistic self care strategies work for you, you are better prepared for any challenges that may present itself in the future. So, don't be afraid to try new things, step out of your comfort zone, and listen to and honor the needs of your body, mind, and heart.

**R: So with that, we hope this episode kickstarts your holistic self-care journey and has given you some ideas of how you can incorporate simple yet effective strategies into your daily life. Be sure to follow our Summer Self-Care Series as we post weekly tips, ideas, and strategies to practice holistic self-care. You can follow along on our IG and FB at @UCSDHPS!**

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So that concludes this episode of Live Well, Be Well! If you like what you heard today and would like to learn more about topics related to health and wellness, there's much more to come!

Please be sure to check out our website [healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu](http://healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu) and also follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDHPS. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.