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**THE VITAL
GUIDE**
to Self-Care

Here at Vital Proteins, we're making February all about **self-care**. This is a time of year when many of us think a lot about other people in our lives. Valentine's Day is all about showing our partners, kids, family and friends that we love them... And that's great! But it's also important to show **ourselves** some love once in a while.

February is also a time of year when we start to look forward to spring. It's just around the corner, and with warmer weather come more opportunities to socialize, travel and maybe spend some time on the beach.

With that in mind, our **Self-Care February** focuses on nourishing our minds and bodies from the inside out. This last month of winter is the perfect opportunity to tune in to ourselves, and tune out the noise.

Join us this February for a month of self-love and self-care.

How to Practice Self-Care

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Yoga



If you already love yoga, we don't have to tell you how amazing it is for self-care. But to those who've never tried yoga (or who think it's not for you), listen up!

Yoga helps us unwind because it has a mysterious ability to clear and focus the mind. It may not be easy at first, but over time, a regular yoga practice can help you learn how to quiet your mind, ultimately helping to reduce stress and worry. In this way, it can be a fantastic tool for self-care.

HERE ARE A FEW TYPES OF YOGA YOU MAY WANT TO TRY OUT:

Vinyasa Yoga

Arguably the most popular form of yoga in the west, Vinyasa yoga is a style of movement that flows from one pose to the next, while a focus on the breath is cultivated throughout. It is this type of yoga that's most commonly practiced in conventional yoga studios in the United States.

Hatha Yoga

Much like Vinyasa yoga, Hatha yoga doesn't refer to a particular school of yoga, but rather a style of movement. Hatha yoga also focuses on poses, but tends to have less of a "flow" and more of an emphasis on doing one pose at a time.

Iyengar Yoga

One of the more prescriptive yoga schools, Iyengar yoga is a globally practiced style of yoga in which the teacher guides students through subtle muscle motions as they move through poses. Iyengar yogis perform the same poses found in other schools of yoga, but with more attention to physical alignment, strength-building, breathwork and the use of props.

Ashtanga Yoga

With roots in India, Ashtanga yoga is a method of performing the same routine over and over again, with strong emphasis on moving through the poses with breath.

Hot Yoga

The term "hot yoga" can be applied to any type of yoga, so long as the practice is performed in a heated room.

Bikram Yoga

Bikram yoga is a style of yoga that is performed in a heated room, but it also contains a specific set of poses that are performed in the same order each time.

These are just a few of the most popular yoga styles. Once you have a handle on yoga, it can be beneficial to make time for your own consistent home practice. Here's one of our favorite [at-home yoga sequences](#).

Restorative Yoga

Restorative yoga is a lovely way to de-stress and re-charge. Rather than focusing on fitness or motion, you simply let yourself relax. These three restorative yoga poses are perfect for helping you wind down and spend a little extra time on just you.

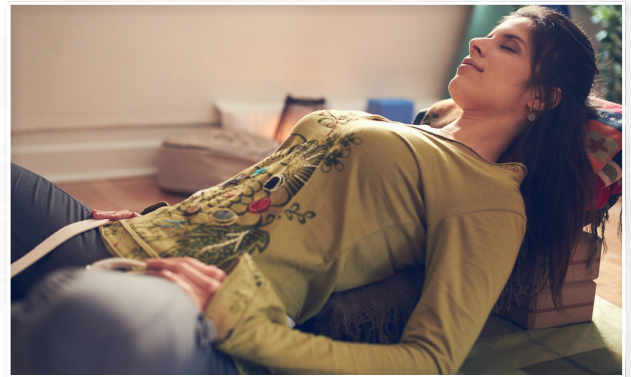


Legs Up the Wall

Bringing your feet above your heart is called an inversion, and this inversion is gentle enough for beginners. Lie on your back with your feet up the wall. A yoga bolster or pillow under your hips can also be extremely restorative, as it elevates the lower body even more, directing blood flow toward your upper body.

Supported Butterfly

Using one yoga block under the small of your back and two to four under your head, recline against your yoga blocks. You can also add a pillow under your head for extra comfort. Now, press the bottoms of your feet together and let your knees fall apart, coming into a butterfly pose. Rest your hands on your hips or at your sides.



Supported Child's Pose

This take on Child's Pose is even more relaxing than the traditional pose. Start in Child's Pose by sitting on your heels, keeping your knees slightly apart and your upper body stretched out in front of you. Now complete that exact same pose with support beneath you. You can use a single pillow or yoga bolster, or use yoga blocks and other props to raise your bolster off the floor.



For more exercise ideas and yoga poses, visit www.stay-lively.com.

Massage

People often dismiss the idea of massage because it can feel self-indulgent. However, contrary to popular belief, taking care of yourself helps you be a better friend, partner and parent!



HERE ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH GETTING A MASSAGE:

Lymph Drainage

Many massage therapists are certified to provide Manual Lymphatic Drainage, which helps direct the flow of lymph away from the heart. Some of the purported benefits associated with lymph drainage include detoxification and beauty benefits.

Myofascial Release

The fascia is a type of tissue that we're only just beginning to understand. It covers all the muscles of the body like plastic wrap, and can lead to muscle tightness and dysfunction if not worked through and released. Massage helps loosen up and provide release to the fascia, ultimately reducing tension and improving feelings of well-being.

Muscle Tension

Massage is proven to help reduce tension in the muscles, leading to reduced physical stress overall.

Relaxation

Of course, don't forget about simple relaxation! Stress has numerous physiological impacts, so taking the time to enjoy a relaxing massage can do wonders for your health and well-being.

Meditation



Meditation is absolutely beneficial for decluttering the mind and reducing stress.

HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE MEDITATION TECHNIQUES:

Mindfulness Meditation

For about 30 minutes, commit to being mindful while doing a routine activity, such as washing the dishes or eating a meal. Perform the activity in silence and be extremely aware of all of your senses (such as how your hands feel under the running water, or how the food tastes in your mouth).

Mantra Meditation

Unlike "mantras" that refer to inspirational phrases or goals, mantra meditation works with non-word sounds (or words borrowed from other languages). While inhaling and exhaling, repeat the phrases "so-hum," "hum-so," "sat-nam" or "om." Focus on these sounds and on your breath for at least 10-15 minutes.

Zen Meditation

One of the more difficult types of meditation, a Zen meditation simply means sitting in awareness. Sit in a comfortable place and begin to focus on your breath, gradually clearing your mind. Then, for at least 15 minutes, simply observe what happens. If you have thoughts, notice them and let them pass you by like you are watching them from a distance. Learn to be at peace with every feeling and thought that passes through your mind.

Guided Meditation

Apps like Calm, Headspace and Insight Timer have some fantastic guided meditations that are perfect for beginners.

Getting stuck on your meditation practice? Try [these tips!](#)

Take a Bath

Taking a bath is good for the soul! Enjoy a luxurious bath all to yourself!



ENJOY THAT RELAXING BATH, COMPLETE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

Essential Oils

Here are a few of the most [calming essential oils](#).

Epsom Salt

High in magnesium, epsom salt can help soothe muscle tension and promote feelings of calm and relaxation.

Play Music

Calming music – especially instrumental music that can help you quiet your mind – is the perfect complement to a self-care session.

Have a Drink

There's no harm in a glass of wine, but if you'd like to keep things alcohol-free, a glass of kombucha will do the trick. Another great option: A spa-like infused water made with [Vital Proteins Beauty Water](#) in Lavender Lemon, Strawberry Lemon, Melon Mint or Cucumber Aloe.

Read a Book

We suggest something that falls in line with self-care practices, such as a spiritual or self-improvement book.

Make a Healthy Meal



Sometimes it's difficult – especially during the end of winter – to focus on our health. The warm months seem so close yet so far away, and it can be easy to resort to takeout and other foods that don't make our bodies feel good. Check out this delicious recipe idea.

Healthy Winter Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 1 T avocado oil
- 1 C pecan halves
- ½ C walnuts
- 1 T avocado oil
- 1 T honey
- 1 C sprouted quinoa
- 1 scoop [Chicken Bone Broth Collagen](#) (optional)*
- 1 C green onions, sliced
- 2 green apples, diced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Place butternut squash cubes on one baking sheet. Toss with one tablespoon of avocado oil and salt and pepper, then spread cubes into a single layer.
3. Place butternut squash into the oven and bake for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Place pecans and walnuts on the other baking sheet and toss with avocado oil, honey, and salt and pepper. Put pecans and walnuts in the oven on a separate rack the last 5-10 minutes of the butternut squash roasting.
5. Cook sprouted quinoa according to the package.

DESSERT INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ C apple cider vinegar
- ¼ C olive oil
- 1 T honey or maple syrup
- 1/8 t ground cinnamon
- 1/8 t ground ginger
- Salt and pepper, to taste

6. Add in Bone Broth Collagen at the end of the quinoa cooking, and stir to mix in evenly.
7. In a large mixing bowl, add in roasted butternut squash, roasted nuts, cooked quinoa, sliced green onion and diced green apples.
8. Whisk dressing ingredients in a smaller bowl, or place all ingredients in a jar with a lid and shake vigorously.
9. Pour in dressing over butternut squash mixture and toss until all is combined.
10. Season with salt and pepper as needed, and serve immediately.

Make a Healthy Meal Cont.

Care for yourself by taking an evening to cook something really healthy and nourishing. Another great recipe to fuel your body with hearty and tasty ingredients.



Paleo Slow Cooker Chili

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 large sweet potato, cubed
- 3 medium carrots, sliced
- 14.5 ounce can fire roasted tomatoes with juices
- 26 ounce jar tomato sauce
- 1 ½ t salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 scoops [Beef Bone Broth Collagen](#)
- 1 scoop [Collagen Veggie Blend](#)
- ½ C chili powder
- Water, as needed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat a large pan on medium-high heat. Add in ground beef, breaking up the meat as it cooks until no more pink remains.
2. Drain the fat from the beef into a separate bowl to be used or discarded later.
3. Add in cooked ground beef then all remaining ingredients into a large slow cooker pot.
4. For a thick, chunky chili, leave as is. Add one or two cups of water for a thinner chili.
5. Let cook on high for 4 hours or low for 6 hours.
6. Serve immediately.

And For Dessert...



Of course there is always room for dessert! Combining gluten-free and dairy-free ingredients, we've added the ultimate healthy twist to the classic sugar cookie. Treat yourself!

Very Vanilla Sugar Cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 C blanched almond flour
- ¼ C honey
- 1 egg
- 2 t unsalted butter or coconut oil
- ½ t vanilla extract
- ½ t baking soda
- ¼ t sea salt
- 1 t coconut flour - for dusting
- ½ C [Vanilla Collagen Peptides](#)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine the dough ingredients in a food processor and process until a smooth ball of dough forms, about 30 seconds.
3. Flatten the ball of dough into a disk approximately 1/2" thick.
4. Cover in plastic wrap and chill for 20 minutes.
5. Roll the dough out between two sheets of parchment paper, keeping it 1/4" in thickness.
6. Remove the top sheet and sprinkle the top of the dough with 1 teaspoon coconut flour, rubbing it in slightly with your fingers.
7. Dip a cookie cutter in a little flour then cut your shapes, peeling away excess dough as you work. Gather the excess dough into a ball and re-roll it.
8. Bake the cookies on a tray lined with parchment paper for 8-10 minutes.
9. Cool completely on a wire rack.

XOXO,
VITAL PROTEINS®



Don't forget: You can't pour from an empty cup!
We've often been led to believe that self-care
is synonymous with self-indulgent...
Nothing could be further from the truth.

We hope you enjoy Self-Care February.

Cheers to you!