

**Mind &  
Body**



*Make time for friends*

**Self-Care Week**  
toolkit for  
local health  
organisations

**Mind &  
Body**

**Mind &  
Body**



*Eat a Balanced Diet*



**Self-Care Forum**  
Helping people take care of themselves

## Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is for ICBs, PCNs, local authorities, public health teams, local health authorities, libraries, surgeries and others involved in health and public health. It includes practical suggestions, key messages, and collaboration strategies tailored to your role in supporting and promoting Self-Care Week in your community.

Further resources are available from the website [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org) here are useful links:

- Self-Care Week [case studies](#) to share best practice.
- A comms doc is available on the [resources page](#), also an 8 Point Plan, Self-Care Week Ideas, the icon, posters and social media assets etc
- [Subscribe](#) to our newsletter to stay updated
- Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#), [X](#), [facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).
- Get in touch via [selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)



## About Self-Care Week

Self-Care Week is the annual national campaign from the Self-Care Forum, encouraging individuals to take control of their health and wellbeing. It's a perfect opportunity for local health organisations to:

- Promote both mental and physical wellbeing
- Support self-management and prevention
- Help signpost people to relevant health services according to their needs
- Improve health literacy and resilience in communities

This year's theme, "Mind & Body", is designed to be broad enough for organisations to tailor their self-care messages to what is needed in their community.



## Why Self-Care Week Matters

The NHS is facing rising demand and stretched resources

- GP appointments have increased by 20% since 2018/19
- A&E visits and hospital admissions continue to rise
- More people live with multiple long-term conditions
- Mental health demand has grown sharply, especially post-COVID

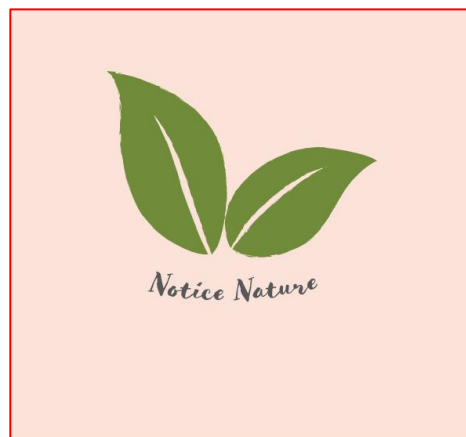
Empowering people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their health – mind and body – can help reduce this pressure and improve health outcomes.



# Your role as a Local Health Organisation

Local health organisations play a vital leadership role in making Self-Care Week successful.

- ◆ **Lead and Champion**
  - Promote Self-Care Week across your organisation and networks
  - Endorse it publicly and in partnership communications
  - Align the campaign with local strategies for population health, prevention, and mental wellbeing
- ◆ **Coordinate Across the System**
  - Bring together stakeholders: GPs, pharmacies, schools, community groups
  - Support consistency of messaging and resource sharing
  - Enable co-branding and local customisation of materials
- ◆ **Empower the Public**
  - Use your channels (web, social, newsletters) to share self-care messages
  - Run public-facing campaigns that highlight local services, including pharmacy first
  - Promote access to mental health support and wellbeing tools



# Resources from the Self-Care Forum

## Self-Care Aware Fact Sheets

Designed to empower individuals and help them understand how to take care of symptoms of common ailments. Here are ways you can use them:

- Promote healthy living with our POWER fact sheet
- Promote women's health with our Menopause fact sheet
- Use our Winter Illness and Winter Wellbeing to prepare people for the winter months
- Our Boosting Your Mood can help as part of a mental wellbeing promotion.

## Posters, and icons

The Self-Care Forum has Self-Care Week posters, text for websites, a presentation, footers and social media assets for use during the Week (available 2 weeks before Self-Care Week).

These can be used in waiting rooms, websites, social media, and printed displays.

Also, the “Mind & Body” heart icon will help brand your activities and link it to the national campaign.

 [www.selfcareforum.org/resources](http://www.selfcareforum.org/resources)



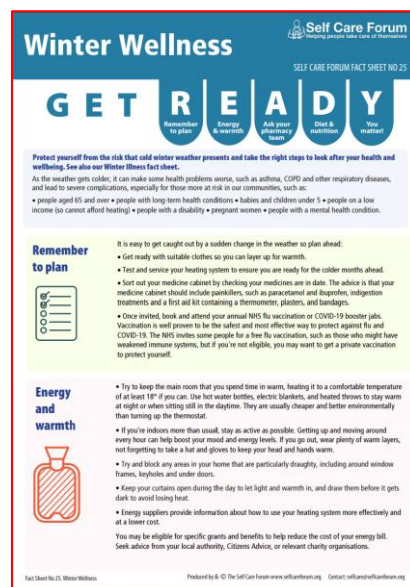
## Campaign Focus: “Mind & Body”

This year's theme encourages people to:

- Understand that physical and mental health are linked
- Take small daily actions to support both aspects of their wellbeing
- Know when and how to seek help – and from where

You can align your campaign activities with this message by:

- Encouraging healthy habits (movement, sleep, nutrition, hydration)
- Promoting stress management and emotional self-care
- Signposting mental health support, local services, and helplines
- Directing people to screening and vaccines services such as flu/COVID jabs, cervical screening and blood pressure checks
- Sharing tips on managing common conditions (feel free to use the Self-Care Forum’s fact sheets)



## “Mind” - Mental Wellbeing

Since more people are suffering with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and stress it is good to incorporate advice and recommendations on how people can protect themselves:

- Help promote work-life balance, encourage workplaces to actively discourage workers from working past their hours and through lunchtime to promote work-life balance
- Publish blogs and articles with a focus on advice
- Promote messages via a social media programme
- Organise events and activities with health experts
- Set-up a coffee morning, book-club or work with local men’s shed to help with social connection
- Use the “Boosting your mood” resource as part of your promotions to support better mental wellbeing.

### Self-Care: Boosting your mood

SELF CARE FORUM FACT SHEET NO.16

This fact sheet helps you to know what you can do to maintain and improve your mood and general wellbeing

#### Useful facts

Everyone copes and responds differently when times are tough. So be gentle with yourself and those around you. Just because others seem to cope, there is no right or wrong way to manage or be in any situation.

Many things can impact on our lives: local or family situations, national and international events, global issues, such as wars, financial pressures and wider political unrest. Don't expect to feel okay all the time or to be perfect at everything. You are doing the best you can.

#### Finances

**Get financial and employment help:** Financial and employment concerns can have a major impact on your mood and morale. If you experience problems, don't ignore them.

Talk to people and get all the help you can, for example talk to those responsible for your mortgage or rent, your utility companies and any other loan companies that you owe money.

The Citizens Advice agency have lots of advice and resources to help with things such as [the cost of living crisis](#).

If you have not already done so, you might want to talk with your employer and, to understand your sick pay and benefits' rights, see [Acas](#).

#### Plan practical things and stay connected

**Structure and plan your day:** Get into a routine, even doing small things like keeping on top of household chores 1 or 2 jobs a day can help you feel better and more in control. A 'to do list' can help identify the sort of things you want to do and help to achieve them. Have a plan and set boundaries with yourself.

**Stay connected with others:** Stay in touch with family, friends and work colleagues.

**Talk about your worries:** Speak with someone you trust about how you are feeling. If you find this hard, there are many reputable websites that have tips on what to do, see the section 'where to find out more' at the end of this fact sheet.

#### Look after your body

Look after your physical health by eating healthily, drinking enough water, and moving your body.


Move your body regularly and choose activities that you enjoy and that suit your level of fitness and mobility: join others for sports, or try yoga, Pilates, cycling, running or go for a brisk walk.

**Get a good sleep:** New routines and situations can cause sleep problems, and sleep is important for well-being. Avoid looking at screens as well as coffee, tea, energy drinks and alcohol before bedtime. Create an environment that promotes sleep. Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and tidy at night. Temperatures between 18C and 24C tend to promote good sleep. Remove electronic gadgets and use an alarm clock instead of your smartphone.

**Alcohol:** Avoid drinking too much alcohol. Having no alcohol days and staying within the recommended limits often improves sleep, helps you feel better in the mornings and prevents you feeling tired during the day.

**Take time to relax:** This can help with difficult emotions and worries, it can help improve well-being.

Fact Sheet No 16: Self-Care: Boosting your mood  
 The Self-Care Forum, www.selfcareforum.org  
 First Edition: March 2020. Best version: May 2023





## “Body” - Movement and Exercise

Exercise is essential for healthy bodies and minds and is proven to reduce stress. As a focus, it is ideal to promote as part of your Self-Care Week activities and our Power fact sheet can help. Other ideas:

- Organise a community trail or walk locally
- Work with your local gyms to set up free taster sessions
- Introduce a free online exercise class for residents who are house-bound
- Publishing blogs or organising a Q&A on the local radio can also reach a wider audience
- Introduce walking meetings during the Week as a fun way to promote better physical health – especially impactful if done outside
- Employers could introduce free or discounted gym membership or set-up a lunchtime running club



**The POWER of Self Care**

**You've got the POWER to take control of your life**

**POWER**

- P** Personal Wellbeing
- O** Out and about & Exercise
- W** Weight Management
- E** Eating & Diet
- R** Risk & Prevention

### Personal Wellbeing

**Connect**  
With the people around you. This includes friends, colleagues, neighbours. Building connections supports and enriches your life.

**Be Active**  
Get a walk or a cycle, play a game, enjoy a sport. Find ways to be active in your daily life. It makes you feel good and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

**Learn**  
Learn new skills, discover new interests. Learn to improve what you do well. Boost your confidence and skills.

**Take Notice**  
Notice the things that make you feel good. Notice the things that make you feel bad. Notice the things that make you feel different. Notice the things that make you feel like you are in control.

**Give**  
Do something nice for a friend, a neighbour, a stranger. Smile. Volunteer. Help out. Be a good neighbour. Be a good citizen. Be a good person.

### Mental health and well-being

The 5 ways to personal wellbeing will help improve your mental health.

- Take small steps. Pick one or two things that feel achievable at first.
- Give yourself time to figure out what works for you. Give yourself space to try.
- Only try what feels comfortable.
- See <https://www.self-careforum.org.uk/help/guide/ways-to-wellbeing/> for more information.

**Sleep**  
Good sleep is vital to personal and mental wellbeing. Help by establishing a routine at night, avoid using screens, try to wind down, make your sleep environment comfortable. See <https://www.mind.org.uk>

**Spirituality**  
Spirituality is a feeling of connection with something greater than ourselves and search for meaning in life. Explore the practices of your belief or your mental wellbeing. <https://www.sagepub.com/abnormal-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/spirituality-and-mental-health>

**Managing illness**  
Know how to look after yourself and loved ones during periods of illness. The Self-Care Forum has events where you have to do this and where you can help for a range of common illnesses. <https://www.self-careforum.org.uk/fact-sheets/>

### Out and about and Exercise

**EXERCISE - some is good, more is better**

Exercise improves sleep, helps maintain a healthy weight, reduces the risk of many diseases, helps manage stress and improves your quality of life.

**Starting out - Exercise**  
You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to be fit. Start with 10 minutes of brisk walking twice a day and you are nearly there! The NHS Active 10 App can help.

**Starting out - Counting steps**  
To count your daily steps, use the free apps Google Health on Android phones and Apple Health on iPhones or use a cheap pedometer.

- Check your daily step count on a quiet day - it may be between 2000 to 4000 steps actually.
- Start by aiming for a couple of thousand steps a day extra - 10 minutes brisk walking twice a day will give you this.
- Then try to achieve 7500 steps a day.

**AIM FOR:**


- 150** minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week (e.g. brisk walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, gardening, housework, etc.)
- 75** minutes of vigorous intensity exercise a week (e.g. running, fast cycling, swimming, etc.)

**Build strength**  
on at least 2 days a week

**Minimise sedentary time**  
Break up periods of inactivity by getting moving frequently

**Why not try the NHS Couch to 5K App?**  
It takes 7 weeks, 60 minutes a day, 3 times a week, to get you from couch to 5K. It's free and it's easy to use.

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Helping people take care of themselves

## Further Activities

### Public Engagement

- Go to where people are and run events like screening, wellbeing events, resource distribution etc in libraries, leisure centres, shopping centres, pubs, barbers etc
- Distribute Self-Care Aware factsheets to the public through community venues like surgeries, pharmacies, health centres etc
- Share advice on managing both mental and physical health via social media
- Run a local challenge: “One small thing for your mind and body each day”
- Work with local media and broadcasters to promote self-care messages during Self-Care Week

### Stakeholder Support

- Coordinate activities with GP practices, pharmacies, schools, and workplaces
- Give a talk in schools, colleges, universities with local health experts
- Run a series of events across the week with stakeholders
- Hold interactive self-care talks and Q&A sessions delivered by experts such as physiotherapists, nurses, pharmacists, doctors, health coaches and trainers etc

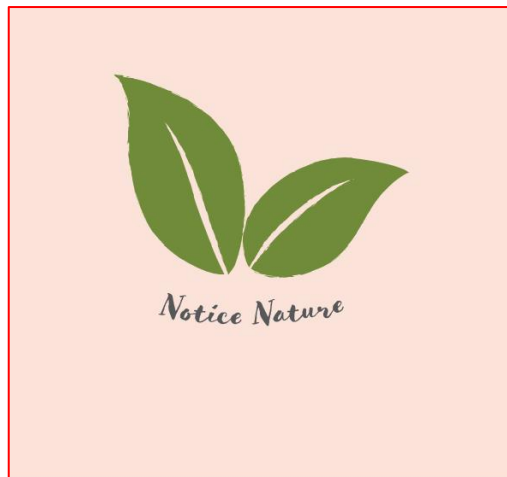


## Social Media promotion

Participate in National Self-Care Week via your social media platforms.

Please connect to the Self-Care Forum's social media platforms [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#), [X](#), [facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and tag us for a share and like. Please also use [#selfcareweek](#) [#mindandbody](#).

Social media assets will be available 2 weeks before Self-Care Week covering exercise, signposting, connection, mental wellbeing and common ailments. Keep an eye on the website or email [selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)



Thank you for participating in National Self-Care Week and making a difference to people's understanding and practise of self-care.

Consider entering our Self-Care Awards. Details on the website. If you have any questions about the work of the Self-Care Forum contact [selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)

