

# Self Care Hacks

## For when your mental health is struggling

Zoe Waterhouse-Bushnell

As someone who works part time and for the most part, looks like I've got my life together, self-care and hygiene can still be a struggle. So, I thought I would compile the various tips and tricks that I've learnt to help make self-care a little more manageable. These suggestions have been accumulated over many years, thanks to many people's perseverance, strength and generosity to share their tips and experiences! P.S click on the underlined words for links

### "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly"

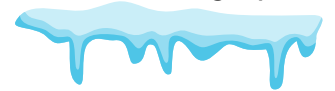
This is a quote that I heard from a psychologist, and it really stuck with me once she explained it. She explained that if something is important enough that you want to do it, or you think it's worth doing, then it's worth giving it a go, even if it means it's done poorly. For example, if you think it's worth showering, then it's worth hopping in the shower and rinsing your body. Or if you know you'd feel better after brushing your teeth, then it's worth brushing them for 30 seconds.

#### Eating and Meals



- [Meal prepping](#) or having [frozen meals](#) can be a life saver. Meal prepping doesn't have to be complex. It might be making a double batch of spaghetti bolognese, then freezing half the sauce so that you can cook some pasta one night and mix it up, or even just chopping up some veggie sticks at the start of the week and putting them in a container of water (to keep them fresh) as a snack throughout the week.
- Keep [snacks](#) and [ready-to-eat meals](#) on hand! Having a couple of muesli bars and a fruit cup for breakfast or a can of tuna with instant rice for dinner can be helpful for low-energy days.

#### Food freezing tips:



- I find individual portions easiest and use a ziplock bag or container
- Freezing on the day that you cook helps keep it fresher for longer
- Lasagna, cottage pie, pasta bakes, Mexican mince and chilli con carne all freeze well in my experience
- There's lots of info online about how long you can freeze certain foods for

Sometimes I struggle to get out of the shower (especially if I'm sitting down), so I set a timer on my phone before I get in & place my phone somewhere in the bathroom that requires me to get out to turn it off

## Showering and Cleaning

- Tips for **making the shower easier** include: **sitting** on the ground or having a **shower chair** and **having products within arm's reach** in the shower, putting **soap on your body before** getting in the shower, and **pairing tasks** (eg. brushing teeth in the shower – double win!).
- If showering is too hard, **body/baby wipes**, plus some **fresh deodorant** is great! Just make sure you do not flush the wipes down the toilet – we love the turtles!
- **Dry shampoo** is also a great option when washing your hair is too hard.
- While brushing your teeth twice a day is probably the goal, gargling some **mouthwash**, or chewing some **sugar free gum**, is still better than nothing – remember if it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly.
- Colgate also sells **single use toothbrushes** with toothpaste on them, so you don't even have to go to the bathroom!



## Clothes and getting dressed

- If doing the washing is too hard or you're questioning if a top can make it a fourth day, **fabric freshener spray** can be a good short-term solution.
- Sometimes getting dressed can feel like a mission but even a **fresh pair of pjs** can help you feel a little more put together.

## Other tips

- **Pair tasks** you have to do **with something nice** like listening to music or a podcast.
- Try '**Body Doubling**' (completing a task in the presence (in person or virtually/remotely) of someone else to help improve focus and motivation).



- Have a list of **daily non-negotiables** to try and achieve (eg. showering, getting dressed). There are also apps like Finch (which I really enjoy), that encourage you to complete self-care tasks.
- Make a **star chart** (yes, even adults like putting stickers on a chart) **or reward system** and stick it up so that you can see it. Maybe after one week of brushing your teeth daily, you get to go and buy new stickers for next week's star chart.
- Try **reframing** a chore or task that you are supposed to do **as doing something nice for yourself** (eg. Gifting yourself a relaxing shower, changing clothes because I deserve to feel fresh and dignified).

For extra self-care tips, check out the self-care strategies in the [Minding Your Mind app](#) which all include a bunch of tips from me and other young people. You could also try setting a self-care goal in the help keep yourself motivated and explore some related content.

All the best,  
Zoe

