



FORT GARRY WOMEN'S  
RESOURCE CENTRE

## **Self Care for Women: Fact Sheet**

### **What is Self Care?**

Self care is care provided “for you, by you.” It’s about identifying your own needs and taking steps to meet them. It is taking the time to do some of the activities that nurture you. Self care is about taking proper care of yourself and treating yourself as kindly as you treat others.

### **First Care for Yourself**

On an airplane, an oxygen mask drops in front of you. What do you do? As we all know, the first rule is to put on your own oxygen mask before you assist anyone else. Only when we first help ourselves can we effectively help others. Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. It is also one of the easiest things to forget. But you benefit greatly from self care and so do others in your life.

### **Why is Self Care Important for Women?**

Women spend much of their lives nurturing others. When we find ourselves focusing more on others than ourselves, we become worn out, stressed out and run down. For those of us who spend time helping and caring for others, it is too easy to neglect our own needs. It’s like “running on empty” when we don’t take the time to re-fuel.

We spend so much time and effort caring for our partners, children, pets, friends, family members, employers and employees. Add to that the numerous volunteer activities, errands, housework, family functions, meetings, etc.—and there isn’t much time left for caring for ourselves. Women need to balance the stress and activity of daily life with activities that bring a sense of peace and well being to their minds and bodies. Women who neglect their own needs and forget to nurture themselves often become unhappy, have low self-esteem and feel resentment. Self care means treating yourself as a worthwhile person and showing that you are valuable, competent and deserving.

## **What are Some Examples of Self Care Activities?**

Remember, practicing self care does not have to cost much. In fact there are many things that you can do that are free or affordable.

- Talk openly with a trusted friend.
- Sit outside and listen to the birds.
- Practice breathing exercises (the library has books to help you with this).
- Make sure you are eating a well balanced diet
- Get enough sleep
- Make room in your life for a nap. Rest a while and “recharge”.
- Make exercise a regular part of your routine (a 20 minute walk 3 times a week will do).
- Take a warm bath/shower. Warm water is very soothing and relaxing for tight and tense muscles and for the mind.
- Listen to music you enjoy.
- Try a yoga class.
- Journaling.
- Read a good book recommended by a friend.
- Plant a garden.
- Buy yourself a little something—a flower, a candle to enjoy during your bath.
- Make room in your schedule for attending a class to learn something new (pottery, a language, scrapbooking etc.)

## **Resources for Self Care** (in the Winnipeg Public Library)

Atkinson, Mary. (2005) A Practical Guide to Self-Massage.

Bepko, Claudia. (1990). Too Good for Her Own Good. Breaking Free from the Burden of Female Responsibility.

Bernard, Patrick. (2004). Music as Yoga. Discover the Healing Power of Sound.

Blanche, Cynthia. (2000). The Power of Music. Harness the Creative Energy of Music to Heal the Body Soothe the Mind and Feed the Soul.

Evans, Mark. (1997). The Guide to Natural Living: Natural Ways to Health Relaxation and Vitality.

Fishback, Alexa. (2008). Women's Health Daily Fix: Handbook of Healthy Habits for the Nutrition Savy Working Girl.

Goldberg, Natalie. (2005). Writing Down the Bones. Freeing the Writer Within.

Jarmey, Chris. (2001). Book of Meditation. Learn How to Use Meditation & Visualization for Inner Calm & Physical & Spiritual Well-Being.

Khalsa, Kaur. (2007). Yoga for Women.

Khalsa, Kaur. (2006) A Women's Book of Meditation. Discovering the Power of a Peaceful Mind.

Lasater, Judith. (1995). Relax and Renew. Restful Yoga for Stressful Times.

Lewis, Dennis. (2004). Free Your Breath. Free Your Life: How Conscious Breathing Can Relieve Stress, Increase Vitality and Help You Live More Fully.

Louden, Jennifer. (1992). The Woman's Comfort Book.

Schaef, Anne, W. (2004). Daily Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much.

Wright, Laura. (2008). Quiet Mind Open Heart. Finding Inner Peace Through Reflection, Journaling and Meditation.