

Self-Love: The Good Side of Being Selfish in Fitness

If someone asked you to list your top priorities, what would be included in your list? What's important to you?

Many might answer "Family" or "Faith" or "Job." More often than not, "My own Health" is usually not listed in the top of that list. I've asked many of my female clients why do they neglect their health and most of the time they reply that they need to take care of others first.

As a mother, they feel their duty is to their children, then their husband, then perhaps their aging parents, their pets maybe and finally, themselves. It's a commendable thing, to take care of others. And you should be proud of yourself if you are a care-taker.

But who's taking care of you? There's a high price for spending all of your energy on others and neglecting yourself. It usually results in lack of sleep, high stress and poor eating habits. It's time to take care of YOU.

Unfortunately, there's a negative connotation to being selfish. While I'm not suggesting complete abandonment of all other duties in your life, there's a balance that you should strive for. Here's 5 Ways to incorporate Self-Care into your life.

Be Selfish with your Body

- *Gym time is your time.* If you have the budget for a personal trainer, this is even better than working out on your own. But even if you don't think you can afford some one-on-one time, just attending your local gym for a 30 minute workout is better than nothing. Exercise is beneficial in so many ways: You release toxins by working up a sweat; you get the endorphins going and your mood improves; you feel stronger thus improving your body image; you release stress which is always a good thing as well.
- *Find a good massotherapist.* Massages shouldn't be considered a once a year treat for yourself. Massage therapy has incredible benefits when done on a regular basis - even done once a month can have major improvements to your tight muscles. Other benefits include release from anxiety, digestive disorders, sports related injuries, fibromyalgia, and insomnia related to stress.

Be Selfish with your Food

- *Research meals and recipes you want to eat and cook for yourself.* Your kids have “THEIR” snacks and “THEIR” food right? Why can’t you have food that’s just for you? So many times I hear my mommy clients say “I snack on my kids food all the time because it’s there.” Or “When I make my kids their dinner, I tend to nibble on it.” Guess what happens? They aren’t hungry for dinner by the time it’s cooked because they just snacked and grazed. Stop that habit and start making food that’s just for you. Of course it’s going to be healthy and if your family refuses to eat it, that means more leftovers for you.
- *Stop eating at your desk.* This is one of the worst habits of people who put their job ahead of their health. Even if it’s 15 minutes that you can spare, make a point to eat somewhere other than your desk. You cannot possibly enjoy your food if you’re sitting in front of a computer. Food is meant to be eaten and enjoyed, not scarfed down in 5 minutes because you have a deadline to meet.
- *Don’t fall for the convenience trap.* Remember your food is fuel to energize you and nourish you. Treat it as such and don’t waste your hard earned money on drive-thru, gas station, convenience, and vending machine “food.” You deserve better!

Be Selfish with your Time We all have the same number of hours in the day but I’m sure many of you feel like you could get a lot more accomplished if you only had more time. I believe the key is to choose HOW you spend your time.

- *Sleep in whenever possible.* I’m sure new mommies will laugh when they read that statement. “What’s sleep?” :) But all joking aside, sleep is one of the most neglected necessities with people today. You spend so much time trying to get everything done in a day, that one of the first things to get put aside is actual rest and recovery. Make a point to go to bed earlier to ensure you get appropriate rest. When sleep is reduced and neglected, you might tend to reach for caffeine or sugar filled energy drinks to keep you going which can lead to disrupted hormone levels. You’re more stressed out because you are wired and tired at the same time, which can also spell disaster for your appetite, not to mention insomnia. Stop the cycle and figure out natural ways to get your Z’s.
- *Spend downtime wisely.* When you have time to spare, perhaps in between errands, instead of popping on social media, do something that’s relaxing or a hobby that you used to do on a regular basis. Think back to before you got married or had kids and start those habits back up again, like reading or knitting or journaling.
- *Book time for your workouts into your calendar and stick to it.* Claim you don’t have time for a long workout? That’s okay because a short 20 minute workout is better than nothing. YouTube some bodyweight workouts you can do in your living room if you’re short on time and can’t make it to the gym.

Be Selfish with your Friends

- *Choose whom you spend your time with wisely.* Let’s be honest, women can get a little catty and jealous. If they see a friend who seems to have it all together, they might become envious

and you don't want that negativity to rub off on you. Choose to spend time with friends who build you up instead of tearing you down or making you feel guilty for taking care of yourself.

- *When it is time to get together with friends, make it memorable.* Perhaps try a new spot instead of meeting up at the usual bar or restaurant. Make the conversation meaningful. Do something together that's new or adventurous. Chances are your friends are busy too and don't make a lot of time for themselves either. You could always spend time selfishly together by booking spa treatments or partner personal training sessions.

Be Selfish with your Health

- *Take your vitamins.* Even if you consider yourself a good eater, you're probably not getting all the nutrients you need. Get your basics in everyday: A multi-vitamin, fish oil and a probiotic are great ones to include in your daily routine.
- *Make doctor appointments and keep them.* So many times we only visit the doctor when we are sick and hopefully that is rare. But upkeep is important too. Do not skip out on getting regular check ups just because you aren't ill. Remember, it's about prevention and staying healthy.
- *Stay sane.* Mental health is equally as important. It's not unusual or rare anymore to ask for a little help from our mental health specialists. Talking to a therapist can be extremely helpful, especially when you are feeling worn down or depressed or stressed out.

These tips can look impossible or overwhelming to some of you. That's because in order to be selfish, you have to learn to say No and that can be a challenge in and of itself. Try saying No the next time someone asks you to do something. Think of it's importance and necessity - Can it be put off at all? Does it have to be done by you only? Is it critical? If it's not, you have your answer. Remember, don't think of Saying No as rejecting someone or something; think of it as saying YES to yourself.