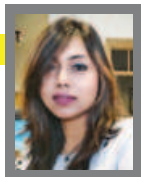


LIFE AS IT IS**WARA KARIM**

Writer, painter, gardener, content creator
Website: <http://www.scratchingout.com>



Self-care is not selfish

Take a break to take care of yourself. We spend so much of our time working and taking care of others that we neglect our own selves. It slips our mind that we can only take better care of others when we ourselves feel our best.

Self-care often takes a backseat in our lives. However, nurturing our own body, mind, and soul is imperative to living a more satisfied and successful life. Therefore, leave behind all feelings of guilt and take some time to focus on yourself and only yourself, if not every day, then at least a few times a week.

How to self-care

Self-care is referred to addressing the needs of our mind, body, and soul. Exercise, meditation, eating healthy, gardening, crafting, reading, listening to music, relaxing at a spa, journaling, talking to friends, etc. are all different ways to nourish our body and mind. Different things and techniques work for different people.

Upoma Haq, a Senior Vice President at a multinational bank in Bangladesh, says that walking has been critical to her well-being, both physical and emotional.

"There was a point when I poured myself into work and did nothing else. That was a type of escapism, but not a long-term solution to your life's problems," she said. She also now consciously reaches out to her close friends and meets up with them to feel light and happy.

Even at workplace, one becomes less productive and less creative, if they stop looking after themselves and addressing their emotional needs.

"Because you are not meeting new people or experiencing new things, you cannot bring fresh ideas to the table," Upoma Haq said.

Haseen Cherry, a UK-based microbiologist of Bangladeshi descent, says that as a professional woman and mother of two children, her daily life is immensely stressful. In addition to walking 12,000 steps every day, video-chatting with friends, reading, and listening to music, she regularly takes care of her skin and hair as ways to self-care.

"I also wear nice clothes and light make-up to work to feel more confident," she said. "All this makes me happy, too!"

In 2020, terms related to 'self-care' reached an all-time high on Google Trends, which means that more and more people across the globe were searching for ideas to take better care of their physical and emotional health. The COVID-19 pandemic

and lockdown conditions showed us the importance of self-care as we struggled to stay physically and mentally healthy in a time of isolation.

The long-term effect of self-care

Thirteen years ago, Rezwan Md Chowdhury weighed a whopping 119 kg, today he not only weighs just 68 kg, but also feels happier and healthier than he ever did.

How did he do this?

Through walking, running, exercising, and changing his food habit. The day Chowdhury fathomed the seriousness of self-care, he never looked back. From a young man who used to take medication for hypertension and insulin to control his blood sugar levels, he, who is now in his late-thirties, runs four half marathons (21.1km) four times a week! He no longer takes any kind of medicine, leads a stress-free life, and is more productive and focused at work.

Rezwan Md Chowdhury, who is the Head of Internet Business at Grameenphone Ltd., wakes up before anyone else in his house.

The first 30 minutes to one hour of his day, he exclusively dedicates to himself.

"That first hour of the day is mine. I use that time to read, listen to podcasts, walk, run and/or exercise," he said. "The quality of my life began to improve the day I decided to take charge of my mental and physical well-being."

He added, "It was not easy, but self-care is something worth giving a try, because if you do not take care of yourself, you cannot take care of others."

Setting priorities in life is important to be happy and healthy. However, most of us do not realise that it should be our top priority to take good care of ourselves. As a result, we neglect ourselves and our well-being day after day. Eventually, we reach a point where we become frustrated with life and everything that we do for the people around us.

We think that we are only giving but not getting anything or enough in return. This bitterness and frustration with life, however, would not have happened, if we gave importance to our physical and emotional wellness from the beginning.

Do not feel guilty, if you set aside an hour of your day to do something that you enjoy, to take care of yourself, to unwind, or to spend some time with yourself. This is the time when you should not be available for anyone, but yourself, exclusively.

By Wara Karim
Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

**#FASHION & BEAUTY**

Managing dry skin

Whether you spend time after skincare and grooming yourself or not, dry skin is a problem that even the most unperturbed person loathes. It has more to do with your health than your appearance.

There are a number of reasons that could cause dry skin. From age to climate, a person's inherent genetics, diseases, and of course, their lifestyle.

Believe it or not, taking long showers are not overly healthy for you. They can have harsh effects on your skin. This only gets worse if you take hot showers. Remember, taking warm showers are good, hot showers — not so much. They dry out your skin from all moisture, which can not only lead to dry skin but also skin related discomforts.

After you have finished your shower or are done washing yourself, pat your skin dry rather than harshly rubbing the towel on your skin. Such actions can aggravate skin irritations.

Using a moisturiser is strongly recommended if you want to get rid of dry skin. They work by trapping moisture, which is why it is suggested that you use moisturisers within few minutes of finishing your shower while your skin is still damp. Moisturisers can come in different forms — whichever one you are using, make sure that it suits your skin type.

Using cleansers, soaps or shampoos

during shower or washing is a good idea, but careful not to use any product that are heavy in chemicals or contains alcohol. Alcohol dries out the skin, which is highly undesirable. If you are about to use any homemade ointment, make sure that they are not detrimental to your skin. For people with sensitive skin, extra caution should be exercised.

Keep in the mind that the weather has a big effect on your skin health. Staying too long in direct sunlight is not ideal and sometimes you might be tempted to take frequent showers, but more than one shower a day is not recommended. Avoid using any fabric that irritates your skin.

Try to drink as much fluid as often you can. If your body is dehydrated, your skin will suffer. Bad habits such as smoking also have an effect, as does stress. So, try to bring positive changes to your lifestyle.

If the dry skin irritates you too much and is turning into red scaly patches and there's no change despite your best efforts, then perhaps it is time to see a dermatologist.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed