

*Self-Care and  
Development of  
Executive Functioning  
Skills: The Keys to  
Success for Autistic  
Adults*



You are:  
WORTHY  
IMPORTANT  
PRIORITY #1



You wouldn't let this  
happen to your phone.  
Don't let it happen  
to you either.

SELF CARE IS A PRIORITY.  
NOT A LUXURY.

Self-Awareness

+

Self-Care

=

Self-Love

## *WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT SELF-CARE???*



Engaging in self-care has been clinically proven to reduce or eliminate anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improve concentration, minimize frustration and anger, increase happiness, and improve energy. From a physical health perspective, self-care has been clinically proven to reduce heart disease, stroke and cancer.



# Foot Lovin'

*myofascial release*

Rolling the foot with a tennis ball provides a self-controlled massage and stretch for the bottom of the foot and plantar fascia. Start by sitting on a chair and placing the tennis ball under your foot. Gently apply as much pressure as you can tolerate to push the ball into the floor, rolling the ball back and forth from your toes to your heel. Roll the ball for 30-90 seconds and switch to the other foot. You may feel some soreness, but back off if you feel any pain.

# Five Areas of Therapeutic Self-Care

## Physical Self-Care

- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Water intake
- Medication
- Supplements
- Breathing

## Spiritual Self-Care

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Spiritual community
- Forgiveness
- Finding purpose and meaning

**The Goal**  
To feel  
vital and balanced,  
free from depression  
and anxiety

## Lifestyle

- Structure/routine
- Relaxation
- Setting goals
- Fulfilling work
- Time in nature
- Pleasure

## People Support

- Family
- Friends
- Psychiatrist/therapist
- Minster/rabbi
- Support group
- Day treatment
- Community service

## Mental/Emotional Self-Care

- Positive self-talk
- Positive beliefs
- Feeling one's feelings
- Mood journal
- A library of positive memories
- Psychotherapy
- Family of origin healing
- Working through grief
- Working with a good therapist

Self care isn't just drinking water and going to sleep early. Self care is taking a break when things become overwhelming, saying NO to things you do not want to do, allowing yourself to cry, asking for help from those around you, doing things that make you happy.



## Building Your Own Self Care Kit

1. Noise cancelling headphones
2. Sensory fidget
3. Sensory jewelry
4. Essential oils
5. Journal and pen/pencil
6. Coloring book/pencils, crayons, markers
7. Something weighted
8. Lovey
9. Stress ball/squishy
10. Snack
11. Laptop/tablet
12. Phone
13. Pictures
14. Book
15. Music

Make two – one for home and a smaller travel size



# TEACCH Research

*Adults on the spectrum are more likely to be successful in life (with success defined as not just getting a job but keeping that job) if they have developed their executive functioning skills*

## The 8 Executive Functions

### Self-Control

The ability to stop and think before acting

### Self-Monitor

The ability to view and evaluate oneself

### Emotional Control

The ability to manage feelings to achieve goals and complete tasks

### Flexibility

The ability to adapt to changing conditions by revising plans or changing strategies

### Task Initiation

The ability to start and finish tasks without procrastinating

### Organization

The ability to develop and use systems to keep track of materials and information

### Working Memory

The ability to use information held in memory to complete a task

### Planning & Time Management

The ability to create steps to reach a goal



## What's the Big Deal About Executive Functions Skills?

These skills are crucial for learning and development. They also enable positive behavior and allow us to make healthy choices for ourselves and our families. Executive function and self-regulation skills depend on three types of brain function: working memory, mental flexibility, and self-control.



CREDIT: [HTTP://COGX.INFO](http://COGX.INFO) (DR.BROWN)

ORGANIZE, PRIORITIZE,  
ACTIVATE WORK

MONITOR AND  
SELF-REGULATE ACTIONS

UTILIZE WORKING  
MEMORY & SHORT TERM  
RECALL

MANAGE FRUSTRATIONS  
AND MODULATE  
EMOTIONS

REGULATE ALERTNESS,  
SUSTAIN EFFORT AND  
SPEED

FOCUS, SUSTAIN AND  
ABILITY TO SHIFT TASK  
ATTENTION



# THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Chair Yoga



When Worlds Collide  
AKA Twofers

1. Games
2. Yoga
3. Meditation
4. Martial Arts
5. Dance
6. Creating Art
7. Sports
8. Gardening
9. Cooking
10. Journaling

# 10 GAMES

TO IMPROVE  
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING  
SKILLS

<b>1</b>	<b>BLURT</b> (self-control, metacognition)
<b>2</b>	<b>SCRABBLE</b> (planning, organization)
<b>3</b>	<b>PICTIONARY</b> (flexibility, time management)
<b>4</b>	<b>DISTRACTION</b> (working memory, attention)
<b>5</b>	<b>5 SECOND RULE</b> (time management, task initiation)
<b>6</b>	<b>FREEZE</b> (self-control, attention)
<b>7</b>	<b>JENGA</b> (self-control, flexibility, planning)
<b>8</b>	<b>BRAINTEASERS</b> (perseverance, flexibility)
<b>9</b>	<b>CHESS</b> (planning, flexibility, working memory)
<b>10</b>	<b>SODUKU</b> (perseverance, working memory)

[www.thepathway2success.com](http://www.thepathway2success.com)

 pathway 2 SUCCESS



1. Meditation for Letting Go: Who couldn't use a little help letting go? Holding on to negative emotions creates a harmful mental drain we're better off not carrying around each day.

2. Loving-Kindness Meditation: If you've ever tried this special form of meditation, you know it focuses attention first on another person for whom you feel unconditional love, then directs those same feelings inward toward yourself.

3. Morning Intention Meditation: Back to the tooth-brushing and makeup habits for a sec. This lovely morning meditation establishes a positive tone for the day, guiding you to set intentions and approach whatever lies ahead with optimism.

4. Meditation for Sleep: Just like meditation can start the morning right, it can end the day on a peaceful note as well. This one aims to help you still your mind, easing you into restful sleep.

5. Meditation for Focus: This three-minute meditation reduces the burden of daily stresses and bring mental clarity. It's pure magic for sharpening focus.

<https://www.brit.co/5-minute-meditations-for-beginners/>

