

31 Days of Self-Care



DAY 1 | LOWER BACK MASSAGE

No time for yoga? Lie down on the floor on your back and pull your knees into your chest. Holding them in place, rotate your knees in circles alternating directions. Let your comfort level determine the size of your rotation. If you want a good stretch, let your knees rest on the floor on one side while you look in the opposite direction.

- Christine, CEW+ Leadership Council

DAY 2 | NOSTALGIC THROWBACK

Reconnect to something from your past that makes you happy. Maybe it's an old kids' movie, a book a parent read to you, or a tv show you watched with your grandparents. Jam out to songs from when you were in high school and look through old photos. Connect to your inner child. Reminisce about simpler times. Whatever it is, find something that gives you that punch of nostalgia.

- Nicole, CEW+ Staff

DAY 3 | DRINK FANCY TEA

Drink some fancy tea. You determine what fancy means! Savor the warmth of a hot cup of tea that has soothed people across the world for centuries. Allow yourself a comfy place to relax with your favorite mug and relish in your own personal tea time.

- Cara, CEW+ Scholar Community Board Member

DAY 4 | INHALE/EXHALE

If I start to feel overwhelmed or anxious, I turn to meditation to help me refocus and relax. Specifically, Anapana meditation focuses on your breath as a way to "calm and concentrate the mind." I prefer this free resource on vridhamma.org because it allows me to choose how long I want to meditate.

- Tiffany, CEW+ Staff

DAY 5 | JOURNALING

Keep a journal on your desk or a place you find calming and jot down feelings and thoughts as they come up throughout the day.

- Annie, U-M Graduate Student

DAY 6 | ENGAGE YOUR SENSES

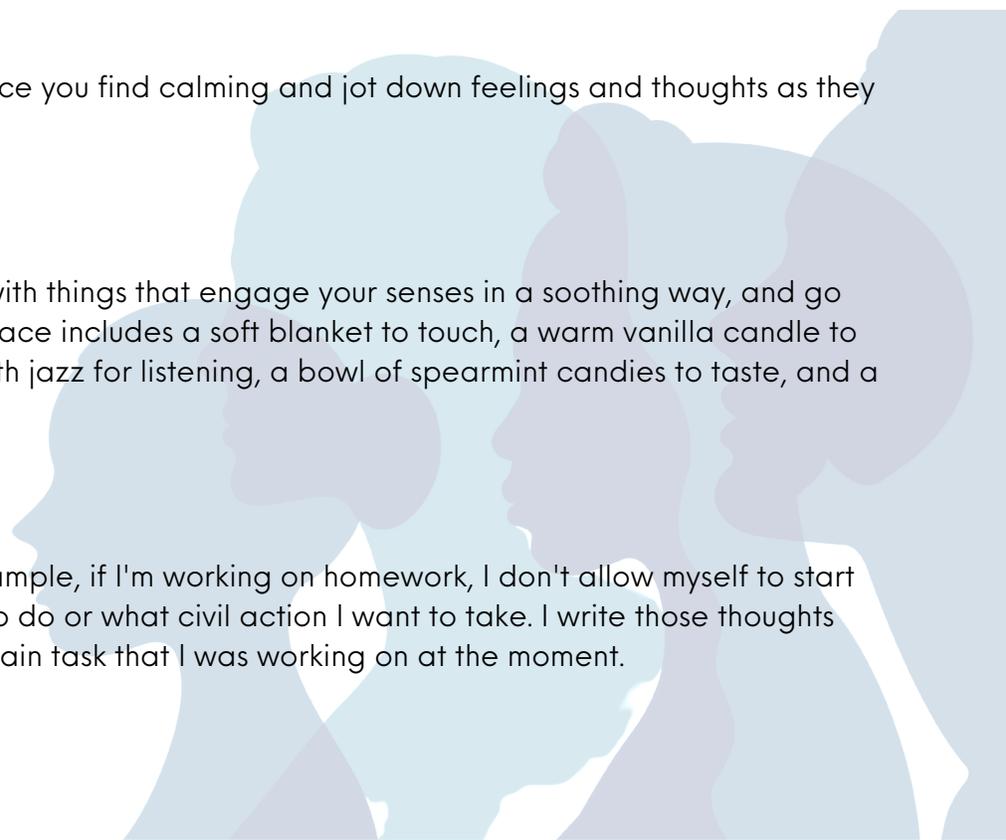
Create a comfortable space filled with things that engage your senses in a soothing way, and go there when you need a break. My space includes a soft blanket to touch, a warm vanilla candle to smell, a portable speaker with smooth jazz for listening, a bowl of spearmint candies to taste, and a window with a good view.

- Courtney, CEW+ Staff

DAY 7 | ONE THING AT A TIME

Focus on one thing at a time. For example, if I'm working on homework, I don't allow myself to start worrying about what chores I have to do or what civil action I want to take. I write those thoughts down for later and go back to the main task that I was working on at the moment.

- Danielle, U-M Graduate Student



DAY 8 | GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Make a daily note of one thing for which you are grateful. It could be something big – health, home, family; or small – a sunny day or enough time away from your kids to take a shower.

- Erin, CEW+ Staff

DAY 9 | SPONTANEOUS CONNECTIONS

Try spontaneously calling someone when you think of them. Our lives are overly structured with scheduled Zoom meetings and calls. This, combined with social distancing and having to plan everything before we go out, means a lack of spontaneity. Try calling someone when you think of them for a surprise conversation or leaving a heartfelt voicemail that will bring you both joy!

- Susan, CEW+ Leadership Council

DAY 10 | STAY IN TUNE WITH YOUR BODY

I practice self-care by being in tune with my body. I take stock of how each body part is feeling, from my head down to my toes. This keeps me grounded and helps me to feel less anxious.

- Danielle, CEW+ Staff

DAY 11 | FIND A TREE BUDDY

Find a tree to be your buddy. Name it, describe it, sketch it. Visit it as often as you can--daily, if possible, but once a week is fine. Use all your senses to connect to it: touch it and hug it; listen to it (a large tree might have a sound like a seashell, or you might hear wind rustling leaves and branches); sniff at the bark and leaves. Let your tree buddy connect you to Mother Earth, and to yourself.

- Jacqueline, CEW+ Scholar Community Board Member

DAY 12 | FAMILY TIME

Make some time for family activities and time to unwind while having fun. You could play board games, video games, or watch a movie. It takes your mind off of all your responsibilities and gives you time to focus on fun with your family.

- Jessica, CEW+ Staff

DAY 13 | CONNECT WITH YOUR BODY

Take thirty minutes of your day to move your body. Break a sweat. Set wellness goals that are sustainable and allow you to unleash your body's strength. Realize the power you have within you and work toward being the healthiest version of yourself, for yourself.

- Carolina, U-M Undergraduate Student

DAY 14 | MIND-BODY CONNECTION

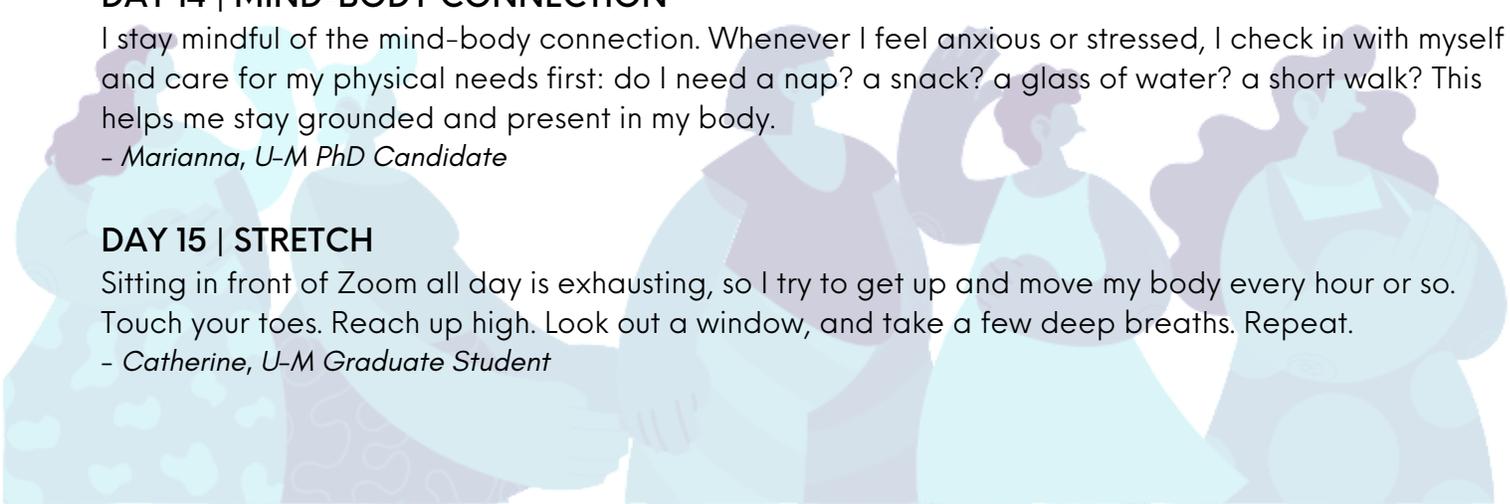
I stay mindful of the mind-body connection. Whenever I feel anxious or stressed, I check in with myself and care for my physical needs first: do I need a nap? a snack? a glass of water? a short walk? This helps me stay grounded and present in my body.

- Marianna, U-M PhD Candidate

DAY 15 | STRETCH

Sitting in front of Zoom all day is exhausting, so I try to get up and move my body every hour or so. Touch your toes. Reach up high. Look out a window, and take a few deep breaths. Repeat.

- Catherine, U-M Graduate Student



DAY 16 | CONNECT WITH YOUR CREATIVE SIDE

One of my favorite ways to unplug and soothe my senses is by making art. I dim the lights, put some soothing spa music on my speaker and pull out my supplies – sometimes paint, sometimes collage. Sometimes a mix of both. I don't plan what I'm creating, I just let myself relax into the flow of the moment and the pleasure of feeling the brush in my hand or choosing pictures, shapes, and colors of different paper to arrange. Connecting to my creative side is soothing to my soul and reminds me to slow down and be present.

- Liz, CEW+ Staff

DAY 17 | RECLAIM YOUR ANCESTRAL POWER

For me, Reclaiming Ancestral Power is an ongoing process of embodied practices embracing connection to ancestral lineages. Spend intentional time dancing, eating, standing, verbalizing intentions, or storytelling so that the mind, body, and Spirit roots in its Wholeness.

- Erika, CEW+ Scholar Community Board Member

DAY 18 | MAKE A FAVORITE FOOD

Make or bake a favorite dish or order from a favorite restaurant. For me, I like to make something that brings back memories of a person, place, or time of year that is meaningful to me and provides me with a sense of joy.

- Jamie, CEW+ Staff

DAY 19 | GROUNDING SCENTS

Stash a favorite, grounding smell to return to and inhale deeply after stressful moments. This could be a dried herb, a particular candle or soap, a citrus rind, a piece of clothing/material from your childhood home, even going out to stand in the fallen leaves.

- Julia, U-M Graduate Student

DAY 20 | DANCE TO THE MUSIC

Find a private space and play music that speaks to you, letting the music move your body in any way that feels good to you in the moment, without a care of being watched. In the words of Sylvester Stewart of Sly and the Family Stone, "Dance to the Music," and if it feels good, sing along too!

- Doreen, retired CEW+ Staff

DAY 21 | TAKE A WALK

By yourself or with your dog. No need to set a goal, just lace up your shoes and head out the door. Let your feet and your mind wander. Listen to music if you find it soothing.

- Lee, CEW+ Leadership Council

DAY 22 | LIGHT AT THE END

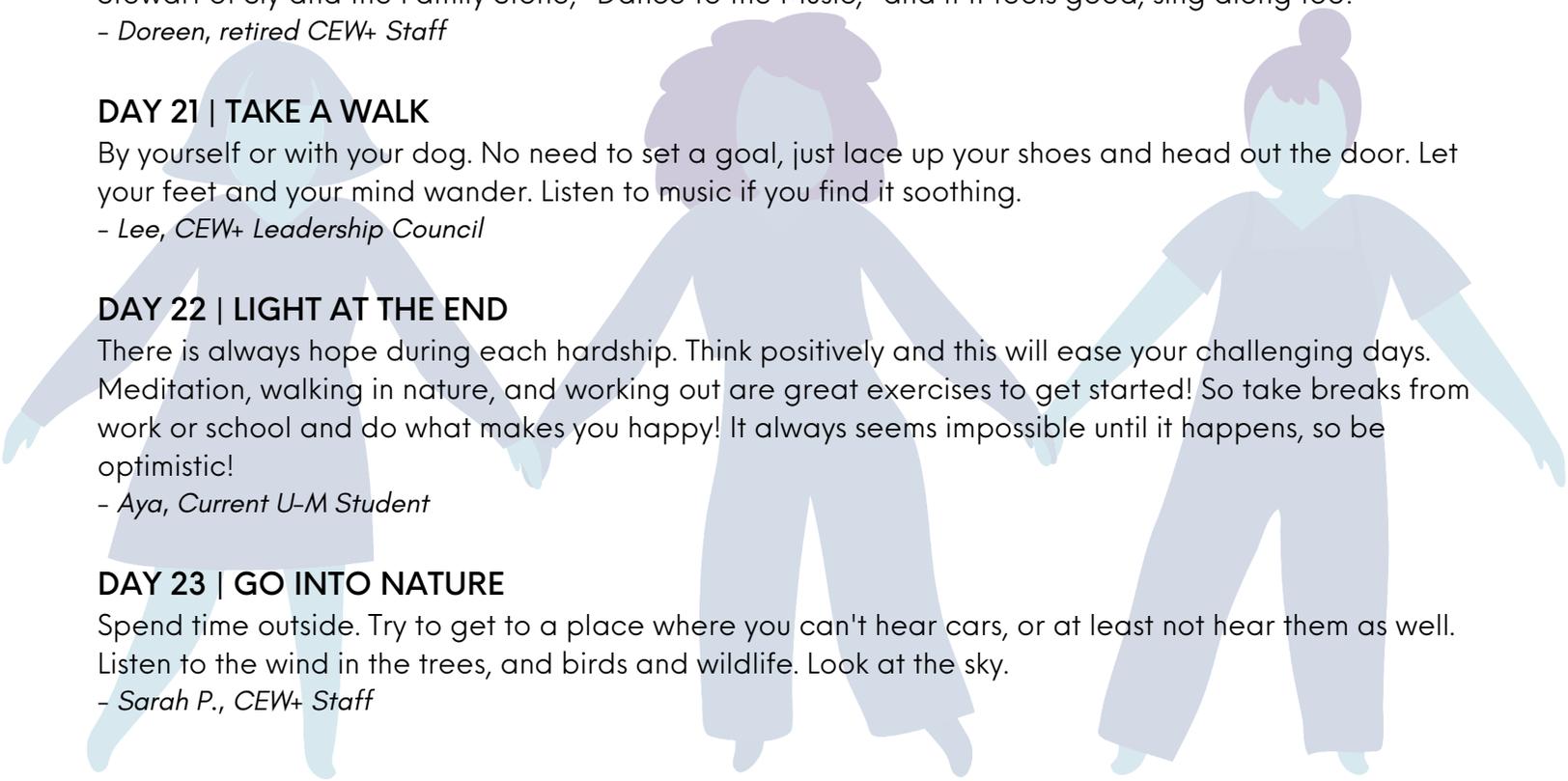
There is always hope during each hardship. Think positively and this will ease your challenging days. Meditation, walking in nature, and working out are great exercises to get started! So take breaks from work or school and do what makes you happy! It always seems impossible until it happens, so be optimistic!

- Aya, Current U-M Student

DAY 23 | GO INTO NATURE

Spend time outside. Try to get to a place where you can't hear cars, or at least not hear them as well. Listen to the wind in the trees, and birds and wildlife. Look at the sky.

- Sarah P., CEW+ Staff



DAY 24 | UNPLUG FROM TECHNOLOGY

Unplug from technology. This can be for at least five minutes to as long as an hour. During this time let your eyes take a rest from the screens. Do something else like read a book, listen to music, write in a journal, or take a nap.

- Dominique, U-M Graduate Student

DAY 25 | LOOK BEYOND THE MOMENT

Some circumstances in life are disruptive but these can also open new paths. Look at it as a means to make connections, experiences, and become more resilient. Connect with family, friends. Focus on what's good. Enjoy the simple things that make you smile.

- Caroline, CEW+ Leadership Council

DAY 26 | QUALITY TIME

My self-care involves being around people that I care about. As an extrovert, that energizes me and helps me feel connected by telling stories, laughing, and sharing in one another's lives. In my quieter moments, I am an avid reader and enjoy getting lost in a story that transports me to new places.

- Sandra, CEW+ Staff

DAY 27 | MEDITATE

Guided meditations with Insight Timer or Calm app are a big help. I find that these help center me and bring me back to the present moment.

- Morgan W., U-M Graduate Student

DAY 28 | SEEK OUT BEAUTY

Set aside some time to stop in at the art museum or hear beautiful music. I find that being immersed in art, even for a short time, is a great way to feed my soul and reset.

- Grace, CEW+ Staff

DAY 29 | CAR RETREAT

Don't underestimate the power of getting in your car and going for a drive. Take your mask off, listen to what you want, roll your windows down, drink your coffee - this is your time! Whatever you do, don't get stagnant in your space. Bring in fresh flowers, take a moment, step outside, and take a deep breath.

- Ciara, CEW+ Leadership Council

DAY 30 | SPEND SOME TIME ALONE

Sometimes the best way to recharge is to unwind with some alone time. As nice as it is to spend time with others, sometimes not having to be social or meet others' needs is just what we need. I personally love to put on music, dance, act silly, talk to my dogs and cats, and enjoy spending time alone.

- Sarah K., CEW+ Staff

DAY 31 | GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

I love putting my hands in the dirt and being in touch with the earth. Although it may be too cold to start your garden outside, it is a great time to start growing seeds inside. It is so exciting when you see life sprouting out of the dirt. Once your seedlings have grown large enough and it gets warmer outside, you can get your hands dirty and transplant them into containers or the ground.

- Gabriella B., CEW+ Staff

