



MINDFUL SELF-CARE
FOR GETTING
THROUGH
THE TOUGH TIMES

Rachael Kable

MINDFUL SELF-CARE IDEAS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE TOUGH TIMES

On episode 44 of *The Mindful Kind* podcast, I answered a listener's question about how to use mindfulness to get through a painful break-up. Mindfulness and self-care go hand-in-hand during this difficult period and I wanted to offer an additional resource by sharing all of my favourite self-care practices and how to do them mindfully.

In this guide, you will discover fifteen mindful self-care practices to get you through challenging times, including turning up the music and singing, surrounding yourself with support, ordering food in and journalling.



Wrap yourself up in a blanket and drink something warm.

This practice is all about comfort and security. Feel the warmth and the safety of being wrapped up, while you enjoy a warm drink. Notice the flavour of your drink (perhaps tea or hot chocolate), the texture, the temperature and the aroma.



Take a bath.

Sprinkle aromatic bath salts into the water and check that the temperature of the water is right before you get in (it's surprising how upsetting the wrong temperature can be when you're going through a tough time!). As you immerse yourself in the water, feel the softness of it on your skin and take some deep breaths, smelling the scent of the bath salts. You might even like to use a face mask for some additional pampering.



Turn the music up loud and sing.

You might not feel like doing this one, but just trust me and give it a try. Belting out Adele's "Hello" at the top of my lungs is cathartic for my soul (you probably have your own go-to songs to use in this situation!). You might dissolve into tears during it (or after) and that's ok! Release all that energy that's been building up inside you and go take a warm shower to wash it away.



Be in nature.

Sit outside (even if you only feel like going as far as the back step) and tune in to nature. Watch the clouds rolling by, feel the sunshine on your skin, listen to the wind moving through the trees, notice the different colours around you and watch out for little creatures on their own journeys.



Breathe.

Pain tends to peak and trough as we move through tough times. Be aware of when the pain is at its peak and remind yourself to breathe- simply take ten deep breaths or do a breathing meditation. You can discover more about breathing exercises on episode 13 of The Mindful Kind podcast. Hopefully, this simple exercise can reduce the effects of that strong pain and discourage side-effects, such as stress.



Surround yourself with support and don't be afraid to reach out.

Sometimes, we cocoon ourselves inside our pain and avoid reaching out when we most need support. Internalising pain tends to give it more power and feeds other vulnerable feelings, such as insecurity, loneliness and fear. It can be daunting to reach out, it can also be incredibly empowering to remind yourself there are people who love and care for you and will take the time to listen and encourage you through this difficult time. I still remember when I was having a particularly rough day and I reached out to someone in my family to ask if they could just tell me they loved me. I'll be honest- I was terrified of hitting send on my message, but it was the best thing I could have done. The message I received back was incredibly thoughtful and reminded me of my own self-worth.



Read a great book.

Pick up your favourite book and read it for as long as you like. A great one to try when you're going through a break up is "Break-Ups and Breakthroughs" by Lisa Messenger- it's filled with practical tips and thoughtful advice.



Treat yourself with something special.

A massage, pedicure, facial or trip to the hairdresser can go a very long way in helping you feel cared for. Book yourself in for something special (although, try to avoid anything too drastic, like a completely new hairstyle or expensive shopping trips) and then do your best to be mindful during the activity. Pay attention to all the sensations and how your body reacts in relaxing environments. Whenever you notice your mind wandering, gently bring it back to the present moment, without being judgemental towards it for wandering.

Bonus tip: *Don't want to go out or can't afford it? Many of these self-care treats you can do yourself, such as self-massage, DIY face masks and painting your own nails.*



Write a letter to the person (or situation) who caused you pain.

First of all, let me begin this tip by requesting that you do not send this letter. Please. This is a cathartic exercise meant for you.

Write a letter to the person (or situation) which caused you pain and tell them exactly how you feel and why you feel that way. Vent, rant, rave, plead, apologise- take this letter wherever you want it to go. Get everything out of your mind and body and onto the paper. It doesn't need to be perfect! Barely legible scribble without punctuation or correct grammar is totally fine. It's likely you'll want to destroy it later, anyway.

When you're finished, pour yourself a cup of tea or take a nap. You might feel drained and need some time to recover, so be sure to listen to your body and its needs.



Listen to uplifting podcasts.

Hearing a comforting voice during difficult times can help you feel less alone and the awesome thing about podcasts is you can generally learn some useful things, too! Here are a few podcasts you can try:

Untangled with Alana Helbig

Happier with Gretchen Rubin

Awaken Radio with Connie Chapman

The Mindful Kind with Rachael Kable



Watch a beloved movie.

When I'm going through a tough time, I usually re-watch movies I've already seen and loved. To me, they feel comforting and it means I won't be caught off guard by a movie which triggers more pain or sadness. Follow the story, pay attention to the sounds and voices, notice the colours and see if you can learn something about the movie you didn't already know.

Some of my go-to movies include:

Frozen (or anything Disney, really).

About Time

Hook



Meditate.

Meditations can help us create a real sense of calm and provide relief from the emotions stirred up by challenging times. Try looking up a loving kindness meditation- a simple Google search will give you some options. Otherwise, I enjoy using the Calm app to guide me when I'm finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on my own.



Practice yin yoga.

The beauty of yin yoga is I can roll out my mat on my bedroom floor, support myself with big cushions, turn on some gentle music, light a candle and create a relaxing, gentle and kind experience for myself. Look up a few gentle stretches (such as butterfly, sleeping swan, saddle and savasana) and ease your body into each one for a few minutes, focusing on your breath and the slow release of your muscles.



Order food in.

Even the idea of going out to buy groceries can make you feel like going back to bed, so take the pressure off yourself and order in (if you can). Try mixing it up with healthier options to nourish your body as much as possible and avoid over-doing it on alcohol.

Once your food arrives, make yourself comfortable and savour as much as you can. If you don't feel very hungry, just take little bites and notice the flavours, temperatures and textures. Take a moment to feel grateful for obtaining the food so easily and save it for later if you can't finish it all. Also, listen to your body and respect its needs as much as you can.



Journal.

Follow the prompts below to complete your own mindful journalling practice. This practice will help develop your awareness and allow you to focus on the moment, while releasing pent up thoughts and feelings.

How am I feeling right now?

What are the loudest thoughts in my mind today?

I would describe my feelings right now as:

These colours...

These animals...

These landscapes...

What can I feel physically in my body? (Tight shoulders, heavy eyelids, slight smile etc)

What is one thing I can do now to take care of myself?

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