

4 Steps to self-care for introverts



A guide for introverts who keep *trying* to figure out this self-care thing, but never quite make it work for them!



Why self-care might look different for introverts

Introversion: what is it and why does it affect self-care?

The word “introversion” has picked up a lot of baggage over the years. At one point, it was seen as a pathology: something to be cured or “fixed”. It had associations of shyness, lack of confidence and even being anti-social.

Luckily, those days are *mostly* over. Most folks now recognise that introversion and extroversion are simply qualities that reflect what happens to our energy levels when we interact with other people. Extroverts get a buzz from interactions, and start to wilt when they spend too long alone. Introverts (like me, for example), are just the opposite.

And since so much of self-care is about recharging and replenishing our energy? It makes sense for us introverts to make sure the self-care practices we choose are ones that genuinely recharge us.

What does effective self-care look like for you?

It’s interesting that many of the activities we traditionally associate with “self-care” are inherently introvert-friendly: meditation, yoga, journaling, bubble-baths or curling up with a good book. However, there are more interaction-rich self-care activities too – e.g. massages, mani-pedis, or spending time with friends. For some introverts, these activities can actually drain more energy than they replenish.

So it’s important that when you pick a self-care activity, you ensure that it’s one that works for you as an introvert. At the same time, recognise that fitting solo activities into an already-overloaded schedule can be incredibly difficult. It’s all very well to know what would recharge you in a perfect world – but you also need to figure out how to make it work in the one you live in.

In other words, the key to making self-care work for you as an individual is twofold:

1. Figuring out which activities work best for you personally
2. Figuring how to make sure you actually do them without stressing yourself out



4 steps to help you figure out the self-care practices that work for YOU

Let's start by acknowledging that there's no one right way to do anything... and that includes self-care.

One person's "wow!" is another person's "meh" – even if you're both raging introverts. A computer game might recharge you deeply, but leave your best friend feeling twitchy. Journaling might work brilliantly for that same friend but do absolutely nothing for you.

Plus, what works for you may change over time. After all, you change and grow and evolve as person, don't you? It makes sense, then, that the "right" self-care practices for you might evolve along with you. The only way to find out for sure what works for you at any given time is to try different practices and see how each feels to you.

To do that, there are four key steps you can take that will help you figure out the most effective way to do self-care for *you*. They are:

1. Get clear on what drains you (it might not be what you think)
2. Get clear on what energises you most (it might *also* not be what you think)
3. Block out time for the self-care and make an appointment with yourself
4. Have a plan to make sure you *keep* that appointment

The rest of this guide will take you through the four steps in more depth.

REMEMBER: There really is no one right way to practice self-care!

The four steps in this guide will teach you how to do self-care in a way that works for YOU.



Step 1: Get clear on what really drains you

What are *your* biggest energy drains? It might surprise you to discover that they're probably not the ones you first think of. That's especially true if you're what's often described as a "social introvert" (*someone who's introverted but still genuinely enjoys spending time with people*).

While that might sound like a contradiction in terms, if you're a social introvert, you love being around other people. They just need to be the right people, in the right numbers – and often, they're the folks you feel as though you can most be yourself with. The downside though, is that even though being social is fun, as an introvert you'll still find yourself having to "spend energy" to enjoy that time.

Even if you're a quieter introvert who prefers to spend time alone given the chance, however, it can sometimes be hard to notice gradual, everyday energy drain. Yes, expectations can play a role in what does and doesn't demand your energy... but in our extroverted culture, sometimes the drain can "slip in under the radar".

Plus, we human beings are complex individuals with far more to our psyches than just an introversion or extroversion score. Think of introversion as just being one thread in the complex tapestry of your personality. This post talks about [some of the other personality factors](#) that affect energy drain, and how they can interplay. There are probably several other factors I don't cover in that post, too.

The key point I want you to take away is that introversion is NOT the be-all and end-all of determining your energy responses.

If you're not sure what your biggest personal energy drains are, check out my ["How to Keep an Eye on Your Energy Levels"](#) guide.

It goes into much more depth about energy levels and responses to help you figure out yours.

Once you've identified those major drains, make sure you don't end up doing any of them at any point during time you've blocked out for self-care (see Step 3).



Step 2: Get clear on what energises you

For all the same reasons that it can be hard to figure out what's really draining you, it can also be hard to accurately identify what recharges you.

Once again, every introvert is different, but most of us have two or three activities that we *know* tend to replenish our energy levels. They're things we enjoy doing on our own – often things that make us feel calm, relaxed and at peace.

Some of the most common recharging activities for introverts include:

1. **Meditating:** Both breath-focused meditation and guided visualizations can work wonders for energy-depleted introverts. Either option lets you step back from the demands of the world and offers you a chance to simply “be.”
2. **Music:** Plugging in your headphones and pushing “play” on your favourite tunes can help bring your energy level back to full. Plus, music is one of *the* most powerful non-chemical tools for managing your mood and state of mind.
3. **Journaling:** Many introverts describe spending time with their journals – exploring their thoughts and reflecting on life, the universe and everything – as a lifeline when they're feeling drained.
4. **Walking or other solo exercise:** Other introverts list going for a walk in nature as a favourite go-to technique when they're “peopled out.” Not only does walking give you time alone, but moving your body can help clear any lingering stress hormones from your bloodstream.
5. **Meditative exercise:** Even done in group classes, meditative exercise forms like T'ai Ch'i, Yoga or Qi Gong often combine the re-energizing benefits of both meditation and movement.
6. **Taking a bath:** Something about being able to sink back into hot, scented water and soak is the ultimate in luxurious recharging for sensual introverts. I try to incorporate at least semi-regular aromatherapy baths into my overall self-care routine.
7. **Art or craftwork:** More right-brained introverts often find that some type of art or craft helps them unwind, recharge, and reconnect with their sanity. Options include painting, drawing, sculpture, needlework, making jewellery, scrapbooking, and even cake-decorating.



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8. **Reading:** One of the most common introvert recharging techniques, this is one of my two personal go-to strategies. Sometimes I'll reach for non-fiction – often personal development or something business-related. Other times, I just want to lose myself in another world with characters I care about. Either way, there's no right or wrong: the key is that I enjoy whatever I'm reading.
9. **Watching your favourite show:** TV-watching gets a lot of bad press, and it's true that some shows do nothing more than numb you out. But critics forget that there are also some excellent shows available, with thought-provoking writing, complex characters, and great dialogue. This is my second go-to option, incidentally.
10. **Computer games:** Another activity that attracts its fair share of criticism, computer games can be the perfect recharger for some folks. You'll probably find that some kinds of games work better than others for you - just be aware of the effect each has for you, and use your own responses to guide you.

Explore these options and try out a few that appeal to see which work best for you. It's totally OK if some of activities don't quite feel right for you – or perhaps, if some of them actively feel wrong. There's no one right way, remember?

AGAIN: If you're not sure what your best rechargers are, try using the techniques in "[How to Keep an Eye on Your Energy Levels](#)" guide to figure out your personal energy patterns.



Step 3: Actively block out time for yourself, and treat it as an appointment

While each introvert is unique, our defining characteristic - at least when it comes to introversion - is that time alone recharges us. (Note: while being simply being alone is *necessary* for most introverts to recharge, [it's usually not sufficient](#).)

That means it's often not enough to simply schedule downtime for self-care. You need to actually spend some of that downtime completely on your own, doing things that genuinely nourish you. Doing – in fact – at least *one*, if not more, of the things you identified as a recharger for you in Step #2.

That can be crazy-hard if you're a social introvert who really likes spending time with friends, or if you have a family who depend on you. If either situation applies to you, taking time out just for yourself can feel selfish, anti-social, or just rude.

If so, it may help to think of alone-time as a resource that you need as an introvert in pretty much the same way you need water, food and sleep. Or, you could try [looking at your energy levels like a bank account](#) – one in which energy drains are withdrawals and recharging activities are deposits, and *your* job is to stay out of overdraft.

How you actually block out time for self-care is up to you. If you like the feel of pen and paper in your hand, you might want to use a wall calendar, or a portable planner. If you prefer digital, you can use Google Calendar, or any number of calendar apps on your smartphone or tablet.

The key is that you make a habit of actively scheduling your self-care in advance... because if you don't, there will always be something that feels more important in the moment to do.

**If you already do some kind of weekly and/or monthly planning session,
aim to block in at least one period of recharging activity each week.**

If not, grab your calendar *now* and schedule at least an hour of self-care some time this week.



Step 4: Create a plan to protect that time

Unfortunately, no matter how good the intentions that most of us start out with, real life happens. So even if you do Step 3 and actively block time into your schedule, you'll often find that something comes up to threaten it.

Examples can include:

- **Unexpected family or work responsibilities:** e.g. discovering you need to child-mind when you'd planned to spend a couple of hours on self-care, or being called in to work at the last minute.
- **Fun stuff:** e.g. a dear friend that you haven't seen in *forever* just happens to be in town just for the day, and invites you out to do something you'd really enjoy.
- **Frustrations:** e.g. something you'd planned on finishing well before your downtime takes far longer than you expected, and you need to get it done.

I'm not going to tell you that you should always treat the time you've blocked out for yourself as inviolable: the fact is that life happens. Unexpected things do come up, and sometimes, in the moment, they are genuinely more urgent and important than taking time out.

Insisting that your own downtime is always more important than anyone else's needs is a quick way to damage your relationships. What I'll tell you *instead* is to treat the time you've blocked out as being just like an appointment with a paying client. That means:

- **Where humanly possible, honour the appointment at the time you originally booked it.** That may mean saying a flat "no" to a few enjoyable opportunities; but it could just mean proposing an alternative time for them too. You might also be able to negotiate a slightly earlier (or later) time to come in to work, or look after the kids too. Sometimes it's just a matter of asking.
- **Where you can't honour it, reschedule as soon as possible.** It happens with paying clients occasionally too – a genuine reason that you just can't make the appointment comes up. When that happens, the first thing you do is to find another time that works better. Do the same with your scheduled recharging time – the moment you know you have an unavoidable clash, block a new time into your calendar.

The key to ensuring you actually *take* the time you've blocked out for yourself is to avoid the temptation to just forget about it altogether the first time a problem comes up. If you find yourself wanting to do exactly that, go back to Step 3 and remind yourself why it's so important for you to take time out to recharge in the first place.

Treat the blocks of time you schedule for recharging just like appointments with a paying client.

Honour the original time if you can; but if you can't, reschedule ASAP.



What if you need help making all (or any) of that happen?

Building a business doesn't need to flatten you!

Look, I understand totally. You started your business to make a difference, but you can't figure out how to do it without wrecking yourself.

You can't work out how to do everything that needs to be done in your business and still have time and energy for the rest of your life. You're exhausting yourself trying to make it all work, then staggering to bed like a zombie at the end of the day.

On the one hand, you want to grow your business.... but on the other, you're scared to expand.

Because, let's face it – if being an entrepreneur is wearing you out now... how are you going to cope when there's more of it to manage?

It doesn't have to be that way!

It's possible, I promise. You can run a successful business and still have time – and energy – left over for everything else in your life. You can market your offerings using introvert-friendly techniques that play to your natural strengths. You can connect with your perfect clients – and make it happen on your terms.

And you can [get personalised, completely-individual-to-you coaching](#) to help you figure out how.

Not sure if 1:1 coaching can help you right now?

That's OK – sometimes you need to connect with someone personally before you can get a real sense of whether or not they can really help you.

I offer a limited number of free, no-obligation 30 minute "Dip Your Toes" online consultations each month to help you get clear on what help you need, and whether I'm the right person to provide it.

Click the big red button below to make one of those FREE sessions yours.

CLICK HERE TO BOOK YOUR FREE 30MIN "DIP YOUR TOES" SESSION





About Tanja and Conscious Introvert Success

Hi, I'm Tanja!

I'm the person behind [Conscious Introvert Success](#): a treasure trove of introvert-friendly information and resources.

I'm a deeply introverted (*but not even *slightly* shy!*) heart-based entrepreneur who started my business life online as a copywriter for difference-makers over at Crystal Clarity Copywriting Ltd.

Somewhere along the lines, though, I discovered that I yearned to work with other introverts like me to help them build their businesses while honouring their introversion. That's why I branched out and started Conscious Introvert Success!

My mission there is to help introverted difference-makers figure out how to make their conscious, heart-based businesses work... without burning out, exhausting themselves, or running rough-shod over their inner introverts.



Want to check out what I do in a totally no-pressure environment?

- Follow me on [Facebook](#)
- Check out my free, introvert-friendly [community for introverted entrepreneurs](#) to connect with and support each other, or
- **Click the Big Red Button below to discover exactly how to make self-care work for you in YOUR business and life!**

CLICK HERE TO BOOK YOUR FREE 30MIN "DIP YOUR TOES" SESSION

