



# Love Yourself

Self-Care For People With a Disability

## A Month of Love

This February, take some time to show yourself some love. This guide highlights some ways you can do that, like foot checks, deep cleaning your wheelchair or finding some movement that's right for you. Your job this month is to find some time for self-care.

First, take time to check in with yourself.

- How much screen time do you get a day?
- How much physical activity do you do every day?
- How many fruits and vegetables are you eating?
- How many cups of water do you drink?

All of these can play a big role in how you feel. We will talk you through each of these items in this guide.

## Nutrition

Have you ever heard the saying “you are what you eat”? When it comes to how you feel, this statement can be very true. The right foods have the power to fight off sadness and stress, boost your energy, and combat hunger and boredom. Make sure you get enough of the foods your body needs and fewer of the foods your body doesn't need. Check out “[Food for Your Mood](#)” on our YouTube Channel to find out more.

When is the last time you cleaned your wheelchair or other mobility device? I mean really cleaned it? Do you have hair wrapped around the axles, stains on your cushion or a back rest that could use some refreshing? If you said yes to any of those, then it's time for a deep clean.

Watch these two videos for easy tips: “[Wheelchair Maintenance, Cleaning Your Wheelchair](#)” and “[How to Clean Your Adaptive Sports Equipment](#).”

**The grass is greener where you water it. Take the time to make your grass greener.**



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# Taking Care of You

Did you know that outside of work, your screen time should be fewer than two hours a day? Too much screen time can cause eye strain, headaches, addictive behaviors, neck, shoulder and back pain, and a reduction in physical activity.

Let's start with a moment of intentional meditation, or mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present. This meditation is a [guided meditation for self check in](#). It will help you "check in" with how you are emotionally and mentally, and help you find balance in your life.

Check out our [playlist](#) full of guided meditations if you want to do more throughout the month!

If you sit for a large portion of your day, then an intentional stretching routine is in order. The first thing you should do is try to lay on your belly. This may be challenging, but with a little practice you will be able to stay on your belly for longer periods of time. Once you've mastered laying on your belly, try an [abdominal stretch](#). Or try this [8 minute stretching](#) routine. As a general rule, aim for 30 minutes of activity a day.



Whether you have prediabetes, diabetes, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or another condition that limits blood flow or decreases feeling in your feet, performing regular foot checks is always a good idea.

Here's how to perform a foot check: [video](#)



Skin checks are also very important. You want to make sure that no skin breakdowns go untreated. When performing your skin check, look for any red spots or tears in the skin. Check all of your skin, including your back side, which may require the help of a mirror or a caregiver. While you're at it, grab some lotion and rub it on. This will help your skin feel soft, especially through these winter months.

Here's how to perform a skin check: [skin check document](#)

## Next Steps:

If you are ready for a long-term approach to your self-care, maybe it's time to sign up for one of our programs or research studies. Below is a list of our current programs and studies and what disability types can participate:

**Accessible and Inclusive Diabetes Management Study (Ai4DM)** – a study to measure the impact of the first online diabetes management program for people with physical disabilities.

- Enrollment website: <https://ai4dm.org/>



**SMART-Health: An online, home-based exercise training program for people with a spinal cord injury** – a study to evaluate the effects of an exercise program on improving pain, fatigue, physical activity, and physical function with people with spinal cord injury.

- Enrollment website: <https://redcap.link/SMARTHEALTH>

**MENTOR** – The M.E.N.T.O.R. program which stands for Mindfulness, Exercise and Nutrition to Optimize Resilience take a holistic approach to restoring, improving, and protecting health.

- Enrollment website: <https://mentor.nchpad.org/>

**NCHPAD-Connect** – a registry for people living with a mobility disability. Gain access to programs, resources, and connection to others.

- Enrollment website: [nchpad-connect](https://nchpad-connect.org/)

**14 Weeks to a Healthier You** – a free personalized web-based physical activity and nutrition program.

- Enrollment website: <https://www.nchpad.org/14weeks/>



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