

My Personal Self-Care Plan

Structured self-care planning during pregnancy and the postpartum period encourages women to take small intentional steps to care for themselves. This approach can have a meaningful impact on overall well-being. Research shows that organized and consistent self-care interventions are associated with improved physical recovery, reduced stress, better mood, and stronger coping skills (Nguyen et al., 2023). When women set clear and achievable actions, they are more likely to follow through with their plans. This also helps them feel more confident in their decisions and notice gradual improvements in emotional and physical health. Planning can also reveal where support is needed from family, friends, or healthcare providers and it encourages women to seek help when necessary.

Physical Recovery Plan

A physical recovery plan focuses on helping your body heal after birth whether you experienced a vaginal delivery or a cesarean section. It includes caring for any wounds, managing discomfort, and slowly rebuilding strength as your body recovers. Recovery also involves getting enough rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and eating nutritious foods that support healing and overall health. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2018) recommends early contact with a healthcare provider after delivery and continued follow-up visits to check recovery and provide guidance about safe activity. Creating simple weekly goals can support this process. Examples include short walks, light stretching, or taking extra time to rest when your body needs it. These small steps can help you notice progress and build confidence as your strength returns.

Emotional Well-Being Plan

Emotional changes are a normal part of pregnancy and the postpartum period. Shifts in hormones, the process of recovery, and challenges like disrupted sleep or new responsibilities can all affect mood and energy. Supporting emotional well-being is an important part of overall recovery. Evidence suggests that psychological and cognitive behavioral strategies can reduce anxiety and support emotional health during pregnancy and the postpartum period (Val et al., 2025). These strategies help strengthen coping skills and improve emotional regulation, and they can increase confidence when managing stress. Over time these habits can build resilience and support emotional well-being. Check 1–3 habits you can try implementing this week:

- 5-minute breathing or mindfulness exercise (focus/relaxation)
- Journaling or writing down my thoughts (reflection/emotional processing)
- Texting or calling a supportive friend (social support)
- Asking my healthcare provider a question (professional guidance)
- Taking a short walk outside (physical movement)
- Listening to calming music or a favorite podcast (sensory/mental break)
- Doing a creative activity like drawing, knitting, or crafting (creative expression)
- Practicing gratitude by listing three things I'm thankful for (positive mindset)

My Support Map

Having social and practical support improves outcomes for women during the postpartum period (Walker et al., 2022). Identifying people you can reach out to ahead of time makes it easier to ask for help when you need it. Try to identify one person for each of the items below:

Medical questions: _____

Emotional support: _____

Practical help: _____

Childcare or parenting guidance: _____

Household tasks or errands: _____

Social connection or companionship: _____

Tip: Include friends, family members, healthcare providers, or local support services. Even one reliable contact for each area can make a big difference in your recovery and well-being.



References: Nguyen et al., 2023; ACOG, 2018; Val et al., 2025; Walker et al., 2022

