

Nikki – Self Care Blog

To me, self care means looking after myself physically and mentally, so that I can look after my daughter and my mum and dad.

I'm 50 now and in the last 12 months, to improve my health and wellbeing, I've started to do more physical activity. I've started swimming once a week and I walk whenever I can.

I've found that my mental wellbeing improves after a brisk walk. Even if I don't have a lot of time, a quick 10 minute walk in the open air definitely increases my endorphins. At the end of the walk, even if I feel tired, it's a good kind of tired, and I sleep better at night. A couple of friends have started to join me on my walks. We meet up on Wednesdays, and go for an hour-long walk. Our weekly walks mean we get to chat whilst getting fitter. Walking is a simple way to improve both physical and mental health. My advice is, get up and walk! Don't sit at your desk through your lunch hour and not have a break – go for walk.



I try not to snack between meals and have limited myself to one unhealthy snack a day. Whenever I have plans to go out for an indulgent meal, I will try and eat healthier the day before, in order to counterbalance the indulgent meal. I've always eaten a lot of fruit and vegetables, and often make a smoothie or soup to take to work, instead of sandwiches and cake. It's not only healthier, but cheaper! I also try and drink 2 litres of water a day, as it's so important to keep hydrated.

I think I get fewer colds now, but I've never been one to go to the GP unnecessarily. I only go to the GP if I'm really ill. I certainly wouldn't go if I have a cold or sore throat, as I can treat these conditions myself at home. Unfortunately, I did go to the hospital when I fell at home and hurt my foot. I thought if I need an x-ray, my GP wouldn't be able to provide that. But I wouldn't go to hospital for something minor.

When my GP practice is closed, I've phoned the NHS 111 freephone number for health advice available 24 hours a day. I've sought health advice from my local pharmacist. My pharmacy is next door to my GP surgery, and the pharmacists there have been really helpful in giving advice to me, and to my daughter on treating minor conditions such as verrucas or skin ailments. My supermarket also has a pharmacy counter with a consultation room, for customers to discuss their health concerns in private. I don't think many people realise they can often sort things out this way.

All in all, I would say that since making small changes to my lifestyle, my health and well-being has improved, and that's got to be good news all around.