



Self-care for busy people in the autumn

Dr Karen Ward, Counselling Psychotherapist, offers some simple tips for easing yourself through autumn.

If you are a child, a lover, or a colleague, what do you need in a parent, partner or peer? A positive environment with someone trustworthy who can support you to live your own healthy and happy life, especially in these uncertain times. How would you feel if that someone was stressed or even burnt out, fatigued or overloaded?

This is a scenario that can happen so easily. We are passionate about caring for others, but who cares about us? If we go to a gym or fitness class, the first thing we do is look at the person to see if they look fit and

healthy. The people we care for look at us to see if we are balanced in our lives, empathic to their situation and in a position emotionally and mentally to be ourselves.

We all need balance in our lives between work, home, romance, family, and socialising. When the balance goes and we feel less healthy, fit, or relaxed, then we often succumb to the effects of stress. Let's go back to basics and see how we can look after ourselves as best as possible so that we can be there for the people who need our care during the busy autumn season.

Breathe

Do you ever feel your stress levels rising, your hands begin to sweat and/or your breathing speeds up with racing thoughts?

When you are relaxed and calm, your breath is always slow and calm. You may not realise that if you breathe slowly, you will automatically relax. You can do the old 'take 10 slow deep breaths or try a yoga or t'ai chi class, where they will teach you breathing techniques. This may be considered pampering yourself but taking time for regular deep breathing is a necessity, not a luxury. Ask in your local health food shop for details of local classes.

What is your passion?

Distract yourself from any worries with a hobby or interest you are passionate about. This might be gardening or walking outdoors with the trees wearing their magnificent autumn foliage or snuggled up reading or watching your favourite boxset indoors.

This is pure escapism after a busy day. Think of it as nice homework for you to do when the children do theirs. If you need to be on hand to help them then knitting or giving yourself a manicure at the same time can be a soothing way to cope.

Time out

We all deserve time to ourselves to restore our balance and rejuvenate our minds. Many Irish women find this difficult as taking me time used to be regarded as being lazy or even selfish. No more!

Try both active and passive time out to see which suits you best, so an aromatherapy bath or listening to a relaxation podcast are passive as you are resting, whereas a walk in nature or playing sport are active things to do since you are expending energy.

Set the scene

You can never underestimate the effect on body, mind, and soul of serene surroundings.

Light an aromatherapy candle, burn some essential oils, play your favourite music, dim the lights or light a fire. This will change the atmosphere at home to one of calm and cosiness.

Hollywood heaven

After a tough day, treat yourself to a film night. Watch a weepy, action or comedy on television or Netflix to cry, holler or laugh away the frustrations of the day. Release through your tears and laughter.

This is a fantastic way to release pent up emotions that need to be let out in a safe and appropriate environment.

Holistic delights

Go for whichever one of the many terrific holistic treatments that appeal to you. Acupuncture or reflexology are terrific all-rounder treatments, and the therapeutic benefits of massage are legendary.

You might consider asking for vouchers for your birthday so you can use them at any time during the year. A treat once a month from September on will set you up for the approaching winter.

Romance yourself

During the pandemic when we had a lot of time isolating, you may have rediscovered the art of pampering yourself with manicures, pedicures, face packs and hot oil hair soaks. This autumn, continue this terrific habit regularly. As the girl in the shampoo ad says 'because you are worth it!'

Be creative

From painting and knitting to doodling and cooking, creativity comes in many forms. We are all creative so take time to find out

your special talent. A good start is a hobby that absorbs you completely.

The attitude of gratitude

Meditation is simply a way to bring your mind from being busy and stressed to being quiet and calm.

Last thing at night in bed, think of all the things that happened in your day for which you are grateful. This has the wonderful effect of gently focusing your mind on positive things as you drift off into a good quality and deeply refreshing sleep.

Don't let the autumn go by without doing something special for yourself. Have fun planning and dreaming to find an online evening course that you have always wanted to do.



Dr Karen Ward is founder of Moon Mná – Women's Celtic Circles. Her Sacred Ireland Celtic Moon oracle

card deck and Moon Mná Diary-Journal 2021 are available at www.moonmna.ie She co-presents the Health and Beauty Talks at Kelly's Resort Hotel, in Rosslare, Wexford (www.kellys.ie).