



Be kind to yourself: Essential strategies for self-care



You're on the move all day—seeing patients, reaching and bending to access different areas of the mouth, then repeating these actions several times a day. All this moving around can put stress on your back, neck, and wrists, which can result in pain and discomfort.

Your mind is always working, too: trying to keep pace with schedules, patient needs, career, and family life. It can be mentally demanding. So, it's important to take the time to be kind—to your body and mind!

We've got your back

Proper ergonomics is essential to help minimize physical strain.² So, show your body some love—it will pay off big now and in the future.

Here are some simple tips. You may remember them from dental school, but here's a quick refresher:

Adjust a patient's chair positioning

Avoid awkward bending or twisting to reduce stress on your musculoskeletal system.^{2,3}

Adopt a neutral posture while working to prevent strain

A neutral position enables the inherent curve of the spine to better align with the ears, shoulders, and hips. So, in essence, it forms a straight line.²

Here's how to maintain a neutral body position²:

- Make sure your head is tilted at 0° to 20°
- Keep your shoulders in a horizontal line, with weight evenly distributed
- Align your wrist with your forearm—with the pinky finger slightly lower than the thumb

Take a regular posture break

Strengthening the core and back muscles can help support you during the active workday and prolonged dental procedures.

Stay in the loupe!

Loupes can help achieve a better view, reduce eye fatigue, and help improve posture. Using loupes with "headlights" can reduce the need to bend over, which can help to alleviate back strain.³

Did you know up to

93%

of dental professionals experience **musculoskeletal disorders** during their careers?¹



Enlightening fact:

Magnifying loupes are designed to be used to help you keep proper posture and distance during cleanings.³ They are a great investment!

Remove the stressors: Open up and say Ahhhhh

Mental health is an essential part of whole-body health. Long hours and the repetitive nature of the work can lead to stress and anxiety.

Here are some stress-busting tips:



Breathe in (and out!)

Deep breathing, like box breathing, can help promote relaxation and reduce anxiety. It's named "box breathing" because the four steps of the exercise make a box shape. To begin, sit or stand with your back straight.

Then relax and follow these four simple steps⁴:

1. Breathe in slowly and count to four
2. Hold your breath and count to four again
3. Now, breathe out slowly through your mouth to a count of four
4. After breathing out, hold your breath again for a count of four

Jot it down

Tools like planners or apps can help prioritize tasks and bring clarity—which is especially helpful for a busy workday!

Keep growing

Invest in your professional development by attending workshops, pursuing certifications, or learning new skills.

Stay connected

Join our community and explore our **heartfelt social wall**. It's a great way to send positive vibes and hear advice, tips, and words of gratitude from peers.

HALEON is here to support you

You are at the heart of oral care, always there for patients, always there to elevate oral health. Haleon HealthPartner is here to support you with patient resources to help in consultations and drive behavioral change, as well as professional education, including free dental CE courses to help you thrive professionally and in your practice.



Explore more resources

#AtTheHeartOfOralCare

References:

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2. Hunt AW, Lintag-Nguyen K. Promote ergonomic health. *Dimens Dent Hyg.* 2021;19(11):8,10-11.
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4. British Heart Foundation. 3 breathing exercises to relieve stress. Accessed May 5, 2025. <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/wellbeing/breathing-exercises#:~:text=During%20the%20fight%2Dor%2Dflight,with%20your%20health%20and%20wellbeing>