

Celebrity doula and wellness lifestyle maven Latham Thomas, founder of The Ritualista, shares her expertise

# TOP 10 Rituals for Self-Care

By Latham Thomas

Self-care is an important part of our wellness ritual, and it often goes by the wayside in our overscheduled, hyper-connected world. Consumed by “being busy,” we often forget to take time for ourselves.

As someone who revels in discovery, and is deeply inspired by the temporal and spiritual, I celebrate moments of magic wherever I go. Every aspect of life is punctuated with ritual. To indulge in self-care, connect with the ambient landscape, surround ourselves with beauty, thrive in community and experiment with new healthy lifestyle practices that enhance the quality of our lives. When we attune ourselves to what I call the *magic of the mundane*, wherever we may be, gratitude allows us to honor each moment as sacred and show up with grace.

Self-care transforms ordinary daily routines into something sacred. It's the five minutes you take for gratitude in the morning and the 30 minutes you devote to your evening bath. It's the layering of creams and the focused meal prep. At the *Ritualista* ([lathamthomas.com](http://lathamthomas.com)), I've denoted the five pillars of what I consider an inspired and passionate life: Adorn, Commune, Nourish, Nurture and Retreat. Here are my Top 10 Rituals for Self-Care.

## Adorn

**1. Dress your way to a good mood**  
There is a science (“enclotted cognition”) about how what you wear influences the way you feel. Reframe “getting dressed” in the morning to “adorning yourself,” and the moments you spend preparing yourself for the day are charged with ritual.

Dress for the mood you want to embody. For example, just because it's dreary outside doesn't mean your wardrobe has to be. Dress your way to a better mood, starting with your most intimate layers—your underwear—with undergarments that are beautiful and feel good against your skin. Bold accents like scarves or hats can infuse personality into your wardrobe and jazz up any look.



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**2. Lather Up!** What you put on your skin enters your bloodstream. I recommend a shea butter and coconut oil blend to keep your skin moisturized and radiant throughout the winter. Since you use so much on your body, it's most affordable to make my recipe at home and indulge in a special facial product that you love. For winter skin protection and deep nourishment, I love Tammy Fender Quintessential Serum ([tammyfender.com](http://tammyfender.com)) and May Lindstrom's The Blue Cocoon ([maylindstrom.com](http://maylindstrom.com)).

**DIY Adorn Body Butter**

- 1/2 cup shea butter
- 1/2 cup mango butter
- 1/2 cup coconut oil
- 1/2 cup jojoba oil

*Optional:* 25 drops of essential oil or flower essence of choice

In a double boiler or glass bowl, combine all ingredients except essential oils. Bring to medium heat and stir constantly until all ingredients are melted. Remove from heat and let cool in refrigerator for one hour or until it starts to harden. Use a hand mixer to whip for 10 minutes until fluffy. Return to fridge for 10-15 minutes to set.



**3. Gather with Girlfriends** Communing is primal. In ancient times we lived in bands, united in our vulnerability to the natural elements. We told stories, hunted and gathered and ate together because our lives depended upon it. The rudiments of culture were born in these pockets of gathering. It's easy to retreat into the winter, but that's a perfect time to foster relationships with friends and meet over mealtime. Bring your friends together for a seasonal brunch or dinner, rotate houses so each of you gets a chance to host. Gathering with girlfriends will boost your mood and satisfy your need for connection.

*Commune*

**4. Volunteer for a Charitable Cause** It feels good to help others in need. Do good and amplify some of your favorite charitable causes making a difference in the world by volunteering. We all have something we can offer—serving meals at a soup kitchen, reading books to the elderly, collecting donations for winter gear for the homeless—pick one that resonates for you.

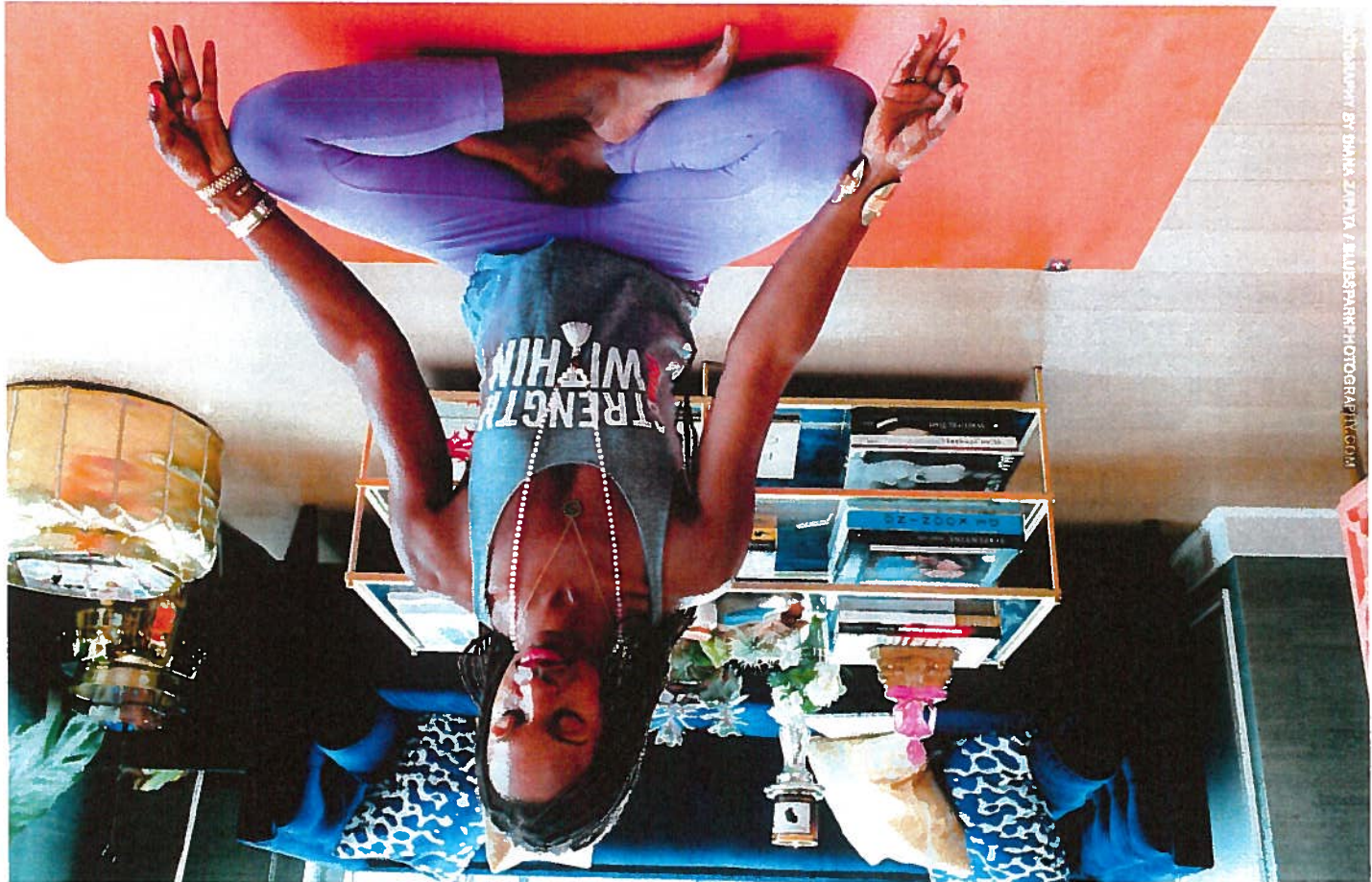
*Nourish*

**5. Keep it Local** What we eat becomes our blood, our thoughts and our actions. Eating as local, seasonal and sustainable as possible is key. Visit your local farmers' market for seasonal produce. Prepare foods that are in season now.

**6. Intuitive Cooking** Allow creativity to flow in the kitchen. It's not all about recipes, it's about sensing what is right for you, your palate, your mood. Try preparing something without a recipe next time and see what happens. If you engage your senses when eating, you will develop wisdom that will tell you what is in the food and what your body needs.

*Nurture*

**7. Establish a Meditation Practice** Set up a sacred space in your home where you can sit in silence and tune inward. Deep breathing and focused concentration slows down brain waves, making them more organized. It allows us to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, releasing



ing endorphins in the blood stream and allowing the brain to emit “happy” hormones! This helps us to have presence, peace of mind and maintain a practice of gratitude.

### 8. Try Phone-fasting

Tune all the digital chatter out of your life for one day per week. If that sounds intense, try a half-day. Phone-fasting includes iPads, computers, video games, etc. Take that time to tune inward, be with yourself and with family, go for a run, get outside in the park, cuddle with your sweetie, write a letter, spend time doing what you love with who you love and take time to appreciate the precious moment that is the present.

## Retreat

### 9. Schedule a Mindful Va-cay

That's where travel comes in and punctuates our experientive while granting us the much-needed time to

unwind. A *Ritualista* retreat is about mindful travel. Sometimes it takes a quick retreat to get us away from the everyday mindset that dulls and dims our lives, to learn to appreciate and celebrate these moments. Find a retreat or a wellness-oriented place to be your homebase while away. Whether you're headed to the mountains to ski or down to the Caribbean, be sure to include time for adequate rest and unstructured play and discovery.

### 10. Create Atmosphere

Every day can be a getaway when you design the home in a way that reflects peace within. Surround yourself with beauty and objects that make your home feel like a sanctuary. Candles, artwork, lamps, buddhas, your favorite quotes, etc. Whether you live in a palatial sprawl, or a studio apartment, your space should feel inviting and restorative for the soul. Each one of us needs respite, a way to tune out our busy surroundings and tune inward to connect within. A daily practice of incorporating rituals of self-care is imperative for optimal wellbeing.

LATHAM THOMAS is a graduate of Columbia University and the former co-president of Humanix. She serves on the advisory board of *Adapt Health* and is the host of being online at *Adapt Health*. She can be found on Instagram at *lathamthomas*. She has co-authored the popular nutrition e-book by Dr. Christine Tripping, Dr. Matt Frazier, Cheryl Johnson-Raine, and more. She has co-authored the e-book *Weight Gain: A Handbook for Health, Fitness, and Lifestyle* with Dr. Robert Long, Dr. Mark Williams, and more. She is also a frequent speaker at health and wellness conferences.