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# *Top Self-Care Skills for Doctors at Work*

# ABOUT ATARAXIA COLLECTIVE

## WHAT DOES ATARAXIA COLLECTIVE MEAN?

We think Ataraxia is a pretty cool word and hardly used by anyone. It's an old word from Greek philosophy. It can be defined as a tranquil and calm state free of distress. Sounds nice, hey?

Ataraxia Collective hopes to imply a sense of community, because a feeling of belonging is a fundamental part of wellbeing. We love a tribe.



## OUR PURPOSE

- Supporting people to develop their individual sense of wellness no matter what they are going through in life.
- Inspiring people to realise that ataraxia is a state accessible to all.
- Empowering one another to a life of full potential.

## ATARAXIA COLLECTIVE'S VALUES

- Non-judgement awareness
- Self-compassion
- Nurturing self-restraint
- Honesty
- Courage
- Willingness
- Wisdom
- Curiosity
- Solace & surrender
- Blissful joy!





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white tank top and black leggings, is walking away from the camera on a sandy beach. The ocean is to her left, and the sky is clear. The text "DR SUSANNAH WARD" is overlaid in white capital letters on the lower part of the image.

DR SUSANNAH WARD



*I am a Specialist Physician of Rehabilitation Medicine. I am passionate about self-care & human mastery as a means to optimal health & wellbeing. I aim to support other doctors & my patients to achieve their holistic health goals & live full & meaningful lives despite their circumstance. Please see my LinkedIn profile or contact me for further details on my clinical work.*

*- Dr Susannah Ward*

## ABOUT DR WARD

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Dr Susannah Ward qualified as a Specialist Physician of Rehabilitation Medicine in 2018 with the Basmajian Award for best fellowship clinical exam performance. She has a background in medical science and health research with honours degrees from Sydney University. She has over twenty years of experience working as a doctor in public and private hospitals across Australia. She has diverse clinical experience including general medical and surgical care, palliative care, geriatrics and rehabilitation. She has rehabilitation experience working in brain injury, spinal cord injury, chronic pain, geriatrics, palliative care, orthopaedic rehabilitation, stroke, amputation and general rehabilitation. Her clinical roles involve hospital rehabilitation locums, governance positions, medicolegal and insurance work and private clinics.

Dr Ward is an expert at understanding the behavioural, psychological and social challenges faced by people & the impact of environment, upbringing & social determinants of health. She has a deep understanding of the holistic nature of health. She incorporates evidence-based wellness tools like mindfulness, healthy eating, exercise and social/lifestyle prescription into her goal-directed and patient-centred care. She promotes the key message that *living with illness or injury need not be a barrier to feeling well or living life to the full*. Dr Ward's therapeutic emphasis is to support clients in self-compassionately accepting themselves and acquiring self-mastery skills to maximise their functional ability and quality of life. She aims to help empower clients to independently self-care and optimally manage their circumstances using wellness tools and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Dr Ward has always advocated for health professional wellbeing & promoted a more supportive & nurturing medical culture that facilitates wellbeing & sustainable careers. She founded Ataraxia Collective in 2018 as a creative adjunct to her clinical practice, hosting retreats & workshops showcasing powerful holistic tools like mindfulness & yoga. She currently runs physician wellbeing & CPD retreats. She is the Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Member Health & Wellbeing Committee & the Wellbeing Advocates Town Halls. She is the health director of the not-for-profit charity Mood Active. She enjoys professional writing on topics related to doctor well-being & is publishing her first self-care book, *Mastering Real Wellness*, with presales of the ebook available now on Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/author/drsusannahward>

Dr Susannah Ward

Physician Rehabilitation Medicine

Lifestyle rehabilitation, wellness, yoga, mindfulness

BMed Sci(hons) MBBS(hons) FAFRM(RACP) RYT200



## CREDENTIALS

- Physician of rehabilitation medicine, Fellow Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (RACP), Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP).
- Basmajian Prize Winner 2016, clinical rehabilitation fellowship exams.
- Bachelor of Medical Science with honours, The University of Sydney.
- Bachelor of Medicine and bachelor of surgery with honours, The University of Sydney.
- Certified accredited yoga teacher (200 hours), Yoga Alliance International.
- Mindfulness practitioner, experienced in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Therapy.
- Experienced in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Schema Therapy, Dialectic Behavioural Therapy and Acceptance Commitment Therapy.
- Self-proclaimed expert on Real Wellness!

## PUBLICATIONS

- Ward S. Do physicians need tragic optimism? Intern Med J. 2024 Feb;54(2):348-351. doi: 10.1111/imj.16315. PMID: 38350660.
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# TOP 5 ESSENTIAL Self-Care Skills for

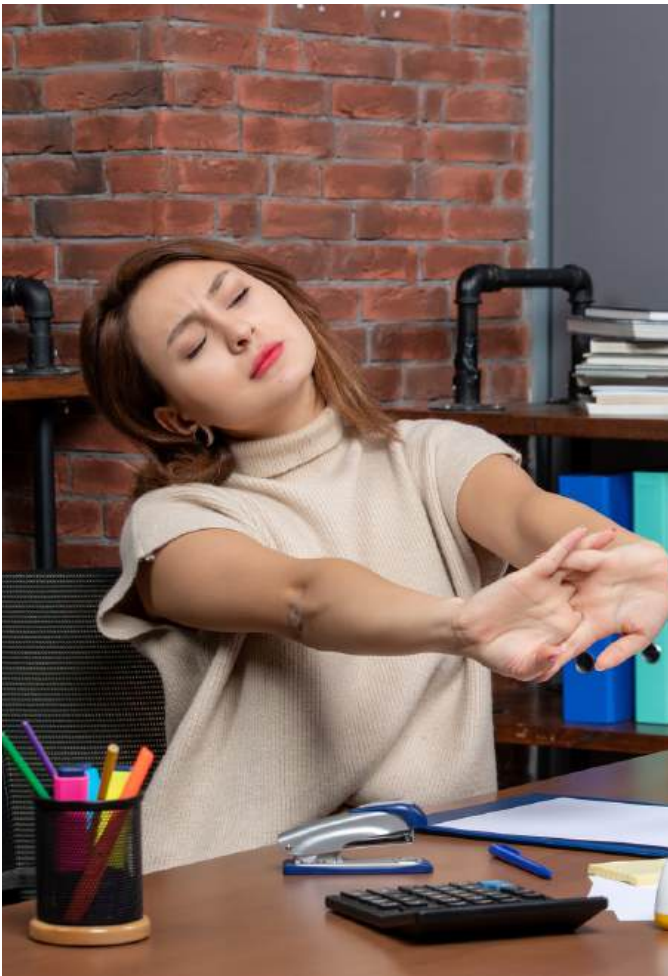


## Doctors at Work

*Self-care is not just a personal need but a professional responsibility for doctors and trainees working in and navigating the demands of modern healthcare.*

*At Ataraxia Collective, we understand that your well-being is vital not only for your own health but also for the care you provide to your patients. Below are five essential self-care skills designed to help you thrive in your work environment, ensuring you remain balanced, focused, and fulfilled.*

# 01 Gentle Movement



Incorporating gentle movement into your workday can be truly transformative. Whether it's a few minutes of stretching, a short walk, or mindful yoga poses, these movements help alleviate physical tension, reduce stress, and boost mental clarity.

Aim to take short breaks every hour to move your body, even if it's just standing and stretching at your desk. Regular movement will help to reset your posture, improve circulation, and recharge your energy levels.



# 02

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## Setting Boundaries Between Work & Breaks

Setting boundaries is crucial to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Make a conscious effort to schedule short, regular breaks to decompress and reset during your shifts. View these as tasks and add them to your list! Use this time to step outside, practice deep breathing, or engage in a quick meditation. Protect these breaks as essential moments for self-rejuvenation, allowing you to return to work with renewed focus and energy.



# 03

## Emotion Regulation & Stress Management Skills

Healthcare environments can be emotionally taxing. Developing emotion regulation and stress management skills is essential for maintaining your well-being. Techniques such as mindfulness, self-compassion exercises, and cognitive reframing can help you manage stress effectively. Regularly check in with yourself: acknowledge your emotions without judgment, and take actionable steps to care for your mental health, like speaking with a colleague or using relaxation techniques.

Breathwork is a powerful tool to help manage stress and maintain calmness amid a hectic day. Practice diaphragmatic breathing, breathing deeply into your belly rather than your chest, or try box breathing: inhale for a count of four, hold for four, exhale for four, and hold again for four. Regular breath work sessions can help lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety, and improve focus, allowing you to navigate your day efficiently.



# 04 Optimise Your Workplace Environment

Your workplace environment plays a significant role in your well-being. Be mindful of environmental stressors; even poor lighting can impact some people's workflow & peace of mind. Ensure your workplace is free of environmental toxins such as air pollutants and harsh cleaning chemicals. Aim to create a workspace that supports your health: open windows for fresh air, use air purifiers, opt for non-toxic cleaning products, and ensure ergonomic furniture. Declutter and organise your workplace to reduce cognitive load and distractions. A well-arranged workspace reduces fatigue and promotes overall well-being, allowing you to feel more at ease throughout your day.



# 05

## Nourish Yourself with Adequate Nutrition & Hydration

Maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration is crucial for sustaining energy levels, mental clarity, and overall health throughout a busy workday. Prioritise balanced meals that include a variety of whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Make nutritious snacks, like nuts or fresh fruit, available to fuel your body between shifts. Also, ensure you stay well-hydrated by keeping a water bottle nearby and setting reminders to drink regularly.

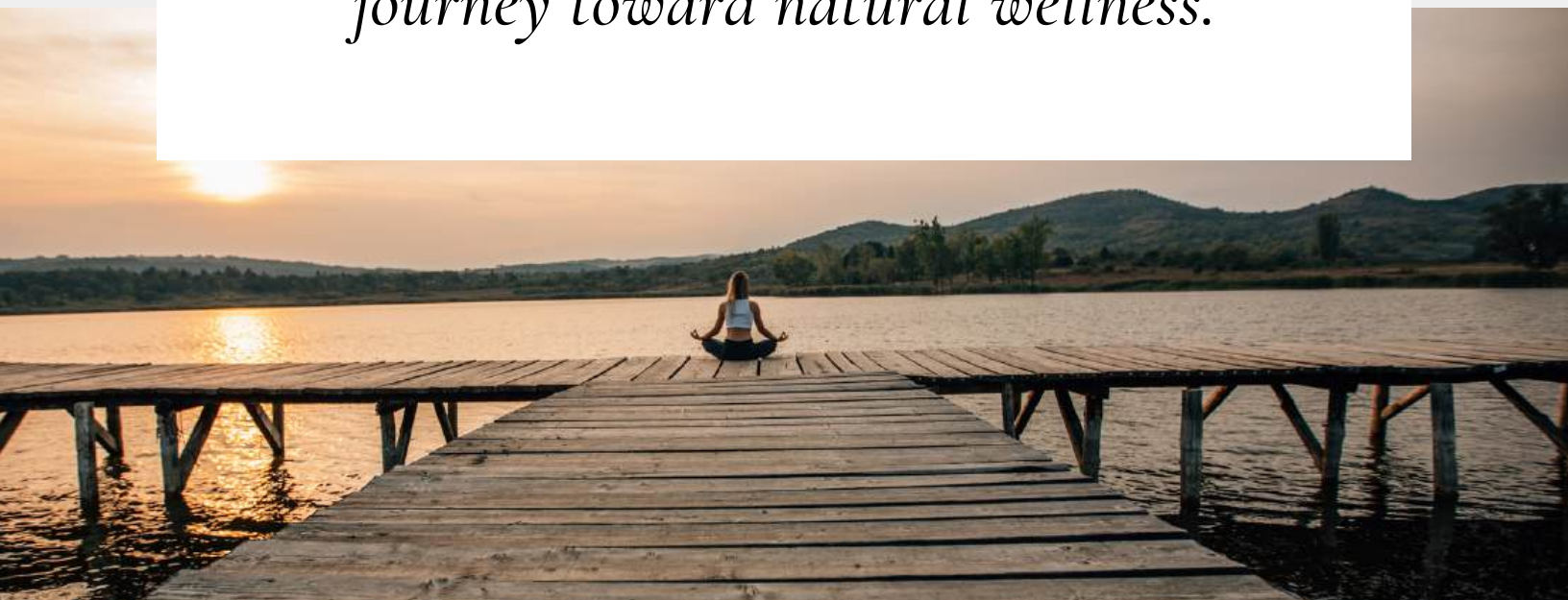


Proper nutrition and hydration are vital to feeling your best and performing at your peak. Meal prep on a Sunday afternoon and have ready-to-go ingredients to pack a healthy lunch for yourself. Not only will this ensure you eat well & fuel your body with what it needs, but it will likely save you a lot of money that you may otherwise have spent on poor food choices at staff cafeterias and takeout.

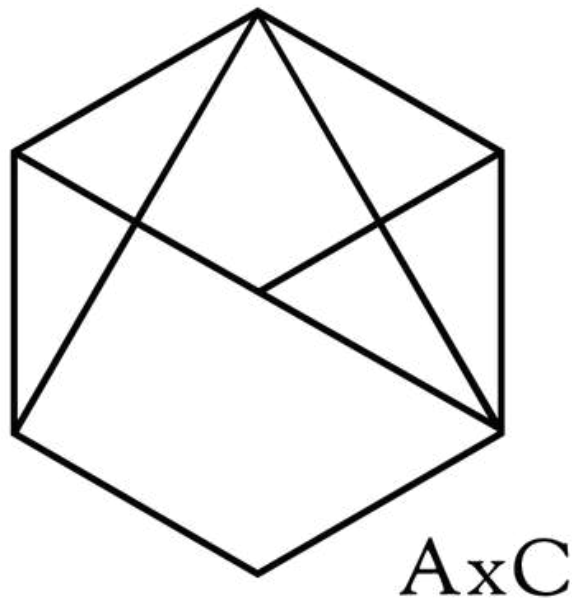


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*Remember, caring for yourself is not a luxury but a necessity. Integrating these self-care skills into your daily routine will enhance your well-being and improve the quality of care you provide to your patients. At Ataraxia Collective, we support you on your journey toward natural wellness.*



**READY TO RESTORE,  
REJUVENATE & BRING YOUR  
CPD TO LIFE? JOIN US!**



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