

# Self-Care in the City

**100 WAYS** TO OPTIMIZE  
YOUR NUTRITION,  
FITNESS & WELLNESS  
IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

**MICHELLE CADY**

# Self-Care in the City™

**100 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE  
YOUR NUTRITION,  
FITNESS & WELLNESS  
IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

**MICHELLE CADY**

Copyright © 2018 Michelle Cady

Instruction in this book is not intended to replace or interrupt the reader's relationship with a physician or other professional. Please consult your doctor for matters pertaining to your specific health and diet. Information in this book is general and is offered with no guarantees on the part of the author or publisher. The authors and publisher disclaim all liability in connection with the use of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, email the author at [michelle@fitvista.com](mailto:michelle@fitvista.com).

Photography by Daryl Getman. Cover Design & NYC Skyline by Violet Lemay.

Interior Book Design by Amie Olson. Editing by Leigh Weingus.

To contact the author, visit: [www.FitVista.com](http://www.FitVista.com)

ISBN-10: 1732194618

ISBN-13: 978-1-7321946-1-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018904335

Printed in the United States of America

# Dedication

To the Michelle of five years ago,  
and those of you who  
may be in the same exact place today:

Here's the book I needed to survive.

I wrote it for us.

Copyright © 2018 Michelle Cady

Instruction in this book is not intended to replace or interrupt the reader's relationship with a physician or other professional. Please consult your doctor for matters pertaining to your specific health and diet. Information in this book is general and is offered with no guarantees on the part of the author or publisher. The authors and publisher disclaim all liability in connection with the use of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, email the author at [michelle@fitvista.com](mailto:michelle@fitvista.com).

Photography by Daryl Getman. Cover Design & NYC Skyline by Violet Lemay.  
Interior Book Design by Amie Olson. Editing by Leigh Weingus.

To contact the author, visit: [www.FitVista.com](http://www.FitVista.com)

ISBN-10: 1732194618

ISBN-13: 978-1-7321946-1-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018904335

Printed in the United States of America

## Advanced Reviews

*"Self-Care in the City is the book every 20, 30 and 40-something woman needs in her life. In an era when we're encouraged to work hard and play harder, Michelle's book is the reminder we all need that sometimes, the most important thing you can do is slow down. Go for a run, take a yoga class, stay in with a good book and a mug of herbal tea, swap that pastry for a piece of fruit and go for a long walk and just think. This self-care bible will help you implement real, lasting change in your life, and you'll be so much calmer and happier for it."*

- Leigh Weingus, Senior Editor at mindbodygreen, New York, New York

*"I love this book! I breezed through the sections not even realizing the time was going by because it is such a fun, gentle, helpful, interesting, attention-maintaining read. I am so excited to share this book and message with my friends!"*

- Anna Chavis, Manager, Solar Development at NRG Energy, New York, New York

*"The beauty of Self-Care in the City is it's approachability and simplicity. Michelle's compiled her "life hacks" into one, well-written volume: helping readers optimize long days in the office, work travel and hotel stays with simple, small adjustments — all of which will lead to a happier and healthier you! The book is like having the pro showing you the ropes — follow her tips, refer to them time and time again, and feel better and more confident in life and business!"*

- Laura Esposito, Senior Vice President, TT International Investment Management, New York, New York

*"In a city that's survival of the fittest (and busiest!), Michelle has taken the guesswork out of finding time for self-care. As a seasoned New Yorker that prides herself on efficiency, this book taught me quick and easy tips, tricks, and swaps to prioritize my physical and mental health. Self-Care in the City is a true gem and should be given to every girl with her first set of apartment keys!"*

- Jen Steen, Esthetician and Founder of The Whole Hive, New York, New York

*"As someone who has lived in various major cities my whole life, I can relate to the stressors of the concrete jungle. I found Michelle Cady's Self-Care in the City a clever concoction of unique advice on how to live a more health-conscious and simultaneously metropolitan lifestyle. I consider myself to be a relatively healthy person, but was pleasantly surprised by all of the insightful, new, and sometimes unconventional tidbits that Michelle provides in this guide. From a bonafide banker to fitness fanatic, Michelle puts her full energy and mindfulness into her work and this book reflects that — surely her kindhearted expertise will make you rethink some of your own daily habits as you giggle your way through her very relatable stories!"*

- Megan Leigh Hawkins of LiveLeigh Events, Austin, Texas

# Table of Contents

## Introduction 13

What Sex and the City Looks Like in 2018	15
You're a Hero	17
My Story	18
Permission to Take Care of You	20
My Philosophic Blend	21
You Can Do This	24
Asking for Help, Hiring Coaches	25
What to Expect	26
How to Read this Book	27
Teaching Ourselves	29
Privilege	30
Social & Contact	31

## Nutrition in the City 35

1. Rethink Brunch	37
2. "Half Dinners" FTW	40
3. Pick One Indulgence	42
4. BYO Veggies	44
5. Google "Natural" or "Organic"	47
6. Grocery Store Trifecta	50
7. Tier Your Seamless Orders	53
8. I Fell in Love with a Blender	56
9. Take (Gut) Shots	59
10. Use Your Oven for Cooking	61
11. Be an Entry-Level Chef	64
12. Late Nights at the Bodega	67
13. Walk Home	69

14.	Your Corner of the Work Fridge	72
15.	Half Lunches & Rotating Leftovers	74
16.	Drinking on Dates	76
17.	Revolutionize Work Entertainment	78
18.	Drink Water Like it's Your Job	81
19.	Love Your Food Tote	84
20.	Emergency Snacks for Biz Travel	86
21.	Be the Sugar Detective	90
22.	Eat a Fake Dinner	92
23.	Wait 45 Minutes	94
24.	Inspire Your Kitchen	96
25.	Aspirational Trip to Whole Foods	99
26.	Just One Cup #CoffeeAddict	101
27.	Eating Seasonal in the City	104
28.	Greens Game, Salad Game & Sexy Veggies	106
29.	Skinny in the City	108
30.	Order Like a Boss	111
31.	Chew Your Food	113
32.	The Stimulant Cycle	116
33.	Invest in You	121

## *Fitness in the City* **125**

34.	Your Five Weekly Workouts	127
35.	Schedule it = Prioritize it	130
36.	Fitness Warrior Weekends	132
37.	Your "Go-To" Run	134
38.	Early Bird Workouts	136
39.	Pack Your Sneakers!	140
40.	Your Keystone Workout	142
41.	Friend "Walk and Talks"	144
42.	Bike = Your Escape Car	146
43.	Solo "Walk and Thinks"	148
44.	Commuting Shoes	151
45.	How to Lose Bodyfat	153
46.	Join a Gym You Want to Go to	156

47.	The 1000 Calorie Swing	159
48.	Thank You Dry Shampoo	161
49.	12 Sessions with a Trainer	163
50.	Walk to Work	165
51.	Sprint Weekly	167
52.	Hiking Days	169
53.	Studying for the GMAT, CFA, MBA or Grad School	172
54.	Workout Clothes that Make You Feel Good	174
55.	Couples Who Sweat Together, Stay Together	177
56.	Love Your Feet	179
57.	Tension Headaches are the Worst	181
58.	Restorative Workout Niche	185
59.	The Biz of Building Bootays	187
60.	Stress and the Spare Tire	189
61.	Walking Meditation	191
62.	We're Bringing Sexy Back	193
63.	Boutique Fitness	195
64.	Movement in the City	197
65.	Train for a Race	199
66.	Quick Workouts for Biz Trips	201

## *Wellness in the City* **205**

67.	A Note on Perfectionism	206
68.	Rushing Woman's Syndrome & My 5-Minute Superpower	210
69.	What Kind of Weekend do You Need?	213
70.	Selfies for Self-Confidence	215
71.	The Best Souvenirs from Vacation . . .	217
72.	Stress, Testing for Adrenal Fatigue & The Magic of Magnesium	219
73.	Massages are not Indulgent	223
74.	Your Tech Detox Experiment	226
75.	Skip Your Workout, Hit up the Steam Room	228
76.	Oh Hey Nature	230
77.	Find Your Tribe	232
78.	Sleep Your Way to the Top	234
79.	Creating Your Sanctuary	237

80. Friend Playdates	239
81. Noise at Night	241
82. How to Survive the Subway	244
83. Breaking the Stigma on Naps	248
84. Health-ify-ing Your Swipe Lefts	251
85. Dirty Feet	253
86. Work Hard, Play Hard ... Rest Hard	255
87. "I'm sooo Stressed, I'm sooo Busy"	257
88. Limiting Your Social Engagements	259
89. Your Inner Circle	261
90. Take a Fake Sick Day	263
91. Fuel Your Secret Passion	266
92. Human Connection	268
93. Working from Home	270
94. Creating Home & Work Boundaries	272
95. Put Yourself First	274
96. Becoming a Plant Lady	276
97. Learning How to Relax	278
98. JOMO is the New FOMO	281
99. Fertility in the City	283
100. Write Your Own Way	286

## **Conclusion** **289**

How to Work with Me	291
Talks & Speaking Engagements	291
Press & Media	292
How to Stay in Touch	292
Acknowledgements	295
Notes	301
About the Author	307

# Introduction

---

"The most exciting, challenging and significant relationship of all is the one you have with yourself."

— Carrie Bradshaw

I've lived in New York for a decade, and let me tell you something: **Living in New York City is some hard shit.** This place is absolutely nuts. For years, I looked for a book that told me my experiences with overwhelm, over-stimulation and stress from living in the city were real. All I wanted to know was that New York was, in fact, different from other places, and that I wasn't just making it all up in my head.

I'd walk in to bookstores and try to find something that spoke to the inherent stressors of living in such a big city and how to survive here, but I couldn't find it. If you've been thinking the same thing, I promise you: **This is your book.**

I have close friends in Boston, California, Denver, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Vermont, Austin and Ohio, and I know they all politely wonder why the heck I'm still here after all these years. Here's the thing: I've

*Self-Care in the City* | 13

loved it here, and sometimes I almost feel addicted to this place.

You too?

I arrived in New York City in 2008 after graduating from Middlebury College in rural Vermont. I was a bright-eyed, enthusiastic, overwhelmingly positive and eager new financial associate at an asset management firm in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. I'd done a short stint living in London as a student studying abroad and as an intern at Goldman Sachs, but other than that, this was my first big adventure living in a city, without a return ticket home.

And it was hard. I had to learn how to cook chicken. I had to fit in seeing my friends on weekends when I wasn't at work. I had to pay for a gym membership, buy groceries and allocate some serious cash for my monthly rent.

Adjusting to **#adulthood** is hard enough anywhere. But when it's in New York City, it's like adulthood on steroids. No longer could I hop outside my residential dorm room for a long run on a bucolic Vermont dirt road or jump in my SUV from my suburban house to help my mom with groceries from Costco. Nope, I lived in Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan, 10023, and I was determined to succeed and figure this whole thing out. On my own.

I know you — you're tough, you're hardworking. You're determined to figure out this whole "working and being healthy at the same time" thing, too. You want it all. You want balance, you want success and you don't want to sacrifice your social life.

Well, I've been there, and that's why I wrote this book. *Self-Care in the City* is a reflection of all the health and wellness tricks I discovered during my experience living in the city as a finance executive. These tips are blended with my professional expertise and education in

nutrition, exercise science, and stress management — making this a book that every busy urban person needs on their night stand or nestled in their work bag.

This is the self-care guide that I wish I'd had by my side over the last 10 years — and I couldn't find it anywhere. So I decided to write it myself. This book will help you survive your hectic life in the city and get ahead. This book is a compilation of all my mistakes and failures, lessons, experiments and ways I know will help you to succeed — and help you skip ahead a few years faster than I was able to learn everything myself.

So my friend, you're in the right place.

## What *Sex and the City* Looks Like in 2018

Like most of you, I grew up watching *Sex and the City* and idolizing the four women who were figuring it all out together in their fabulous New York life.

But when I arrived here and tested it out on my own, it didn't always quite feel like me. Sure, I've had my fair share of crazy nights out and open bars, but extra dirty martinis gave me hangovers, big brunches made my stomach hurt, and going on dates at 9 p.m. made me want to curl up in a ball and go to sleep.

See, if there's one thing Carrie Bradshaw didn't master in her beautiful Manhattan life it's **self-care**.

*Self-Care in the City* | 15

Like most of us, she rushed around from thing to thing, drank a few too many cocktails, smoked cigarettes, and dealt with the stress that came along with a demanding social life and dynamic career.

Little did she know that a few simple changes to her daily habits could drastically improve everything from her mood to her sleep to her ability to manage the ups and downs of life and love.

Since you're reading this book, you're getting the inside scoop on self-care. You'll no longer have to overthink how to squeeze a workout into a busy week or what dish to choose at a business dinner or how to relieve stress without reaching for a glass of wine.

As a busy urban person, you have in your hands a handbook for learning how to bring a healthy dose of self-care into your busy, fast-paced life. After finishing this book, you will have 100 fool-proof ways to address the common dilemmas of your everyday life, including:

—**Way #1 Rethink Brunch:** How to approach a fabulous weekend meal without overdoing it.

—**Way #7 Tier Your Seamless Orders:** Method for making healthy-ish options your go-to when you're exhausted.

—**Way #16 Drinking on Dates:** Tips to navigate every blind date without drowning yourself in cocktails.

—**Way #66 Quick Workouts for Biz Trips:** How to keep up your workout routine no matter where you travel.

—**Way #81 Noise at Night:** Solutions for reducing stimulation and getting a great night's sleep.

—**Way #82 Surviving the Subway:** Insider secrets to stress-less on your daily commute.

No matter what you need help navigating, there's a tip or resource within immediate reach.

## *You're a Hero*

I know you can do it all. You've been a rockstar your whole life and you're kind of secretly wondering how long you can keep this whole thing going before it all falls apart.

As you begin embracing these self-care practices, you'll find that you have the power to rise above the routines that diminish your beauty and focus and fall in love with the wellness strategies that will not only make you feel unstoppable, but will also give you an edge.

You've got the power. You're the boss. As I tell my clients, "You're the CEO of your own Health."

If you're successful at your job, your academics, your sports, whatever, I can assure you you will be successful at building out these healthy habits to support yourself. Like anything, it takes practice and a willingness to experiment (and potentially fail, reevaluate and try again).

So I ask you, can I be your guide?

# My Story

Let's rewind. Before I became a health coach for successful, high-achieving urban go-getters, I was one of them.

I advanced quickly through my beginning years in finance, starting at Goldman Sachs, taking the CFA, getting that promotion to Assistant Vice President and going on weekly business trips to London, Boston, D.C. and California.

**I was 27!** I could pitch for an hour on the benefits of global value investing, the intricacies of our investments in Japanese P&C companies, and why gold and cash is an important part of every institutional portfolio. For years, I loved my work in consultant relations, client service and institutional sales. My small team raised over 12 billion dollars of institutional investments during my six years at the Firm. I wasn't messing around.

I got up every morning at 5:15 a.m. to fit in my Barry's Bootcamp class or personal training session. I arrived at the office polished and put together with my second coffee of the day in hand. And I even kept my eating habits in check with a meticulous salad order from Chop't every single day. Days wrapped up with wining and dining clients, drinks with my girlfriends, or a second session at the gym. Or getting home and collapsing on my couch, *exhausted*.

I'd eat weird protein bars to "stay skinny," drink four cups of coffee to keep it all going and schedule every minute of every day to fit it all in.

Dating was hard, but I didn't have much time to think about it because I was so committed to my career, my fitness and my fab group of girlfriends, that it just seemed like one more thing I had to do.

Well, something had to give. For years, I felt stress building in my system and had a deep suspicion that if it weren't for hormonal birth control, I probably wouldn't be getting my real period. I over-exercised, I restricted my eating, didn't sleep, drank alcohol to relax, partied on the weekends and was never not chasing my next epic personal or professional goal.

I think you know where this is going: **I burned out.**

I noticed my happiness dimming, and I was calculating how many more years I could keep this all going. I also started asking myself questions like this: Why was my personal training session with my trainer my favorite hour of my day? Why was I sneakily reading nutrition blogs while eating lunch at my desk?

I had a crashing realization in April 2014 that my mind and body were both in a no good, very bad place. I had to change careers, heal my body and make my passion for nutrition and fitness my job.

It was one of the best decisions I've ever made, and that's why I'm here now: I've come back to tell you my story and bring you along for the ride. I went to nutrition school, I became a certified personal trainer, and I built a thriving health coaching business and wellness platform, FitVista.

The best and worst discovery I made on my journey was that I was suffering from adrenal fatigue. Thanks to all of the stress I'd put myself through during my entire adolescent and adult life, my adrenals were shot. But with the right diet, supplements, self-care strategies, and patience, I was not only able to heal my adrenals, but got my period back naturally for the first time since my teens.

Simultaneously, in late 2014, I began taking on personal training clients and working as a health coach, often in the corporate world. And I discovered that so many of my clients suffered from the same symp-

*Self-Care in the City* | 19

toms I had. Determined to find a way to help them all thrive within their demanding jobs, I developed a process that works wonders for even the busiest professional.

Leveraging my personal experience, education, and holistic health expertise, I've enjoyed playing a role in the wellness transformations of hundreds of women and men all over the world.

The past few years have been a tale of slowing down personally while also building a business professionally. It's been all about lowering my stress and upping my self-care. Of swapping my workouts and paying attention to my food cravings. Of listening to my body. The results are phenomenal and I can't wait to share them with you in the following 300 pages.

Now it's your turn. In this book you'll learn about one of the core principles of my approach: **self-care**.

## Permission to Take Care of You

I want you, my dear reader, to see this as your permission slip. Permission to take the best possible care of you.

I know you want to be your best in your professional career and personal life, but I also know that comes at a cost. Usually a cost to your health. Whether it be digestive problems today or autoimmune disease a decade from now, your body always presents the bill.

This book allows you to both strive and thrive by focusing on your

deepest needs. Taking better care of your health will allow you to get things done in a way you once thought impossible.

At the risk of sounding corny — and here's your warning, I can be kind of corny! — *Self-Care in the City* is the gateway to living the life you imagined.

The city is a scary place, and we have to learn how to take good care of ourselves to kick-ass in our career, love our social life, date, maybe even fall in love, and leave the city a better place than we came.

**Here's a little secret:** This city doesn't have to beat you up. Not even a little bit.

## My Philosophic Blend

Now that you know that I've been in your shoes, you should also know that I went and got the education before I started calling myself an expert: I graduated from The Institute for Integrative Nutrition, made it through the rigorous educational exercise science classes for personal training at Equinox, and hired my own coaches, practitioners and functional medicine doctors as I healed myself from adrenal fatigue and amenorrhea. And I read and research constantly — I'll always be a student of new trends and findings that can help my clients and community (and myself!).

So, from the relatively unique point of view of a health coach, certified personal trainer, stress-less expert, wellness writer and former finance exec living the fast-paced life in New York City, here we go.

*Self-Care in the City* | 21

## THREE PARTS OF HEALTHY

I'm constantly reminding my clients of my signature philosophy on "being healthy." These three factors can also serve as great motivators when you need an extra reason to kick your wellness routine up a notch.

1. Sure, an element of health is your **body composition and the number on the scale**. But most importantly...
2. **How do you FEEL?** How much energy do you have? Does your tummy hurt? Are you pooping? And ...
3. What are you doing for your **long-term health?** Are you going to live to the ripe old age of 100 feeling fine? Or are you going to put yourself at risk for lifestyle diseases like metabolic syndrome, fertility issues, autoimmune disorders, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and even cancer?

## THE MANY ELEMENTS OF SELF-CARE

It's not just about bubble baths and dark chocolate. Self-care is the total package. It includes everything from the food we're putting in our bodies and the way we exercise and move every day, to the stress in our minds, how much sleep we get and how we operate in the world.

You're the boss. Start with the self-care practices that you need the most right now. Got your nutrition figured all out? Great. Skip over to the wellness section. Can't get started on your gym routine? Dive right into the fitness section. Start in the section that feels right for **y-o-u**: It's my book, and I've decided that *you* get to make the rules.

## NATURE

Since this book is all about the city, I want to throw in an extra plug for the underdog: **Nature.**

“Paleo-Deficit Disorder” is a term no one talks about. So, my peers, I’m going to talk about it. In a world of rapid urbanization, we’re all somewhat out of touch with what we need for a healthy lifestyle: sun first thing in the morning, walking outside, skin-on-ground contact with the earth, natural movement, eating real foods and true integrated communities.

As early as the 1960s, microbiologist René J. Dubos discovered that humans thrive when they see large swatches of “green zones” and/or “blue zones.” Think sky, ocean and forests. The Paleo-Deficit Disorder study discovered that the lack of “green zones and “blue zones” in modern city environments was leading to *higher physiological distress, like depression, anxiety and stress.* When participants were constantly exposed to a lot of grey and “industrial” colors like tan, black and white, they experienced a reduction in altruism, empathy and in a sense, their overall “humanness.” That’s scary.

In short, when we’re in a big city, surrounded by building and technology and away from nature, we can lose touch with our humanness. It’s not great, but don’t worry: I’ve got you.

These “100 Ways” strive to get you back to that paleo lifestyle bit by bit. We’ll weave in time in nature to get you away from that concrete cubicle. Instead, we’ll get you eating an ancestral diet with trips to the grocery store, optimizing your microbial ecology with probiotics, taking walks outside to stare at the sky, and escaping the city for mini adventures to dig your heels into the sand at the beach or feel the rocks under your feet as you gingerly dip into an ice-cold creek after a hike.

You won't lose your humanness if you take care of your **self-care**.

The city is over-stimulating, so we'll figure out ways together to recenter in nature. To realize you need a day in the woods to clear your head. Or a walk in Central Park to calm down and stress less. Or a vacation to catch up on your sleep and take naps on the beach.

I strongly believe that by fueling yourself with stellar nutrients, smart exercise and personalized self-care, you'll show up as a productive employee, better partner and friend, and be more comfortable and happier with yourself. You'll figured out how to thrive in this structure and you'll want to share it with everyone you know.

This is my purpose in life. This is my mission and what I've been called to do — and I've never been happier in my work. I can't wait to share it with you!

## You Can Do This

I've always been a sensitive person. I've always been a great listener. I overthink and overanalyze, and I was always on the hunt for health-based solutions to everything I was going through. For that reason, I was into wellness way before it was "cool"— first secretly, and now much more publicly with my education, practice, community, and book.

Through it all, I often thought to myself, "If you've figured out how to be really good at academics, really good at sports, really good at your job, you can figure out how to be really good at your health."

**Health is wealth, and nutrition changes everything.** You're upleveling your health to match the levels of success you've created in other areas of their life.

If you've figured out how to make \$100k+ a year, you can certainly figure this out. And even if you're still figuring out the career thing? No sweat, I have faith in you.

Even if you're busy, you know that taking care of yourself is going to allow you to achieve even more as the years go on — and make you happier while doing it all. This growth mindset is what made you so successful in the first place — you're always growing, learning, upleveling, optimizing. *In everything.*

## Asking for Help, Hiring Coaches

I've never been very good at asking for help, and I'm still working on it. I've figured a lot of this out on my own through attending school, reading research and practicing self-experimentation. But remember: **asking for help allows you to move along faster.** Whenever I've hired my own coach (yes, even coaches need coaches), I've sped up my level of growth and success. You can too.

# What to Expect

While there are tons of diet books out there and I'm happy to recommend my trusted favorites, I'm here to tell you this: This is not a diet book.

Instead, **Self-Care in the City** is a collection of city-centric stories focused on helping you survive and thrive in a place that never seems to slow down. Yes, I happen to be in New York, but I bet you can apply this to your life in London, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and every other crazy city out there.

I'd always been an intensely private person, but my goal when writing this book is to let you sneak a look into my purse and my past. I've included my stories as a way for you to imagine your own. My approach? I drop a fun fact or a splash of education, plus a zinger of motivation and some easy action steps.

I'm someone with a massive fluff-detector, and I didn't want to give you exercises at the end of each chapter, because who really does them anyway? Instead, there's a notes section so you can jot down your thoughts. They're *your* thoughts, so *you* get to choose your action steps.

# How to Read this Book

While I would be flattered if you read this whole book in one sitting, *please* do not. If you're reading this, I'm sure you have some Type A tendencies that have gotten you far in life ... but please don't make this book part of that! There is no deadline, no race, no test. Go at your own pace. I'd prefer if you took your time.

Read a few sections, then put the book down for a couple of weeks. Anytime you feel yourself starting to get overwhelmed with *all the things* you want to do or try, just put the book down, go for a walk, take a deep breath. You'll return to it when you're ready.

But truly, I want you to go slow. I want you to take a few strategies and actually go out in to the real world and practice them and incorporate them into your life.

I don't want to turn this into 100 more things you have to add to your to-do list, and I certainly don't want to it to add stress to your life. The truth is, habit change is gradual. If you try to do 100 things at once, it's just not going to happen.

And sometimes, the first step to doing less is **giving yourself the permission to do less**. So if it takes you a year to read this book, you know what? Go you. And while you're at it, feel free to choose your own adventure: Scan the Table of Contents and pick ways you want to read, jump around within sections or follow a theme or thread of interest as you go along.

Different points of this book will resonate with you differently over the months and years. You can skip over sections now that overwhelm you. You'll notice that when you return to these sections in an evolved mindset, maybe years down the road, different parts of the book will

speak to you, other parts will motivate you, or inspire you, or kick you in the pants, or make you realize a part of yourself you hadn't been ready to see yet.

I purposely chose the paper type to be written on with my favorite black gel pen. Years don't erase the beloved academic dork within me. So grab your favorite pen and make this copy yours — underline, circle, write notes in the margins, use the section in the back to put reminders or questions for yourself and things to follow-up on, etc.

This book took me 10 years to learn and implement, so you'd be officially bonkers if you thought you could do all these things or add in all these new habits within a certain period of time.

Even if you only take one "way" and turn it into something that makes a positive, long-term and lasting impact on your life, then my work here is done.

# Teaching Ourselves

"The persistent interest in self-improvement is probably the defining trait of the interesting and accomplished person."

— David Cain

They don't teach this stuff in school. We graduate from college, we get a job and we learn on the job. Then we have to figure out a lot of life ourselves. *That's a lot of figuring out to do.*

You move to the city without a roadmap. Your "Freshman and Sophomore years" in a city are hard. You create your own schedule. It takes time. You adjust. And then eventually you forget that there was another way of living before this — that you ever did anything else another way.

When you move to NYC, you know that you have to be at your desk by 9 a.m. and leave by 6 p.m. (if you're lucky), and that's all you know. Other than that, you have to create your own rules.

In some sense, life is a blank canvas, but doesn't it also feel like you only have 10 minutes of space to create your life between getting home from work, eating something, catching up on Netflix or Instagram scrolling and sleeping, only to have to do it all over again the next day?

That's why we're in this together. This book is a self-help book for optimizers, for people with a constant growth mindset, who know there is something else out there.

*Self-Care in the City* | 29

**Remember, your task is to personalize everything.** My 100 ways to thrive might not be your 100 ways, and that's totally cool! Personalization is key for success. It's not one size fits all. You're unique. You're a rockstar. And I know you will continue to evolve and shift in your life year over year, season over season in a way that suits YOU best. Not your boss, not your spouse, not your friends, but YOU.

## Privilege

I'd be remiss if I didn't address privilege in this book. I want to be clear that I'm aware I'm writing to a set of people who lead semi-charmed lives. We work hard, but we're also fortunate. We're lucky to be able to focus on our diversified weekly workout schedule, what kind of organic vegetables to buy and how to sleep well at night in our king-sized beds.

This book will give you the power to change your own life, then pay it forward. Your healthy salad post to Instagram might just inspire your friend, colleague or aunt who lives in the suburbs. Health trends start in the cities and spread on a 10-year lag to the rest of America. (I learned that in nutrition school — isn't that a cool fact?!)

You vote with your dollar and I've spent enough time in the world of investments to truly know that's a fact. The big food industrial companies are starting to respond. Heck, McDonald's even offers avocado now!

So since we're privileged, I believe you have a deep responsibility to

take care of yourself. You have the tools, you have the money . . . why waste it?

Disclaimer: I'm also not a mom and I can't profess to know what it's like to juggle kids and a self-care practice. But I do work with busy, stressed-out people and some of them are moms. I know you can incorporate parts of this book into your busy, demanding life and feel better because of it. As I tell my mom clients, "We can't pour from an empty cup! Self-care is truly an act of survival."



I'm nuts about photos. You too? Let's connect on Instagram @michellefitvista and @selfcareinthecity — let me know you're reading the #SelfCareintheCityBook or how you're implementing the #SelfCareintheCity 100 Ways into your life. I'd be downright *thrilled* to connect with you and will repost some of your photos.



Have a few points or ways you love? Drop by Amazon now and leave a review on your favorite strategies so far. Did *Self-Care in the City* impact your life in some way? Then hop on over to Amazon and take two minutes to write a review. Not many people actually take the time to write reviews, but it would mean the world to me if you did. *A million thanks!*



And don't forget to have **F-U-N**. I admit, I can sometimes take this "be healthy" thing too seriously and over the years, I've been getting better at calling myself out on it and catching myself before I get too dedicated (or isolated) leading my "healthified" lifestyle. Because hey, having *fun* — maybe over laughs and cocktails with your girlfriends — *is part of being healthy and living a balanced, joyful life.*

**LEGAL DISCLAIMER:** Do everything at your own risk. Always consult a doctor for *your specific health concerns*. Any rapid changes to your diet, fitness or lifestyle can impact any medications you're already on. Be safe. Be smart. Go gradual. Listen to your intuition.

**FIND ME:** One-on-one coaching is the heart of my business. If you're reading this book and thinking "omg I just have to work with Michelle so I can finally figure this all out," hit me up, sister, and we'll talk. You can find me over at my website at [www.FitVista.com](http://www.FitVista.com).

**Last but not least, remember this:** I was just like you, a go-getter who wanted it all, who ate well, who worked out a ton, who would jump on a fitness trend or diet trend and follow it religiously, *until I didn't*. Because it didn't have my name on it, because I was trying to white-knuckle my way into someone else's program.

Now I believe and teach the creation of a long-term, *personalized* plan that relies on smart habit change — finding enjoyable, inspired and effective ways that stick with you *for life*.

Again, you're the CEO of your own health. No one else is going to do

this for you. Even your doctor, even your therapist, even your personal trainer. You've got to do the work. You're the detective and you're following your clues and I can tell you, you're on the right path.

I'm so thrilled to be your guide, your health coach and your cheerleader. Paint a picture of *your version of success*. What can you achieve? What does your mind really want?

I can see you ...

- Effortlessly shopping the perimeter of the grocery store for fresh produce. **(Way #25 Aspirational Trip to Whole Foods).**
- Getting in your weekly yoga class for a diversified workout week. **(Way #34 Your Five Weekly Workouts).**

**and**

- Giving yourself a break from your phone so you sleep better at night. **(Way #74 Your Tech Detox Experiment).**

This is the story of how I learned to take care of myself and how you can too. Keep reading — and *let's go for it*. Let's co-create your version of *Self-Care in the City*.

Xo,

michelle

*Self-Care in the City* | 33

this for you. Even your doctor, even your therapist, even your personal trainer. You've got to do the work. You're the detective and you're following your clues and I can tell you, you're on the right path.

I'm so thrilled to be your guide, your health coach and your cheerleader. Paint a picture of *your version of success*. What can you achieve? What does your mind really want?

I can see you ...

- Effortlessly shopping the perimeter of the grocery store for fresh produce. **(Way #25 Aspirational Trip to Whole Foods).**
- Getting in your weekly yoga class for a diversified workout week. **(Way #34 Your Five Weekly Workouts).**

**and**

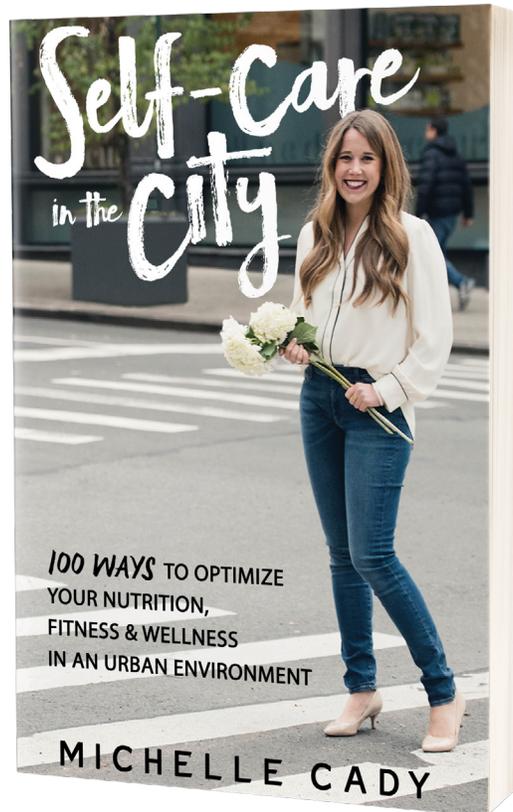
- Giving yourself a break from your phone so you sleep better at night. **(Way #74 Your Tech Detox Experiment).**

This is the story of how I learned to take care of myself and how you can too. Keep reading — and *let's go for it*. Let's co-create your version of *Self-Care in the City*.

Xo,

michelle

*Self-Care in the City* | 33



ready for more self-care in the city?

PURCHASE ON AMAZON!