

# TOP TIPS for Creating Long-term Healthy Habits

Every day, millions of people wake up and brush their teeth. Why do we do this? It's because we have formed a habit! Habit formation means to make an action become automatic.

## WIRING THE BRAIN FOR HEALTHY HABIT CREATION

Whenever we perform a specific task or action, the brain forms neural pathways that strengthen each time we perform the action. Therefore, repetition is key until the action becomes second nature.



## TIPS FOR MAKING HABITS STICK

**HABIT STACKING**  
Add your new behaviour...  
5 minutes of stretching each evening...

**1**

after an old behaviour:  
Brushing your teeth

**GET SPECIFIC**  
Swap: "I'm going to go for a walk after work"

**2**

For: "On Tuesdays and Wednesdays when I get home from work, I'm going to change and go for a 20 min walk around the park"

**START SMALL**  
Prevent burnout and allow yourself time to build up by starting small

**3**

**Starting goal:** Interval run for 15 mins 3x a week before work

**Goal:** Run for 30 mins 3x a week before work

**MAKE IT EASY**  
Once you've identified the small, specific action, make it easy to do.

**4**

E.g., lay out gym clothes so you can slip them on and go

**MAKE IT PHYSICAL**  
Create a physical action for non-physical habits.

**5**

E.g., To practice gratitude get a gratitude journal and keep it where you plan to perform the task

**TRAIN YOUR BRAIN**  
When the brain recognises a pattern, such as a connection between an action and a feeling, it files it in the basal ganglia, a part of the brain where we develop emotions and memories and pattern recognition.

**6**

Brain-training exercises like Sudoku can strengthen the function of the basal ganglia. Set yourself a goal to do it three times a week.

**HEALTHY HABIT INSPIRATION**

Drink a glass of water after your morning alarm

Practice deep breathing for 3 mins after brushing your teeth at night

Stretch for 10 mins before showering each morning

Walk or run for 30 mins upon waking - place clothes by your bed the night before

Eat a protein-rich breakfast each morning



The World Health Organisation defines self-care as “the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider”.

The **Self-Care Iceberg** illustrates the importance of investing time and effort into proactive self-care as it forms the foundations of our health, which reduces the support needed from reactive healthcare.

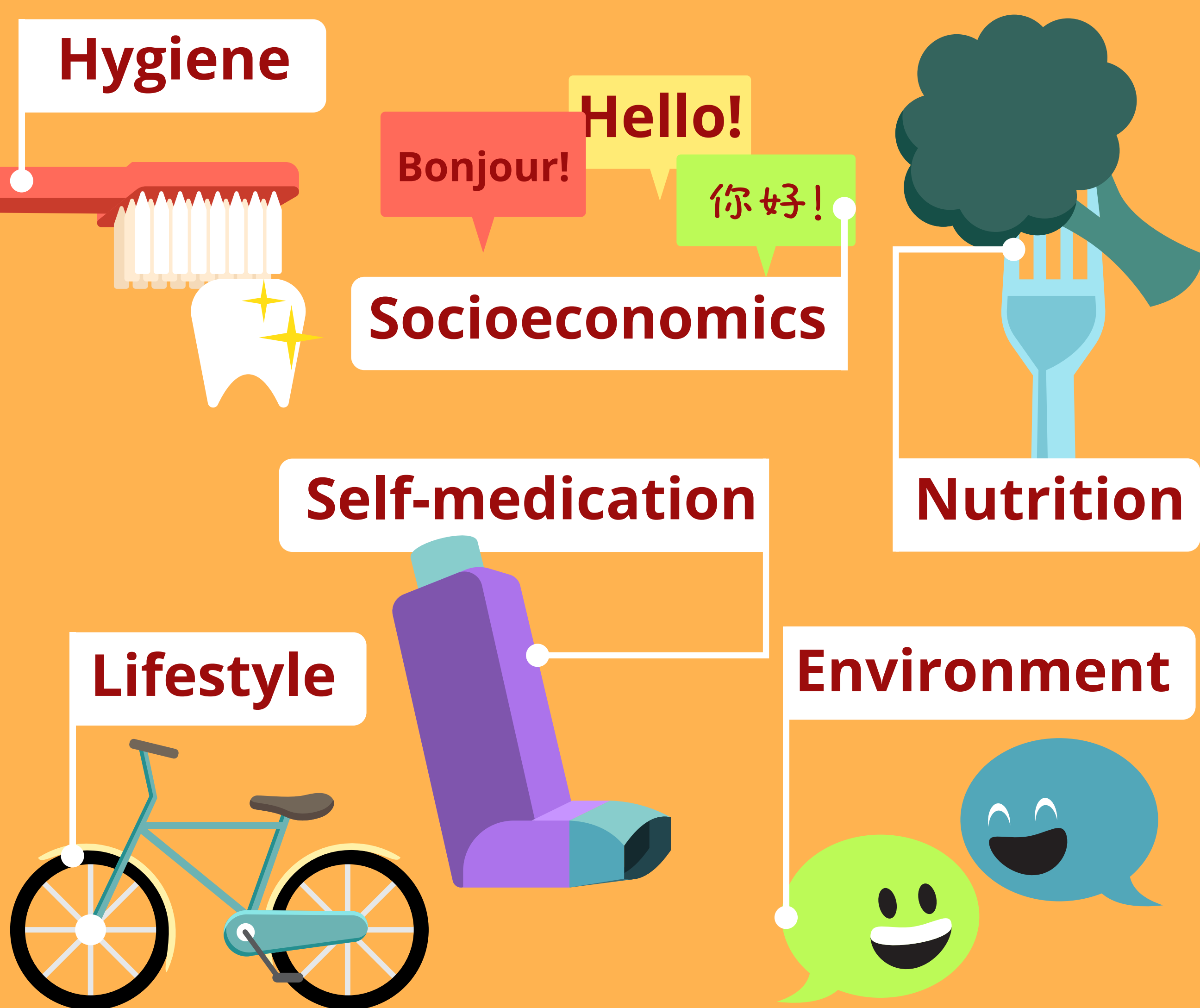
The role of self-care is to prevent or control disease. Globally 71% of deaths are due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which result from physiological, environmental, behavioural and genetic factors meaning that self-care plays a big role in their development and outcome.

With the global shortage of health workers expected to grow, looking after ourselves has never been more important.

**Reactive:**  
Medical care

**Proactive :**  
Self-care

## Six Pillars of Self-Care

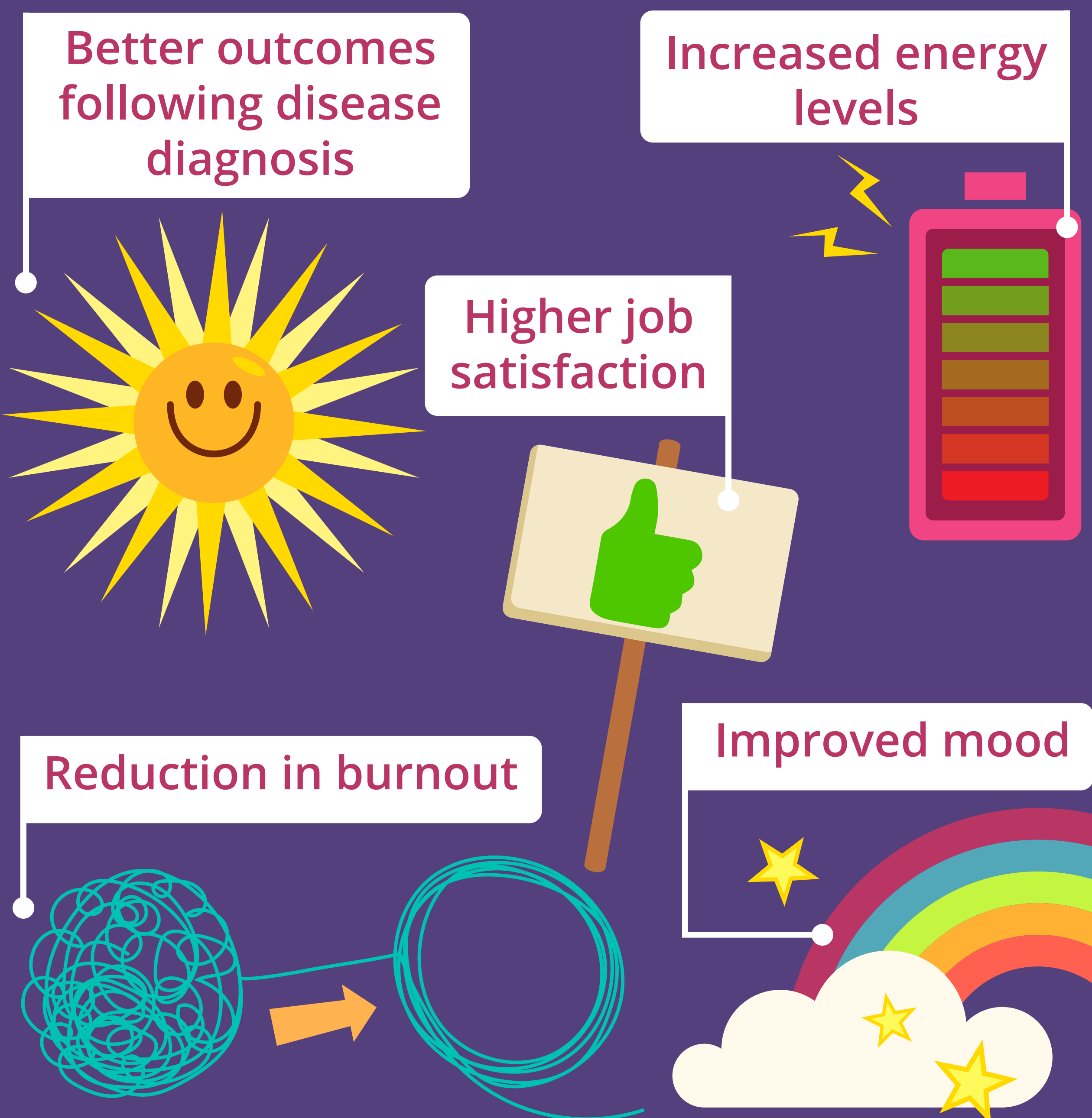


## BARRIERS TO PRACTISING SELF-CARE



## BENEFITS OF SELF-CARE:

Apart from the long-term benefits e.g. reduced risk of NCDs, there are short-term benefits too.



## SIX TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR SELF-CARE

