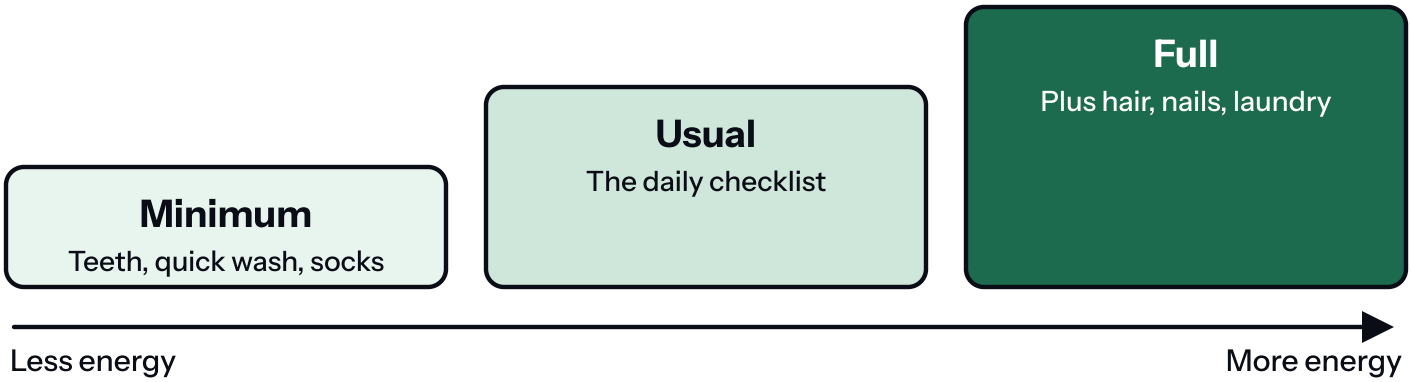
Self-Care Routine

A daily checklist, a smaller version for hard days, and why each habit matters.



Every day

- Brush your teeth twice, for two minutes, with fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth once.
- Wash your armpits, groin and feet.
- Put on fresh underwear and socks.
- Wash your hands after the bathroom and before you eat.

Shower or bathe every day or two.

Morning and evening

In the morning, brush, put on clean underwear and socks, and wash your face and hands. In the evening, wash up or shower, clean between your teeth, and brush last thing before you sleep.

Hard days

Pick the level that fits today. On a minimum day, brush at night, wipe your armpits, groin and feet with a wet cloth, and put on fresh socks. The minimum level still protects you.

Why it matters

Plaque on your teeth causes cavities and gum disease. Warm, damp skin grows bacteria and fungus, which cause odor and infections such as athlete's foot. Washing your hands lowers the spread of colds and stomach bugs.

No shower or little money

Wash at a sink with a wet cloth and soap, and dry well between your toes. Wash a set of socks and underwear in the sink and hang it to dry. In New York City, call 311 to find drop-in centers, which often have showers and supplies. Community health centers such as Callen-Lorde offer dental care on a sliding scale.

Dysphoria

Try the time of day when you feel most at ease in your body, a washcloth instead of a full shower, or a covered mirror. Trans Lifeline offers peer support run by trans people at 877-565-8860.

Sources: American Dental Association (ada.org); CDC handwashing (cdc.gov/handwashing); Mayo Clinic on athlete's foot. General information, not medical advice. Last checked November 2026. Is something unclear or out of date? Use the contact form on our website and choose Guide feedback.