

Top 10 Self-Care Tips for Caregivers

EMORY

Healthy Aging Study

Every day you give so much of yourself to take care of your loved one. You sacrifice time and energy to make sure they have everything they need. Proper self-care promotes better caregiving. Check out 10 ways to stay balanced in your daily routine and prevent burnout.

- 1 Stay healthy by eating right and getting plenty of exercise and sleep.** Many caregivers' immune systems perform poorly due to the amount of stress and inactivity of their routine. Build yourself up by doing at least 20 minutes a day. Try exercises like yoga, walking and or even use home exercise videos. Additionally, make sure to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep.
- 2 Stay connected with your friends and loved ones.** Socialization is a healthy way to keep your brain active and to take a mental break from your routine. Try your best to talk more about yourself instead of your loved one.
- 3 Ask for help.** You are a super hero but not in the supernatural sense! Everyone needs a helping hand sometimes. Assistance can be a great source of relief, even for small tasks.
- 4 Be realistic about your loved one's disease.** This is especially important if the disease is progressive or terminal. It is a good idea to educate yourself about the disease. The more you know about the illness, the more effective you will be in caring for the person.
- 5 Speak to a professional.** Many therapists, social workers and even church/clergy leaders are equipped to help you with your emotional health or concerns.
- 6 Accept your feelings.** It is natural to have some negative feelings about the person you care for and/or about having to be the primary caregiver, do not feel guilty for those emotions.
- 7 Take advantage of respite care services.** Respite care provides a temporary break for caregivers. This can range from a few hours of in-home care to a short stay in a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- 8 Do not neglect your need for quiet time.** Set aside some time for yourself, to meditate, read or do an activity that you enjoy. Remember, taking care of yourself is not a luxury.
- 9 Look at the bright side.** Try to find the positive in each day. You can start by reciting a motivational quote to inspire a positive attitude.
- 10 Set realistic goals.** Do you have a project or a task you want to tackle for yourself? Map out your goals and create a game plan to help you achieve it. Best practice would be to give yourself a reasonable timeframe and break the goal into small steps.



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