



Tips for Caregivers

Caregiving can be both physically and emotionally exhausting. Whether you are a caregiver for a parent, partner, spouse, sibling, child, friend or grandparent suffering from a chronic illness or disability, there are things you can do to help you and your family feel balanced.

What You Can Do

Seek Collaboration. If you care for others at the expense of yourself, no one will benefit. However, a healthier, happier, more balanced you can translate into a healthier, happier, more balanced family. Find an activity that you enjoy, and carve out time for it on a regular basis. Make sure your family members know that this time is off-limits unless there's an emergency.

Find support. Seek out other caregivers to share stories and experiences. Reach out to family and friends. See if there is a caregiver support group in your area. If not, consider an online support group.

Prioritize. Rather than trying to do it all, and feeling drained and stressed in the process, prioritize your To Dos each day. Aside from your daily tasks—going to work, making dinner, administering medications, etc.—identify one or two things that you want to accomplish that day. Keeping it at one or two things (and no more) helps keep your To Dos manageable. You may also feel a greater sense of accomplishment by completing the extra thing on your list for the day rather than constantly feeling defeated by all the things you didn't get to.

Make (quality) time for your family. Remember to distinguish between quality time versus quantity of time. Thirty minutes of building a fort with your youngster will be more meaningful than simply being in the presence of each other all afternoon. Try to find some time each day where you are actively engaged with your family members. It may help to keep the same planned time or activity. The 'tradition' of the activity or time helps keep it going and provides a consistent expectation of when you will have your special time together.

Here are some ideas:

- Turn shared meals into family time. Consider instituting a 'no screens at the table' rule to get the most out of this family time.
- Plan an evening out with your spouse once a week or even once a month. Use this time to connect as a couple.
- Identify activities where every member of the family can be involved, such as evening walks, movie night or game night.
- Bedtime can be a nice quiet time to spend some quality time with your kids. Get comfortable, talk about the day, read a book...

Create 'spaces.' Organization can help you feel more empowered to handle the day to day. One way to organize all of the stuff of multiple family members is to create spaces:

- Organize by person. Keep each family member's items in a designated space.
- Keep a notebook or binder specific to each family member. Anytime there is a meeting, phone call, appointment, etc., have this notebook with you and take notes. Include a pocket where you can store receipts, prescription orders, and other important documents.
- De-clutter. Every week or month, go through spaces and get rid of things that are no longer needed.

For more information about self-care, and caregiving tips and tools, visit the website or call the toll free number listed below.



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