

# Caring for the Caregiver



Caring for another person can be overwhelming and leave you physically and emotionally exhausted. Taking good care of yourself is the first step in ensuring you can continue to provide high-quality care for your clients. Use these tips to maintain the energy and balance needed to provide reliable, compassionate care.

**Create Balance.** Working as a professional caregiver takes an enormous amount of energy. When you're feeling drained, take time for something you enjoy. Little moments of relaxation, whether you're curling up with a good book or enjoying your favorite dessert or music can be an effective pick me up.

**Arrange your time.** Plan your schedule to allow for enough time to rest and take care of your own needs. Squeezing shifts too tightly together may lead to exhaustion.

**Work out.** Exercise has many healthful benefits, from reducing stress hormones to keeping your energy level up. Most caregivers do a lot of lifting and moving. Staying fit helps you avoid injuring yourself. Even simple stretching and breathing exercises can help.

**Use local resources.** Many communities have free or low-cost services for the elderly and disabled. Be aware of your client's options for transportation, home-delivered meals, or phone check-ins and discuss them with the office.

**Encourage autonomy.** Sometimes it's faster to do something for your client rather than let them do it slowly, with your help. Encourage your client be as self-sufficient as possible while you stand ready to assist. Then celebrate their accomplishment together.

Working as a professional caregiver can be rewarding and meaningful. Give yourself the ability to offer that care without risking burnout or overload by taking good care of yourself.