



Me Time Monday™ Tip Sheet for Caregivers in support of the Healthy Monday Campaign

Stress Relief Tips

How Caregivers Spell “Stress Relief”

In the world of caregiving, stress is the number one complaint when it comes to your health and wellness. While finding stress relief is just one more thing you have to do, if you don't, it can seriously impact your ability to continue caring for your loved one. Studies show that caregivers are twice as likely as the general population to develop chronic illness such as heart disease or cancer due to prolonged stress.

So how do caregivers spell “Stress Relief?”

Start by taking a Caregiver Stress Test developed by the [American Medical Association](#) that can be found on their Web site. If you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease, there is a specific Caregiver Stress Test you can find on the [Alzheimer's Association](#) Web site as well. If you score off the charts, it is time to decompress before your engine blows.

Here are a few tips to banish the stress:

- **Talk to a “friend”** – a spouse, adult child, sibling, neighbor or other friendly face who can give you a shoulder to cry on or help get your mind off things for even a few minutes.
- **Join a support group of other caregivers** – if you are frustrated, angry or depressed, it helps to let off steam by talking to other caregivers who understand.
- **Try yoga, tai chi, or meditation** - just calmly sit in a quiet room and listen to your breathing. Dr. Mehmet Oz in his best-selling book, “You – The Owner's Manual” advises taking 10 deep, long breaths a day – it will help take your mind on a journey to a happy place.
- **Do something that soothes you physically** – you'll be amazed at how it calms your mind. A bath is great or if you don't have the time, just running your hands under warm water for a few minutes can relax you.
- **Get enough sleep** – 7 to 8 hours is recommended. If you find your nights tossing and turning or you cannot get those eyes closed, try drinking green tea an hour before bed or having a lavender pillow near your head which aids relaxation.

Can Stress Be A Caregivers “Frenemy?”

In a recent study published in the journal, *Stroke*, it was reported that a full 90 percent of those caring for someone who had suffered a stroke said that their caregiving enabled them to appreciate life more. Many also reported that it helped them develop a more positive attitude.

Friend or foe? Stress is a caregiver's biggest enemy – become a stress-buster and it will improve your health and wellness.

For other Me Time Monday Tips from the Caregiving Club, visit: <http://www.caregivingclub.com/me-time-monday/>

For more information about the Healthy Mondays campaigns, visit: www.mondaycampaigns.org

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