



Kupuna Consulting  
Senior Advisors

# QUICK STRESS RELIEF TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Caregivers can experience emotional, physical and behavioral changes over time. Eating habits are altered and sleeping patterns shift, impacting the thoughts, emotions and overall health of the caregiver. Recognize the signs of caregiver stress and create a balanced life where caregiving is tempered by periods of rest and rejuvenation.

**Here are four quick tips to help caregivers alleviate stress:**

- 1. Exercise:** Any exercise is beneficial in the battle against stress. Be attuned to biorhythms and find time to exercise and relieve tension. Keep a pair of sneakers by the front door and walk to get a change of scenery when the opportunity presents itself.

Don't go it alone! Find someone to accompany you and act as a source of encouragement to ensure that you're consistently exercising. Walking to relieve stress will become a habit in approximately three to four weeks.

- 2. Speak Up:** Caregivers must make their needs known and not be afraid to ask for help. People around you are often unaware you are drowning. Other family members or friends could help lighten the load sometimes and just need to be asked.

Dividing or distributing tasks such as shopping, paying bills and direct care reduces the pressure on the primary caregiver. Graciously accept help when help is offered. Do not act as if everything is under control when it is not. Learn to give up control to others and not micromanage delegated tasks.

- 3. Take Some Alone Time:** Actually set a standard, scheduled aside time to take breaks and take time for yourself. Change settings and get out of the house even if only for a few hours. A change in scenery will improve your mood and behavior. Visiting friends to talk and laugh will provide relief from a stressful situation. Take time to enjoy yourself. A little pampering will provide a sense of renewal. Give yourself a break and plan time away from the situation.

Periodic mini-vacations where the burden of caregiving is lifted can make a big difference. They relieve stress and alternative care arrangements are easier to arrange for the shorter span of time. Do not overlook the benefits of something calming like yoga or meditation.

- 4. Focus on Positive thinking:** This is, of course, easier said than done. In your situation, there are some fundamentals that can't be changed. However, break the loop of negative thinking by focusing on things that can be changed. Look for the positives in every situation, and do not dwell on negative thoughts over the things you can't fix.

Release pent up feelings of aggression or frustration through a positive outlet. Practice acceptance and reduce feelings of resentment. Continuously looking for answers or asking "why" drains needed energy and creates unresolved questions that may never be answered. Do not allow caregiving to be your only role in life. Take time to pursue activities that allows for personal growth and development.

You must take care of yourself before you can take care of others. Keep up with doctor's appointments, get regular exercise and eat right. Good sleeping habits help maintain good health during times of stress. If the caregiver is rundown and worn, out the quality of care diminishes quickly. There is a great deal of pressure and stress when caregiving for person that is sick or elderly. Being a caregiver takes patience and sacrifice. Maintaining good health both mentally and physically is important for all involved!

## Seek Assistance

If you are suffering from caregiver burnout, there are alternative arrangements that can be made to provide support for you and your loved ones. The professionals at Kupuna Consulting, Certified Senior Advisors, can help to identify caregiver stress and provide recommendations for finding a better balance to staying healthy.

For more information or to schedule a no-cost consultation, call 732-655-4770.