

Caregivers and Exercise—Take Time for Yourself

Taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a caregiver. Finding some time for regular exercise can be very important to your overall physical and mental well-being.

Physical activity can help you:

- Increase your energy level so you can keep up with your daily caregiving activities.
- Reduce feelings of depression and stress, while improving your mood and overall well-being.
- Maintain and improve your physical strength and fitness.
- Manage and prevent chronic diseases and conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis.
- Improve or maintain some aspects of cognitive function, such as your ability to shift quickly between tasks and plan activities.

Some ways for caregivers to be physically active:

- Take exercise breaks throughout the day. Try three 10-minute “mini-workouts” instead of 30 minutes all at once.
- Make an appointment with yourself to exercise. Set aside specific times and days of the week for physical activity.
- Exercise with a friend and get the added benefit of emotional support.
- Ask for help at home so you can exercise.
- If possible, find ways to be active with the person you’re caring for. Both of you can benefit from physical activity!



Quick Tip

Pick an activity you really enjoy to make exercise something you *want* to do, not *have* to do.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Read more tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Order a free exercise guide or DVD.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

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