

Soci t  Alzheimer Society

Caregivers: how to care for yourselves in the new year

Taking care of someone with dementia requires time and energy. You always need to be ready for changes in behaviour.

But studies show this constant diligence takes its toll, with 35% of caregivers reporting declines in general health. This rate increased to 60% for live-in caregivers.

You are the most important person in the life of someone with Alzheimer's disease. Here are 8 tips that can help you look after yourself:



1. **Know what resources are available.** Contact your [local Alzheimer Society](#) to find out what's available in your area, like support groups, respite care and one-on-one counselling.
2. **Get help.** Whether it's someone to walk the dog, do the dishes, or offer a sympathetic ear, ask for what you need.
3. **Use relaxation techniques.** Try visualization (picturing a place that is peaceful), meditation and breathing exercises. Studies show that these techniques can lower the heart beat and decrease blood pressure. So go ahead and "om!"
4. **Get moving.** Physical activity reduces stress and improves overall well-being.
5. **Share information and feelings with others.** This will help friends and family understand more about the disease and what you are going through.
6. **Make time for yourself.** Staying connected to friends, family and activities that you love is so important, even if it's only for 30 minutes a week.
7. **Become an educated caregiver.** Learn as much as you can about the disease. Your [local Alzheimer Society](#) can help.
8. **Take care of yourself.** Go to the doctor regularly, watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. You need to stay healthy.

If you experience a crisis situation, contact your [local Alzheimer Society](#).
At night or on the weekend, call Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000).