

## Caregiver Tips

Remember, caring for your parent means taking care of yourself! Try these caregiver tips to help you better balance elder care responsibilities with your personal, work and family needs.

1. **Invest in your own well-being.** Take time to nurture yourself daily with a healthy diet, exercise and adequate rest and sleep.
2. **Organize your responsibilities and priorities.** Develop an organized plan for addressing your work, family, elder care and personal needs. Use a time management appointment/calendar book to identify where and when you need to be. You won't have to "remember to remember" if you can refer to your appointment book at a glance.
3. **Use community assistance.** Local programs and services for aging individuals are a valuable resource for employed caregivers. Discover how they can help you help your loved one.
4. **Make time for leisure and recreational opportunities.** Seek the support of family and friends in carrying out routine household jobs and errands. "Bank" this time for private pleasures such as reading a book, taking a walk, meditating or listening to music.
5. **Remember to laugh and smile.** Humor can reduce the stresses associated with caregiving and help you keep your situation in perspective.
6. **Allow yourself to be angry.** Sometimes things do not always go well. Caregiving can evoke a wide range of emotions, including anger. It is neither "good" nor "bad." It just is.
7. **Maintain an active social life.** Social isolation can become a problem when you are providing elder care. This lack of time and energy for many employed caregivers causes them to decline invitations and stop seeing friends. Yet friends can provide you with the very understanding, support and perspective you need. Take the time to be with friends.
8. **Box up your worries.** A cornerstone of elder care involves worrying: worrying about your parent's physical, emotional and psychological well-being, worrying about balancing your work and personal life responsibilities and worrying about meeting your own needs and the needs of your spouse or partner and children. If

worrisome thoughts are preventing you from sleeping, try putting them in an imaginary, lidded box before going to bed. They cannot disturb you once inside and you can open up the box at a later time to inventory your worry list if you so desire.

**9. Acknowledge all that you do.** It's human nature to focus on what hasn't been done—the remaining items on your "To Do" list, rather than all of the activities you have accomplished. Remember to give credit to and appreciate yourself for all the roles you perform and all of the tasks you carry out. Caregivers are creative, resourceful, generous, sensitive and special people. Elder Care and Life Cycle Resources would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to you for all that you do.