

Caregiver Self-Care

It is very important to remember to take care of yourself. Caregiving is hard! Caregivers often feel guilty for taking care of their own needs, but taking time for yourself will allow you to be a better caregiver for your loved one. This is not being selfish. If you become exhausted, develop health issues, or grow resentful, it will not benefit anyone.

Some things you can do for yourself include eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, doing yoga, meditating, going on walks, meeting up with friends, planning outings with your loved one, talking about your challenges with close family and friends, and attending an ALS caregiver support group.



Asking for Help

The demands of caregiving on top of everyday tasks can feel overwhelming. As your caregiving needs increase, trying to do everything on your own can be difficult. It is important to learn to ask for help when you need it.

Finding the time to take care of yourself may mean scheduling respite care, which is any type of short-term caregiving assistance that provides rest and relief for you.

Respite care could mean a few hours out of the house each day or week to exercise, schedule your own appointments, run errands, or go to lunch with a friend. Or it could mean a few days away to simply relax and recharge. Respite care can be provided by professional caregivers, healthcare professionals, family, friends, or volunteers.

It is important to make sure that whoever is caring for your loved one has the skills and training to provide the level of care needed. You will also want to explain important care details so that you feel comfortable leaving.

If you feel uncomfortable asking for help or prefer not to coordinate all the details, you can ask a family member or friend to help coordinate caregiving coverage for you. There are online calendars and tools that can make it easier. Finding greater balance and personal time may also mean asking for assistance with chores, meals, or other tasks.

If you are hesitant to schedule caregiving help because you feel guilty, it is important to continue to remind yourself that you are not being selfish. To be a better caregiver, you need and deserve to recharge so you can be in good physical, mental, and emotional health.

If your loved one is resistant to caregivers other than you, it is important to talk about it and explain that you want to help—and that you also need help. If your loved one is still resistant, you can ask the social worker or another professional at your ALS clinic or ALS Arizona for advice.

Your Mental and Emotional Health

ALS caregivers often feel overwhelmed and experience a wide range of emotions. Whenever you feel you could use some extra support, try reaching out and connecting with others, whether a family member, close friend, doctor, social worker, counselor, religious or spiritual figure, or fellow ALS caregiver. It can be very helpful to share with others.

When your loved one is diagnosed with ALS, it is normal to worry about what will happen to your loved one, your family, your finances, and other aspects of your life. However, if you begin to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety that are affecting your daily life, it is important to discuss these symptoms with a therapist, social worker, doctor, or member of your ALS clinic team or organization.

Your primary care doctor or mental health professional may suggest counseling and/or taking medication that can help ease your symptoms. If you decide to take medication, do so under the guidance of your doctor or mental health professional.

Get Local Support

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