

6 steps to reduce caregiver stress

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(HealthDay)—Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease can be mentally and physically exhausting, so you should take steps to manage and reduce stress, according to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

"Finding ways to manage and reduce [stress](#) is of paramount importance for every Alzheimer's [caregiver](#). Untreated stress can lead to physical, mental and emotional caregiver burnout," Jennifer Reeder, director of educational and [social services](#), said in a foundation news release.

The foundation offers the following six tips to help caregivers enhance their stress-coping skills:

Be adaptable and positive. Your attitude influences stress levels for both you and your loved one. Being able to "go with the flow" will help both of you stay relaxed. If you get aggravated or agitated, odds are that your loved one will, too. Try to adjust to situations in constructive ways.

Deal with what you can control. Remember that some things are out of your control, such as the coronavirus pandemic. What you can control is how you respond and react to these outside factors.

Set realistic goals and take it slow. Everything can't be resolved immediately and it doesn't need to be, so don't have unrealistic expectations. Set priorities and practical goals, do your best to achieve them, and take things one day at a time.

Take care of your health. Too little rest, [poor diet](#) and lack of exercise can worsen stress and cause other health problems. Try to get enough sleep, eat right, drink plenty of water and be active. You can't provide good care if you don't look after yourself.

Clear your mind. Exercise, yoga, meditation, listening to music and deep breathing can help relax your mind and reduce stress. Identify what works for you and do it on a regular basis.

Share your feelings. Talking with [family members](#), trusted friends or a professional can also help relieve stress.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Aging has more about [Alzheimer's caregiving](#).

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