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# 7 Ways To Lower Stress As A Caregiver

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Caregivers often don't have a lot of time for elaborate self-care routines. But when you're caring for someone else, stress can build up quickly—and quietly.

Over time, stress can build up, leading to caregiver burnout. That's why we've put together seven stress-busting **Microsteps** that you can complete in minutes. These may seem simple, but they can create powerful shifts in how you feel, think, and respond throughout your day.

**Taking a breathing break.** One study found that when caregivers practiced slow, steady breathing each day, their nervous systems calmed down and their quality of life improved. Just a few minutes of focused breathing can help reset your stress response and restore your sense of balance.

**Going on a walk.** Step outside and notice something vast or beautiful — the sky, a tall tree, a great song, even a photo of nature. Awe helps you feel connected to something bigger than yourself and quickly shifts your brain out of stress mode. Even short bursts can boost mood, calm your nervous system, and lower inflammation.

**Writing a thank-you note.** Research shows that when caregivers take a moment to reflect on gratitude, they feel more resilient and less overwhelmed. Whether you're thanking a friend, a nurse, or even yourself, that small act may shift your mindset and ease the weight of caregiving.

**Stretching your body.** Taking a stretch break – rolling your shoulders, stretching your neck or lifting your arms – is a potential way to release tension. It may be even more effective if you focus on slowing your breath while stretching. Taken together, these actions may lower stress and enhance feelings of relaxation.

**Drinking a glass of water.** Staying hydrated doesn’t just benefit your body — it also soothes your mind. People who drink five or more cups of water daily have a lower risk of depression, while even mild dehydration can affect memory, mood and reaction time.

**Chewing gum.** Chewing gum might do more than freshen your breath—it could help calm your mind. Studies have shown that gum chewing activates brain regions involved in stress regulation and, when chewed during stressful situations, it may promote feelings of calm and reduce anxiety.

**Taking a self-compassion break.** Place a hand on your heart and offer yourself a few kind words. Research shows that caregivers who practice self-compassion feel less overwhelmed and cope more effectively, making them more resilient in the face of daily stress.

So next time you’re feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or stretched thin, consider trying one or all the short calming routines we’ve shared here. Even on the busiest days, taking just a few moments for yourself can make a meaningful difference—because

caring for others starts with caring for you.

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