



CAREGIVER NEWS

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5 New Year's Resolutions For Family Caregivers

By Huffington Post

New Year's resolutions get a bad rap, and that's understandable, considering the high rate of failure. As a caregiver for a senior loved one, you may be tempted to forgo the resolutions this year. After all, why add more to your already substantial to-do list? But chucking your healthy resolutions isn't such a great idea. Study after study has revealed the many health risks family caregivers face - the chronic stress often caused by this role can lead to a whole host of health problems, and depression is common. If you've been on an airplane, you know to put on your own mask before doing the same for passengers who need your help. In everyday life, it's the same principle - you have to help yourself before you can help anyone else.

The following resolutions address some of the common obstacles family caregivers face. Even if you only manage one or two, it just might help you be a better caregiver, and a happier person.

1. Prioritize your own physical and mental health

Family caregivers tend to be big-hearted people willing to devote themselves to ensuring a loved one's well being, often at the expense of their own health. And the chronic, daily stress experienced by many caregivers means they're also at greater risk of many serious illnesses, from diabetes and heart disease to cancer.

Maybe your first priority is weight loss and physical fitness, lowering your cholesterol, or finding a therapist who can help you cope with stress and boost your mental health. The sooner you take care of your own health needs, the better you'll feel and more equipped you'll be to care for your loved one.

2. Get more sleep

Sleep has a huge impact on overall health, yet for too many Americans, a regular good night's sleep is nothing more than a dream. For caregivers juggling myriad responsibilities, it's even tougher to get the recommended 7-8 hours of slumber nightly.

But getting more shut-eye is key to improving your health and happiness. Try starting small, by setting your bedtime 15 minutes earlier than usual, then add another 15 minutes and so on until you're logging at least 7 hours of sleep.

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3. Schedule more “me” time

Time for yourself is a rare commodity for most family caregivers. When you’re not caring for your loved one, you’re taking on other responsibilities. Carving out some time just for you — at least once a week — is essential for your health and well-being.

Respite care can give you some much-needed time off while ensuring your loved one is in good hands. There are plenty of forms of respite care available today, from asking a trusted loved one for help to adult day care or short-term assisted living stays.

4. Spend more quality time with your loved one

If you’re like many family caregivers, you’re so busy taking care of your loved one’s daily needs that you’re not really spending quality time together. Rather than letting the hours with your loved one get consumed by monotonous care tasks, make a point of creating fond memories with that person.

Planning a fun activity once a week with your loved one that gives the time to connect is a good start. That could include looking over old photo albums together, baking, exploring a local museum together, or going on a scenic drive.

5. Plan for Your Loved One’s Future Care

It’s a tough pill to swallow, but there will likely come a day when you’re no longer able to care for your loved one. This may happen due to your own physical limitations, or as their symptoms become too advanced for you to handle alone.

Planning ahead and researching care options for your loved one could save a lot of time and stress in the future. Depending on your situation, that could mean in-home care or assisted living. And while no one wants to contemplate it, it’s wise to designate an alternate person to care for your loved one in your will.



Four winter safety tips to protect seniors from injury

Posted by Scott Stueber

As we age, cold weather can be extremely dangerous. Plummeting temperatures can lead to, icy sidewalks, hypothermia and other serious injuries.

If you have elderly neighbors, friends, or relatives, check in with them this winter and share these winter safety tips.

1. Dress in layers. Older adults can lose body heat quickly and be unaware that a change in body temperature is occurring, making them susceptible to hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when our body temperature gets below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Consequently, serious health problems can occur, such as a heart attack, kidney problems, or death. Selecting the right number of layers is important. Dressing in multiple layers will help keep them warm and reduce heat loss.

2. Keep the furnace running. Experts recommend keeping the indoor temperature around 68 degrees Fahrenheit at a minimum. While many elderly people live on a budget, it's important to keep their homes warm. Consider helping with some small home projects to keep heating bills down. Such projects may include closing vents, putting plastic on windows, or placing rolled towels or blankets in front of doors to reduce drafts.

3. Space heaters can be dangerous. During the winter months, home fires increase due to the use of alternative heat sources. People 65 and older are three times more likely to die or be injured in a home fire.

In addition, if they're using a fireplace to heat their home, make sure they have a large screen to prevent sparks from landing on their flooring.

Lastly, make sure they have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of their home.

4. Prevent broken hips. Broken hips are a common injury for the elderly, but can lead to other health complications. To prevent injuries, shoes with non-skid soles should be worn.

If they like to venture outside for a little exercise, encourage them to stay inside until snow and ice have been cleared from their property. Lastly, recommend that they stay inside after dark.

Sing-A-Long At Cedarbrook

Today as we sang,
I looked upon your frail, lovely face
And your tears began to flow
At the memories
That only you could know
Came pouring out
Through your eyes
And made me also realize
I, too, will be growing old
When my dreams
Will have vanished
And I will feel all alone
Please then, "Dear Lord,"
Send someone to hold my hand
Today as I held yours
And when they sing to me,
I will know
Someone really cares
As I did today,
When we sang "Silver Threads"
Among the Gold
For all of us, who are growing old.

