



Stress-Relieving Tips for Caregivers and Seniors

As a caregiver, you show so much love and respect for your senior family member. However, you also need to show yourself a little love and respect to stay healthy. Self-care is an often-missed step in the routines of caregivers and seniors alike, but you can use yoga, meditation, and wellness habits to satisfy so many of your self-care needs. Here's how to make it easy.

Take Yoga Classes Online

Mobility issues can make it especially difficult for seniors and caregivers to get to their classes. However, there are tons of online yoga classes you can take instead of visiting a studio. You will need to pay for some classes, but many online tutorials are either free or at least offer a free trial to new users. Look for [meditation resources](#) as well to make practicing this habit more accessible. Guided meditations are a great way for beginners to learn how to focus their mind while working on their breathing. That breathwork is key for maximizing the stress relief you feel during and after a yoga or meditation session. So, really focus on it during practice.

Creating Your Own Practice Space is Easy

You have to set yourself up for success before starting any new practice. For yoga and meditation, the hardest step is often stepping onto your mat. If you have your mat set up in a [dedicated practice space](#), however, you will be more motivated to schedule time to do so. To serve as an inspiring yoga and meditation area, your chosen space needs to be free of clutter and full of all the right light. Dimmer light is usually best, but if you or your senior family member has low vision, you may want to opt for lighting that will [reduce fall hazards](#). Falls are a [leading cause](#) of serious injury for older adults, and a fall during yoga could send your senior loved one to the hospital. Of course, if you fall, you may not be able to care for your loved one any longer, so make sure you have proper lighting and use mobility modifications if needed.

Yoga and Meditation Can Be Very Therapeutic

Mental health is important for seniors and caregivers, and yoga and meditation provide [proven emotional benefits](#). Since caregivers and seniors are prone to depression and anxiety, meditation and yoga can help prevent and manage these conditions. If these feelings begin to overwhelm either of you, however, speak to a mental health professional to fully address your concerns and prevent caregiver burnout or [more serious depression](#). When it seems like darkness and despair is taking over your life, you need more than yoga and meditation to truly feel better, but you also need these self-care practices to enhance your overall treatment.

Other Healthy Habits

It doesn't matter how many times you participate in yoga or how well you learn how to meditate. Your health is also directed by habits, such as eating well and getting enough sleep. Unfortunately, both of these often take a back seat to caring for a senior loved one. Sleep deprivation and malnutrition can also negatively affect your exercise efforts.

Remember the old adage, "you are what you eat?" This sentiment is not hyperbole, and the things you put into your body affects your [gut microbiota](#), which, in turn, plays a significant role in your body's other functions. The Center for Ecogenetics & Environmental Health at the University of Washington explains that this microbiome [regulates the immune system](#) and controls the production of B vitamins. Fill you plate with pre- and probiotic foods, lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and plenty of fresh produce. Leave the boxed and take-out dinners for special occasions.

Sleep also plays many crucial roles in the human body, although exactly how isn't fully understood. What is known, however, is that sleep directly impacts both physical and mental health. Sleep is so important, in fact, that the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute states, "Your immune system [relies on sleep](#) to stay healthy." Make a point to ensure that you and your entire family get it least seven hours each night, and keep in mind that a sleep deficit of a single hour can have negative consequences for your health.

If you are looking for more balance and calm in your life as a caregiver, give yoga and meditation a try. Yoga has so many perks for your physical health and meditating will boost your mental well-being. So overall, these two habits -- along with eating right and getting enough sleep -- are a good idea for caregivers and seniors.

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