

# 5 ways to practice self-care during the holidays

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Some say the holiday season is the most wonderful time of the year. But for many, the holiday season can be a rollercoaster ride of emotions and responsibilities. If you're a caregiver, this time of the year can be even more stressful and emotionally taxing. As we recognize November as National Family Caregiver Month, take a look at some tips for self-care during this holiday season.



The holidays can be a hectic time for those caring for children or aging parents. Take steps to ensure those who care for others care for themselves, too. (Photo: File, York Daily Record)

- 1. Take care of yourself.** Caregivers have the natural tendency to put others first. This often means missed doctor's appointments, poor nutrition and inadequate sleep. In order to be the best caregiver you can be, you need to take care of yourself as well. Keep regular doctor's appointments, eat healthy, exercise and set time aside for yourself to rejuvenate.
- 2. Prioritize your calendar.** The holiday season can be a time of parties, get-togethers, shopping and more. It's easy to over-commit yourself to all of these activities with family and friends and get overwhelmed. This is when it becomes important to prioritize. It may even be helpful to make a list of all the activities and responsibilities, prioritize them, and decide what is a must, as opposed to what can be skipped. Saying no to the latter will free up your schedule for the things that fulfill you the most.
- 3. You're not alone.** Being a caregiver can be extremely rewarding, but it can be extremely taxing as well. You are not alone. Seek out local support groups and opportunities to socialize with other caregivers who will be able to understand what you're going through.
- 4. Ask for, and accept, help.** When someone asks if they can help, say yes. Or if someone offers to do something for you, let them. Caregivers need help, too. You don't have to do everything on your own. Ask family and friends to help you when they can. This will ease the stress you are feeling, and allow you to focus on your most important tasks.
- 5. Talk to a professional.** If you are struggling and need additional help, reach out to a professional. Therapists, social workers, case managers, doctors and clergy can be great resources for working through the concerns you're dealing with, identifying other resources and developing appropriate coping skills.

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