



# Wellbeing Insights

*Living a Better, More Vibrant Life*

## Self-Care for the Caregiver



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Caregiver Support Month**

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Caregiving is one of the most challenging roles many of us will face in our lifetime. Oftentimes becoming a caregiver happens suddenly, leaving us feeling unprepared and overwhelmed by the task. While stepping up to offer care, compassion and advocacy for our loved ones is a magnificent gift that we are eager to give, it can also be very stressful. In observance of National Caregiver Support Month, we've got some tips for when you are battling stress, burnout, guilt and other challenges in your caregiving role so that you can be at your best.

#### **Be accepting of situations and emotions.**

It can be easy to tailspin into overwhelming toxic thoughts while trying to rationalize a loved one's illness or the burden of caregiving, asking "Why them?" or "Why me?" However, dwelling on the things you can't change can quickly drain you of energy and hope. Try instead to accept the situation and think about the ways it has made you a stronger person, brought you closer to your loved one or other family members, or allowed you to give back and



# Self-Care for Caregiver

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show your love. Since you cannot wish away your loved one's illness or force your family members to help out more, you'll find it beneficial to focus on the things you can control.

A very common emotion faced by caregivers is guilt. Guilt may be experienced for a variety of reasons, for example, believing you could have done more in the past or that you could be doing more now. Whatever the circumstance, know that this is a perfectly normal reaction. Again, focus on what you can control in this moment and reassure yourself that you are doing the very best that you can.

## Take care of yourself.

Carving out time to rest, do things you enjoy and take care of your own health may seem like impossible luxuries to a busy caregiver. However, you owe it to yourself and the one you are caring for; you cannot give your best care when you're feeling emotionally or physically depleted.

Making time for breaks will help you decompress from the stress of caregiving. Visit with a friend, get out of the house, take a long bath, get a massage, exercise, journal, take a nap, etc. Whatever it may be, don't treat these breaks as a luxury but rather a priority. Schedule in blocks of time each day dedicated to your self-care.

In addition to daily you time, it's important to take care of your health. Keep up beneficial daily rituals: get plenty of sleep, drink water, keep up on your own doctor's visits, brush your teeth, take your medications, etc.

## Get the help and support you need.

When the care of your loved one is on the line, you may find it hard to trust anyone else with responsibilities or struggle with feeling like an inconvenience or burden to others. Enter science, which has definitively proven that reaching out, connecting and leaning on others in tough times helps reduce stress tremendously and is mutually beneficial for both the person giving and the one receiving the help. Start by deciding where you are willing to relinquish some control. Have a small list of tasks ready so that if someone offers help you can feel comfortable saying yes. Don't rely on family or friends, no matter how well-meaning they may be, to automatically know what

you need. If you see a way they could pitch in, speak up and ask for what you need. You may also consider contacting a respite agency or reaching out to your employer's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which can help you locate the resources you need to effectively care for your loved one and offer emotional support.

Joining a support group is another great way to air your troubles and get valuable advice as you discover you are not alone. Here are some places you can find a local support group:

- The social work department of the hospital
- Adult day care centers (even if you don't use their services)
- Non-profits that deal with your care recipient's condition (e.g., Alzheimer's, ALS, MS)
- Area agencies on aging
- Your faith community



## On the Menu

# Oranges

Oranges are the most widely cultivated fruit in the world! Spanish explorers are responsible for bringing oranges to America in the 16th century. Their first appearance was in Florida, and then in the 18th century they were brought to California by Spanish missionaries. Both states remain known for this juicy, fruity favorite. Although oranges are now readily available year-round, nationwide, this wasn't always the case. Prior to the 20th century, oranges were quite expensive and had a reputation as a Christmas treat.

They have healthy doses of vitamins C and A which help provide the

immune boost many of us need during the winter months. In addition, oranges can help fight viral infections, maintain healthy skin, keep your eyes in tip-top shape and protect against cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Enjoying this sunny treat on a cold day will surely help put a smile on your face, as well.

### Keep It Fresh

Oranges don't necessarily have to be bright orange to be good. The texture of the orange is more important. Select oranges with smoothly textured skin that are firm and heavy for their size. These will have more flavor and juice than those with a

spongy texture or soft spots. Oranges aren't picky about temperature; whether you store them on the counter or in the refrigerator they will last about two weeks before they begin losing their integrity. Be sure to keep them dry and avoid storing them in plastic as these can lead to molding. Oranges are on the dirty dozen list, meaning they tend to have a higher concentration of pesticides; so if you buy any of your produce organic it may be a good idea to add oranges to that list.

## Autumn Orange Salad (Adapted from epicurious.com)



photo: misslittlckitchen.com

### Ingredients:

- 3 oranges, peeled and segmented
- 6 c mixed baby greens
- 1 c plus 3 Tbsp. orange juice
- ¾ c pecans or walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 6 Tbsp. dried cranberries
- 3½ Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. grated orange peel
- Pinch dried ground cloves

Nutrition Info	
Per serving (½ recipe)	
Calories	137
Carbohydrates	15.8g
Fiber	2.5 g
Protein	1.1g
Sodium	1mg

### Directions:

Bring 1 cup orange juice to a simmer in a saucepan. Add cranberries and remove from heat. Let stand for 30 minutes, then drain and discard the soaking juice.

Whisk together oil, vinegar, orange peel, cloves (optional) and 3 Tbsp. orange juice in a small bowl. You can add a drizzle of honey if you prefer a sweeter dressing.

In a large bowl, toss salad greens and dressing. Divide and top each salad with orange segments, pecans or walnuts, and cranberries prior to serving. Serves 6.



## Mindful Minute

In the process of caring for others and fulfilling life roles with our careers and families, oftentimes our own self-care is put on the back burner. The gift of compassion is one of the most powerful gifts that we can give, not only to others but also to ourselves.

This month we encourage you to practice self-compassion by taking a mindful moment each day (or several times a day) to sit with yourself as if you are your own best friend. Tune in to the physical experience of being you, focusing on your breath, heartbeat and the sensations in your body. Experiment with the idea that you are worthy of your own attention and affection, and tend to your needs. Repeating self-nurturing affirmations may help you connect with this idea. Here are some examples:

- May I be safe and peaceful.
- May I be free from suffering.
- I am worthy of love and acceptance.
- I have important work to do on this earth that only I can do. I matter.
- I am deserving of kindness.
- I love myself just as I am.
- I am enough. I have enough. I do enough.
- I heal and restore.

Develop a mantra that resonates with you. Perhaps use one of the examples above or create your own. Write down your mantra and keep it with you as a reminder to take time to be kind and attentive to yourself.

**“YOU YOURSELF, AS MUCH AS ANYBODY  
IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE,  
DESERVE YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION.”  
– BUDDHA**



## November 17th is the Great American Smokeout!

### Want to be tobacco free in 2017?

Your chances of success are better with support. Start with any of these free, national resources to get started on your path to a tobacco-free life:

**To find support in your area:**  
1-800-227-2345

**To get started online:**  
[smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)

**To speak with someone about quitting:**  
1-800-QUIT-NOW

Many employers also offer free smoking cessation programs as part of their benefits package. Speak to your HR representative or refer to your benefits guide to check on employer-sponsored resources.

### After your last cigarette, change happens fast!

- Within 12 hours carbon monoxide decreases, allowing the oxygen in your blood to rise to normal levels.
- Within 24 hours your risk of coronary artery disease (CAD) starts to decrease. (Typically, risk of CAD is 70% higher in smokers.)
- At the 2-day mark the nerve endings associated with smell and taste start to come back to life and these senses (previously impaired by smoking) begin to improve.
- 3 days later your body will be rid of nicotine. This important milestone comes with challenges associated with withdrawal symptoms, but hang in there!
- Within 2 to 3 weeks withdrawal symptoms subside and your lungs make big improvements, allowing you to exercise without getting winded as easily.
- 1 year later your risk of heart disease will be half of that of a smoker.
- 5 to 15 years later your risk of stroke is the same as that of a nonsmoker.

**All elevated risks associated with smoking will continue to subside over time, along with cravings, allowing you to live a longer, healthier life!**

# Undercover Activity

Physical activity has been engineered out of most daily activities that used to require it. These innovations that have made life easier are now increasing our risk of death; humans are designed to move! This can be particularly challenging during the holiday months. In many places it becomes too cold to exercise outside, it gets dark earlier, and we are tasked with additional obligations such as holiday shopping, parties and looming end-of-year deadlines at work.

In order to offset the negative consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, we must consciously add physical movement back into our daily lives. This doesn't mean you have to commit to an intense daily exercise routine. It's also effective to look for 'excuses to move' and add short bouts of activity throughout your day. It's actually pretty simple, but it all starts with awareness and a plan.

## Create a custom routine.

Identify two or three exercise moves to craft a short go-to routine. Pick movements that you don't hate performing to help sidestep excuses later. For example, maybe you despise squats and push-ups but don't mind lunges and crunches. Your routine could be a simple 10 lunges and 25 crunches. Then, create triggers for performing your routine several times a day using one of these techniques:

- Place colorful dot stickers around your house (on the bathroom mirror, kitchen cabinet, etc.) When you notice them, do your routine.
- Pair your routine with activities you do every day such as showering, and do your routine before or after it.

## Use your TV time.

Stretch during commercials or create prompts for moving during your show. For example, every time the main character makes a joke, do 10 jumping jacks.

## Get clean.

More housework = more movement. It's a win-win!

## Look for excuses to move.

Use the intercom, telephone and email less; walk to your coworkers instead.

## Move for at least one minute for every 30 minutes of sitting.

You can even set an alarm to remind yourself.

## Don't wait ... move!

Waiting on the microwave, placed on hold for a call, or waiting in an exam room for the doctor – these are great moments to add some movement.



## App in a Snap

**Name:** C25K

**Price:** Free

**Focus:** Physical Activity

C25K is an app that assists you in training for a 5K run. Specially designed for beginners or couch potatoes, C25K provides coaching that guides you through walk/run workouts three days a week for eight weeks. Each day begins with a motivational quote. Then you start with a brisk 5-minute walk to warm up. Each week you gradually add increased jogging time to your walking until finally at week eight you are ready to run a 5K race. This app has voice prompts that move you through the workout – from walking to jogging and back to walking – for timed increments each week. It also has a very easy-to-read visual display to show you how long you have at each timed section along with the total workout time completed and remaining. Finally, you can play your own music in the background to keep you motivated!

C25K might be the assistance you need to get you off the couch and in shape to complete a 5K event. Once you reach this milestone you are prompted to download the 10k training app and continue on your journey.

# 5 Money Traps to Avoid During the Holidays

The holidays are a joyous, wonderful time full of cheer, togetherness and ... expenses! It can become easy to forget about budget in pursuit of the picture-perfect holiday. That's great for retailers but not your bank account. Safeguard yourself from a financially strained New Year by rejecting these wallet-draining traps.



- 1. Thinking that more money = more pleasure:** It can be challenging to fight this one as we are bombarded with advertisements depicting the sheer joy that a product will bring your loved one, but it's important to remember that the amount of money you spend is not proportionate to the amount of joy you bring. You probably have an example in your own life if you think about the best gifts you've ever received. Were they crazy expensive or crazy thoughtful? Gift giving is all about showing the recipient you care. Even if you don't have the time, energy or desire to come up with a meaningful gift, resist the urge to compensate by spending more money.
- 2. Giving in to competition:** As the saying goes, comparison is the thief of joy. Define what a happy holiday looks like to you and resist the need to compete ... with neighbors' decorations, what your friends are buying their kids, what your coworker gave your boss, the grandiose party your sister threw last year and the like. Competing with all of this can get expensive quickly. Don't feel like you need to top what you've done in the past or what anyone else is doing now; the holidays are an individual sport not a competition.

- 3. Expensive frills:** One of the biggest culprits is wrapping paper. People spend a ton of money on what is essentially trash. Want to get started on a cheaper cycle? Buy bargain bin items this year and then stock up right after the holiday when everything is on clearance. Transforming your home into a winter wonderland also adds up fast! Get crafty (bonus: creating memories) or shop secondhand or clearance when you can.
- 4. Forgoing a budget:** The holiday season can be a recipe for disaster with budgeting. Increased purchases mixed with the pressure to give in abundance and show generosity can leave budgets behind. It's easy to give in to the atmosphere once you are shopping, pulling out the credit cards and losing track of how much you're spending. You can avoid this in a couple of ways. The best is to use cash. This will help you keep track of how much you're spending. If you aren't comfortable carrying cash, create a list based on your budget and stick to it!
- 5. Shopping all wrong:** Flash sales, Black Friday deals and ads instructing you to "run to the deal of a lifetime" can induce serious FOMO (fear of missing out) and lead to rash purchasing decisions. The holiday season is the worst time to go to the mall, or online for that matter, to browse. Always have a plan before hitting the store. Experiencing the sights and sounds of the retail environment during the holidays is all great fun, so a word to the wise is to separate your entertainment trips and your shopping time. When you are out to see Santa, listen to carolers or partake in pie tasting, just be there for the entertainment. When you are there to shop, stick to your list, put on your blinders and shop.

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