

THE CAREGIVER GET-AWAY BOOK



Altenheim Resource Services
MC Wellness Coaching
for
"The Invisible Patient"

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THE CAREGIVER GET-AWAY BOOK is an activity book for YOU - the caregiver, and focuses on self-care ideas.

Self-care is vital to caregivers. If we don't take care of ourselves, we will suffer as will our care receivers. How often do you hear about someone's caregiver getting sick, being hospitalized - or worse - as their caregiving intensifies?

This is where we have to look at our lives as caregivers just as we look at an emergency on an airplane. When the oxygen mask drops, we must first make sure that we are OK so we can help those who need assistance.

Think of this booklet as your oxygen mask. You don't have to do everything in one day. You don't have to do everything. Sample the activities and choose what will help you.

What else might give you a little time to take a deep breath and regroup? Make notes!

It's about your well-being.

We wish you CAREGIVER WELLNESS!

Ann & Marty

February, 2020

Disclaimers: Nothing in this booklet is a substitute for the guidance of your health care professional. Consult your primary care provider with any questions. The products and companies mentioned in this booklet or as sources of information are not endorsements or recommendations for those products or companies. Information is for educational purposes only.

Update - October 2024:

The Caregiver Get-Away Book was developed to accompany the training "The Invisible Patient", a brainstorm of Marty Cornett of MC Wellness Coaching. Marty's eye was on the caregiver. It was her experience that the care receiver was the focus of attention while the caregiver - who was so integral to the life of that person - was often disregarded. The medical team looked only at the patient. The caregiver was in the background and "invisible" to the care team.

What a great idea for a caregiver series!

Marty shared the idea and her material with me (Ann Koegler of Altenheim Resource Services) and we went on to develop the fine points of "The Invisible Patient" which focused on the caregiver, sharing information on self-care, stress management, resources for information and assistance, and so much more.

The series was to be provided in February and March, 2020. Unfortunately, Covid 19 entered our lives and we had to cancel the series after only two sessions. (Virtual hadn't gained a foothold yet.) We had information and materials, and the program content was written. We put it on hold...and then Marty left the area.

We couldn't provide the series but I have updated The Caregiver Get-Away Book for the Invisible Patients who are caring for their loved ones. May you find some ideas that will help you take a short vacation to your happy place and offer some peace of mind on your caregiving journey!

*You may share the information but *please* give credit to the sources. Sources are cited by number with credits at the end. Additional resources are noted in the Appendix. Credit is given but a lot of the information comes from our years of experience (personal and professional) working with caregivers and care receivers, being caregivers (personally and professionally), and being the "Invisible Patients".

With all that being said, I would like to dedicate this revision to my friend and colleague, Marty Cornett, RN, BSN, NBC-HWC. Thank you, Marty! Maybe someday we can revisit "The Invisible Patient" series! And, of course, it's dedicated to all of the Invisible Patients out there.

Ann Koegler
October, 2024

“There are only four kinds of people in this world – those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those will be caregivers, and those who need caregivers.”

Former First Lady, Rosalynn Carter

There are at least 41 million unpaid caregivers in the United States who provide approximately 34 billion hours of unpaid care (1)

A caregiver may help with or provide the following assistance. They may juggle all of these tasks while maintaining their own family, home, job, and possibly grandchildren.

- A Manage finances
 - A Pay bills
- A Do grocery shopping
 - A Buy clothes
- A Pick up prescriptions and personal care needs / arrange delivery of prescriptions and personal care needs
 - A Arrange medical appointments (and keep notes on those visits)
 - A Set up or provide transportation
 - A Provide personal care
 - A Prepare or arrange for meals
 - A Do housekeeping and/or laundry
 - A Serve as an advocate
 - A Serve as a historian for your care receiver
 - A Serve as a liaison with community, church, and friends
- A Be there when the care receiver is in the Emergency Department or hospitalized
- A Navigate care when the care receiver is hospitalized or placed in long term care
 - A Coordinate care
- A Work with insurance / Medicare / Medicaid / other benefit programs
- A Work with Social Security, pension benefits, or other income / resource issues

TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

Perhaps you've not given a lot of thought to taking care of you.

Self-care is critical to everyone but it's especially important to those who are providing care to someone.

Caring for someone is challenging. It's hard emotionally and physically. It's hard to juggle your responsibilities and the needs of your care receiver.

It can be overwhelming. Stressful. Lonely. All-consuming.

Caregivers NEED to take a step away from their responsibilities. Take time to de-stress. Time to regroup. Time to recharge.

We all need some time just for us. To use as we want.

We sometimes think that we need a lot of time and a lot of money for self-care. Although a lot of both would be nice, self-care doesn't have to be expensive.

We may think we don't have time to take time for ourselves. Not taking time now can 'cost' you a lot more in the future. And, besides, taking care of ourselves doesn't have to take a lot of time! These activities don't have to be time-consuming and they're not complicated.

They are meant as stand-alone activities. ...things you can do that will take a little time to give you a fresh start and a few minutes of R & R. Some take a little longer. Do what works for you.

What would you like to do, what do you have time to do, and what will give you some peace of mind?

What did you enjoy before you became a caregiver?

Have you thought about what brings you joy that has been a "lifelong habit"?

Is there something new you'd like to try? Go for it! There are a lot of instructional sources online and in print.

Do what will benefit you!

This booklet will offer you a variety of things to try

- A Self-care needs to be looked at holistically: Information on wellness
 - A Simple pleasures
 - A Exercise / Movement
 - A Puzzling Activities
- A Do you like Word Search? Anagrams? Cryptoquotes?
 - A Journaling
 - A Meditation
 - A Positive Affirmations
 - A Use Your Senses
- A Grounding Mindfulness Technique
 - A Essential oils / Aromatherapy
 - A Humor
 - A Sleep
 - A Easy Creative Activities
 - A Easy Activities
 - A De-Stressing Activities
- A More Things You May Want to Try
- A Sources of information (there are often more ideas on the webpages)
 - A More resources

Stretch your brain! What else might be helpful - and interesting - to you?

Add notes to this booklet.

What worked? What didn't?

What would you like to try?

What can you do without much thought or time?

What can you do alone? What can you do with a friend?

Come on! Get away! This booklet is for YOU!

SELF-CARE NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT HOLISTICALLY

None of our systems work independently of one another.

We need to be aware of our physical health. Make sure to get your annual exams (mammograms, PSAs, labs, & vaccinations). Develop healthy habits. Be aware of your body.

Take care of your mental and emotional health. Focus on a positive attitude. Think about 'hope', 'gratitude', 'love', and 'happiness'. Allow some 'awe' to enter your daily life. It may be 'awe' over the beauty of a sunset. It may be the 'awe' of the feelings you have for your family.

A positive attitude can help you work through and overcome some of life's challenges. Kendal at Oberlin offers an [Emotional Wellness Guide](#). It has some good information.

A little stress isn't bad. A lot of stress can have serious consequences and impact your physical and mental health. Be aware of your stress levels. Work on toning them down. What helps you? This booklet has offered several ideas for some 'get-away' time. Use them or modify them to a workable tool for YOU.

Spiritual wellness is expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life, and includes our beliefs and values. There can be a great deal of spiritual conflict when we're providing care. We may question our Higher Power. Why is this happening to me / my care receiver? What did I do to deserve [whatever situation we're experiencing]? For our well-being, we need to be able to reconcile these spiritual conflicts. [Wellness at Northwestern](#) explores spiritual wellness.

Colorado State University has information on the "[8 Dimensions of Well-Being](#)". A balance of the components help with your overall well-being. Check it out and see how this can help with your well-being.

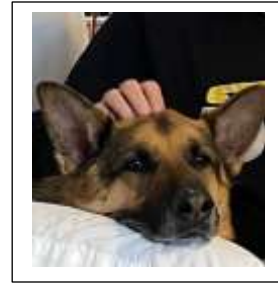
**GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO
ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,
AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.**

Reinhold Niebuhr

SIMPLE PLEASURES

These suggestions don't take long, don't cost much (if anything), and can be interrupted if needed. It's amazing what 5 minutes of refreshment can do! What can you add?

- A Sit on the porch for a few minutes. Leave your cell phone inside. Listen to the sounds of nature. Take a 5 minute vacation to your happy place.
- A Eat and SAVOR a Hershey Kiss...or 2...or 3. Take your time.
- A Turn on your favorite music and dance like no one is watching or sing at the top of your lungs! Or both!
- A Have a cup of your favorite beverage.
- A Cuddle your dog(s) and/or cat(s).
- A Howl at the full moon.
- A Watch a video on You Tube. Pick the topic and pick the length.
- A Send a note or a card to a friend.
- A Listen to audio books or podcasts or read a few pages of the book you've wanted to read.
- A Say a prayer.
- A Read a daily devotional.
- A On a clear night, go out and marvel at the night sky.
- A Watch a little TV. What is your guilty pleasure? Food Network? Judge Judy? Gunsmoke? Hallmark? Indulge!



- A Get a kazoo and belt out a tune!
- A Take a shower or bath with scented bath gel



Think of these short breaks as "a 5 minute power nap" for your mental health.

EXERCISE / MOVEMENT

EXERCISE and MOVEMENT are good for us physically and mentally. Improved sleep, controlled blood pressure, and stress reduction are just a few of the benefits of exercise. Read more about the [benefits of movement](#). (2)

Many insurance plans cover senior exercise programs at local wellness centers, and county senior centers may also offer exercise programs but, quite often, caregivers don't have the option of "going to" an exercise program. There are stay-at-home options, too. You can find [videos on You Tube](#) (3) that demonstrate low-impact exercises for caregivers. Search for more options.

STRETCHING increases flexibility, range of motion, and energy levels, and is great for muscle tension, relaxation, and stress relief.

A colleague suggests exaggerating our normal activities (increasing movement and increasing the stretch). This is easy to incorporate into everyday tasks. (Think about wiping off a table or dusting.)

Be sure to talk to your primary health care provider prior to starting exercises. You need to see if any of your health issues contraindicate certain exercises!

BREATHING: Focusing on our breathing can help ease stress and decrease anxiety. Get comfortable. Try the Modified Lion's Breath exercise for starters. As you do this exercise, imagine that you're a lion. Let all of your breath out with a big, open mouth. Sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair. Breathe in through your nose. Fill your belly all the way up with air. When you can't breathe in any more, open your mouth as wide as you can. Breathe out with a "HA" sound. Repeat several times. WebMD offers [more breathing exercises](#). (4)

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION: Focus on the various muscle groups in your body. Gently tighten and relax the muscles. Don't forget to breathe. Harvard Medical offers [exercises to help relax](#) (5) which includes progressive muscle relaxation.

A CAREGIVER RELAXATION SERIES is offered by the Family Caregiver Alliance online. The [video series](#) (6) guides caregivers through imagery, deep breathing, and other relaxation exercises.

There are a variety of simple exercises or movements that you can do without leaving home offering simple ways to help you step back, refocus, and de-stress.

"PUZZLING" ACTIVITIES

Exercising the brain is an important part of everyday life for everyone. It has a part to play in a healthy, positive lifestyle in the same way as physical exercise.

Just as our bodies need exercise, so do our brains. Keeping the brain active through word search, crosswords, Sudoku, and other stimulating activities such as learning new languages or new skills helps us to keep our brains active.

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in researching the role that mental exercise may play in reducing the risk of developing dementia. Benefits have also been researched in regard to stress reduction, visuo-spatial reasoning, improvement in executive function, and the ability to pay attention to details. Whether or not puzzles have longer lasting benefits is still being studied. (7) If it serves as a pleasant diversion, consider it helpful.

What do you enjoy?

How about jigsaw puzzles? Jigsaw puzzles can help with visuo-spatial reasoning and cognition. Putting jigsaw puzzles together requires concentration and the use of short-term memory. (8)

You can find jigsaw puzzles at the dollar store, online, at garage sales or thrift shops (make sure all the pieces are there), in bookstores, or in toy sections. There are all kinds of puzzles: big pieces, abstract patterns, art work patterns, landscapes or tablescapes, pets, railroads, and flowers. There are puzzles with 3000 pieces! What is your interest?



My friend Pat R. allowed me to share a pic of her puzzle (1000 pieces)

DO YOU LIKE WORD SEARCH? ANAGRAMS? CRYPTOGRAMS?

Word Search

Word search puzzles can be created on thewordsearch.com website. (There are other word search sites. Just look up 'word search' in your browser.) There are also word search puzzles posted online that you can copy and work at your leisure. Dollar stores have word search books and there are also word search puzzles in the newspaper.

Anagrams

Unscramble the words to make a 'caregiving' word.

STRE = _____

RINGAC = _____

YLHETAH = _____

SFTA EY = _____

EEIYSRNT = _____

SNIFRED = _____

TRAGEDUIT = _____

LFPHOEU = _____

SSRVEEIC = _____

HFTAI = _____

YFLAIM = _____

Cryptograms can be challenging!

CRYPTOGRAMS offer us the opportunity to try to figure out what a scrambled quote is when we're given two or three key letters.

KA'CA RGG YIPV KRGDOHQ ARXE ZVEAC EZUA. CIUO
C = R R = A U = M

Answers on page 40

JOURNALING

Journaling involves the practice of keeping a diary or journal dealing with your thoughts, your feelings, the events of your life, the things that frustrate you or make you angry, and / or the things that make you happy. Whatever you want to write about. Journaling is YOURS.

Journaling, as a stress management and self-exploration tool, works best when you do it regularly but occasional journaling can help relieve stress, too. Do what works for you!

You can buy a journal or you use a spiral notebook or 3-ring binder. You can use an app on your phone or you can look for or create a folder on your laptop. What will you be most likely to use?

Journaling prompts may be included in the journal or app or you may want to free-style and follow your own thoughts - wherever they take you!

Here are some types of journals to get you thinking:

- Gratitude Journal: List 3 things daily for which you are grateful. This helps you focus on positive aspects of your life and allows you to create a more positive mood at the moment, both of which have been shown to build long-term resilience. You also have a record of good things. When you're having a bad time, you can go back to your gratitude list and hopefully regain perspective.
- Emotional Release: You may want to write about your emotional responses to events that have happened throughout the day as a way of coping with the stress. This may help you process what you are feeling. Can you reframe the situation to give you a more positive perspective? Write about positive things, too! This gives you the opportunity to savor the positive and grab the good of the moment. Expand on the positive to help you manage the negative.
- Personal Planning Journal: Some people keep journals to track what they need to do each day, goals, memories, and other things they don't want to forget. Writing things down can help keep your mind uncluttered, help you remember what's important, and map out a strategy to manage the day. Being more organized and balanced is helpful in reducing stress.
- Free-Style Journaling: What's important to you? What do you want to remember? What are lessons learned? What's the story of your life? Who do you want to make a note about? Whatever it is - write about it. What do you need to express?

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JOURNALING - CON'T

Here are a few more ideas:

- List 5 good things about today
- What is one thing I can improve on (time management, communication, etc) and how can I do this?
- What is one adjustment I would like to make to my morning routine? My night time routine?
- List 10 things that make me happy
- What new skill would I like to learn? How can I do that?
- What one long-term goal do I need to work towards?
- I really had a difficult day. This is what happened. Is there any part of that I can change to avoid it happening again?
- I succeeded in getting done!
- Do I need to take more time or better care of myself? What can I do this week to work toward self-care?

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What might you WANT to write about?

- A prayer list: who and what to pray for
- Are you a stress eater? A food journal might help you
- Do you want to write a letter to your future self? Your care receiver? Your family? Someone from your past?
- Are you angry? Tired? Frustrated?
- This is YOUR journal

MEDITATION

What is meditation? Meditation is considered to be a type of mind-body complementary medicine. Meditation can reduce stress and help you relax, which is critical for caregivers. Meditation doesn't have to take a lot of time so the time commitment doesn't need to be a deterrent.

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years through many of the world's cultures and religions. While you are meditating, you are focusing your attention and working to eliminate the jumble of thoughts that are going through your mind. Quieting your mind can help you focus, and can enhance physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

There are You Tube videos, apps, and podcasts to guide meditation.

There are many types of meditation, and several relaxation techniques have meditation components. All share the same goal of achieving peace of mind and a relaxed state of being. Here are a few:

- **Guided meditation:** Sometimes called guided imagery or visualization, with this method of meditation you form mental images of places or situations you find relaxing. You try to use as many senses as possible, such as smells, sights, sounds, and textures. You may be led through this process by a guide or teacher.
- **Mindfulness meditation:** This type of meditation is based on being mindful, or having an increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment. In mindfulness meditation, you focus on what you experience during meditation, such as your breathing.
- **Tai Chi:** This is a gentle form of Chinese martial arts. You perform a self-paced series of postures and movements in a slow manner while practicing deep breathing.
- **Transcendental Meditation®:** Transcendental Meditation® is a simple, natural technique. In TM, you silently repeat a personally assigned mantra, such as a word or sound. This type of meditation may allow your body to settle into a state of rest and relaxation, and your mind to achieve a state of inner peace, without needing concentration or effort.

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MEDITATION - CON'T

Autogenic relaxation: Autogenic means something that comes from within you. In this relaxation technique, you use both visual imagery and body awareness to reduce stress. You repeat words or suggestions in your mind to relax and reduce muscle tension.

For example, you may imagine a peaceful setting and then focus on controlled, relaxing breathing, slowing your heart rate, or feeling different physical sensations, such as relaxing each arm or leg one limb at a time.

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
3. Exhale through your mouth slowly, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles.
4. Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
5. Continue breathing and concentrate on your happy place, those you hold dear, or what you're grateful for.

There are several relaxation techniques that you can try.

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POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Although we are one of over 41 million people providing care, it can feel lonely. It can get depressing. It's hard physically and emotionally. We second guess decisions. We worry that we're not doing enough and wearing down as we work harder. We wonder if there is life after caregiving.

Positive affirmations can help us shift our focus away from the negative. They can reinforce our strengths and our belief in ourselves. Repeating the affirmations offers encouragement. There IS power in positive thinking!

You may want to write them on sticky notes and put them on your bathroom mirror. You may want to set up your affirmations like a calendar or place them in a jar so you can pick one per day. An affirmation can serve as your mantra when you meditate. It can be your prayer as you are getting up or going to bed.

Try these:

- ♥ I am strong and capable
- ♥ I am doing the best I can for _____ (my loved one)
- ♥ I am valuable and worthwhile
- ♥ I can't control _____ (care receiver's) behavior but I can control how I react
- ♥ I will live in the moment and not focus on what might happen.
- ♥ I can do this
- ♥ I am grateful for _____
- ♥ The world is better with me in it
- ♥ I am allowed to be angry / frustrated / sad
- ♥ I am allowed to be happy / to experience joy
- ♥ I am allowed to have some time to regroup, to rest my mind

Faith-based affirmations call on your Higher Power:

- ♥ God loves me
- ♥ I am a child of God
- ♥ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me
- ♥ Nothing is impossible with God
- ♥ God goes before me in whatever I face today
- ♥ God goes with me in whatever this day holds

USE YOUR SENSES

VISION

Look at your garden. Enjoy the flowers in your yard. If you can, take a walk or drive and enjoy the scenery around you. You can also look at photographs or "coffee table" books to stimulate your visual senses. If you can't be there, use your mind's eye. Think about and 'see' the beach, the mountains, the lake, your garden - envision YOUR place. "See" the green of the trees, the blues of the water, the snow-capped mountains. Imagine your "happy place".

HEARING

Think about the sounds of your happy place. Do you hear ocean waves? Do you hear birds singing? You can make a video of your happy place with the sounds. You can also listen to your favorite music. If you are so inclined, sing along!

SMELL

The olfactory powers are amazing and call many memories to mind. Aroma can serve to relax or stimulate. You can use essential oils in a diffuser (see Essential Oils / Aromatherapy section), scented candles, incense, or flowers. Kitchen smells can be relaxing and evoke pleasant memories of our past. You can also sprinkle some cinnamon and other spices in hot water and simmer it on the stove to make your house smell good.

TASTE

Have a cup of special tea or coffee. Eat a snack. What tastes make you feel better? Some foods may be stimulating and some relaxing. Your sense of smell and sense of taste work together to help you enjoy food and drinks.

TOUCH

Our skin is our largest organ. Touch can be soothing, relaxing, comforting, and/or loving. Hug someone if you are comfortable with it. Pet your dog / cat. Take a relaxing bath with essential oils added to the water. (You can enjoy the tactile stimulation as well as olfactory.)

Do you have some extra time? Get a massage! (Check with your doctor!)

There are many possible benefits to massage:

- ♥ Helps with stress relief and stress reduction
- ♥ Helps with pain management
- ♥ Reduces muscle tension, stiffness, soreness
- ♥ Increases range of motion
- ♥ Enhances circulation of blood and lymph
- ♥ Improves your sense of well-being
- ♥ It feels really good

GROUNDING MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUE

Uses the 5 senses

It can be helpful to use your 5 senses to calm and center yourself. It's not hard and you can use this exercise to bring ground yourself when you need to re-focus.

- Find a quiet place
- Sit up straight, place your hands on your thighs, get comfortable
- Focus on your breathing. Take a long, slow breath in. Exhale slowly. Do this a few times.

- Look at what's around you. What do you see? What furniture? What colors? Textures? Pick 5 things to focus on.
- If you're having trouble with this, place several objects to focus on.
- Move on to touch. When you began, you placed your hands on your thighs. Be aware of your hands now. What can you feel beneath your fingers? What does the fabric or your skin feel like? Be mindful of what is under your feet. Do you have on shoes or slippers? Socks? What are you sitting on? Pick 4 things and focus on how they feel.
- As you continue the deep breathing, tune in to what you hear. Pick out 3 sounds. Where are they coming from?
 - Just notice the sounds. Initially, you may hear traffic or house sounds. After a few minutes, you may hear more sounds that you hadn't noticed. If you go off track, focus on your breathing.
- Next, focus on any smells. What can you distinguish? Food? Flowers? Laundry aromas? Pick 2 aromas and focus on them. Are they sweet? Clean?
- For the sense of taste, identify one taste. You may want to have a drink to sip on. You can also focus on the taste of the toothpaste you've used or the taste of your morning coffee or tea.
- To finish this exercise, stand up and touch one or two objects in the room. This is part of the grounding process that helps you be in the present.

This brief exercise can be calming and can help ease anxiety.

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ESSENTIAL OILS / AROMATHERAPY

Essential oils are made from flower, herb, and tree parts (bark, roots, peels, and petals). The cells that give a plant its fragrant smell are its "essence". When an essence is extracted from a plant, it becomes an essential oil.

Not all products made with plant essence are essential oils. True essential oils aren't blended with other chemicals or fragrances. They're made using a specific process that doesn't change the chemistry of the plant. Do your research on the brand that's best for you. Read the ingredients.

Essential oils (EO) have many uses and have various ways of distribution. They have been used for centuries for many purposes.

In regard to mode of distribution, not all oils are created equal. Some cannot be used topically. Some have contraindications for certain conditions (such as pregnancy). Some cannot be ingested. Conversely, some can be used topically and some can be ingested. Learn about the oils you are using.

Aromatherapy is a holistic healing treatment that uses natural plant extracts (essential oils) to promote health and well-being.

Aromatherapy is one mode of distribution for essential oils and works through the sense of smell and skin absorption. Essential oils can be used with:

- Diffusers - There is mixed information on whether or not to diffuse essential oils.
 - Use caution using diffusers especially around kids and pets.
- Aromatic spritzers
- Roller bottles
- Inhalers
- Bath water
- Body oils, creams, or lotions
- Hot or cold compresses

You can add essential oils to fractionated coconut oil, other oils, creams, or shower gels. You can also put them on your skin or put them in your bath.

Lemon, chamomile, lavender, cedarwood, and bergamot are a few essential oils used regularly in aromatherapy.

ESSENTIAL OILS / AROMATHERAPY - CONT

Essential oils are extremely concentrated. It is important to know which ones are safe to use and which ones need to be used with caution.

Safety factors with essential oils:

- Read about essential oils before using them.
- Use a dosage chart to determine how much essential oil to use.
- Essential oils are very concentrated. Dilute them before applying to the skin.
 - Lavender and tea tree oils can be used without dilution.
- ⊗ Phototoxic oils are essential oils that can cause a reaction if applied before sun exposure (skin sensitivity). Angelica root, bergamot, lemon, lime, ginger, mandarin, orange, and grapefruit are phototoxic.
- ⊗ Essential oils are not soluble in water.
 - If you have a reaction, apply fractionated coconut oil or a vegetable oil to the area which will absorb the oil and ease the irritation. (Water will cause the oil to spread.)
 - If you get the oil in your eyes, rinse with a neutral oil and follow with water.
- ⊗ Caution: Keep essential oils out of reach of children and animals or avoiding using them.
 - Cats in particular have livers that cannot tolerate essential oils.
 - Children may have an adverse reaction to essential oils.
- ⊗ If skin irritation or allergic reaction occurs, discontinue use.
- Essential oils should NOT replace your primary health care providers' advice. Consult your health care provider before using essential oils. Read the safety data on each essential oil before use.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Certain oils are not recommended or should be used with caution with certain health care issues or for certain age groups. Read each oil's safety data before use.

People with the following conditions should take caution:

- Epilepsy
- High blood pressure or Low blood pressure
- Pregnancy
- Babies & Children

This is **NOT** an all-inclusive list. Check with your health care provider before using essential oils.

(14) & (15)

DISCLAIMER: This information is not to be considered complete nor all-inclusive. Check with your primary health care provider regarding any concerns about the use of essential oils. Different people react differently so use caution and use due diligence in the use of essential oils. Consult your pediatrician and/or veterinarian about use of diffusers and other uses of essential oils with children and/or pets.

HUMOR

Laughter has long been touted as good for us on many levels. Think of it as "humor therapy"!

Scientists have been researching the relationship between the mind and the body, especially in regard to the body's ability to heal. Laughter appears to change the brain chemistry and may boost the immune system.

Humor may allow a person to feel in control of a situation and make it seem more manageable. It allows people to release fears, anger, and stress - all of which can harm the body over time.

What is humor therapy used for?

Anyone can use humor therapy, either preventatively or as part of a treatment for illness. People commonly use it in the treatment of long-term chronic diseases, especially those that are made worse by stress such as cardio-vascular disease and pulmonary diseases such as asthma. Chronic diseases have a negative effect on mood and attitude, which can increase the discomfort. Humor therapy helps reduce the negative effects of feeling unhealthy, out of control, afraid, or helpless which are common problems for those with chronic diseases. (16)

Humor therapy is also valuable as a preventive measure for the caregivers of people with chronic diseases. Caregivers are at risk of becoming sick themselves and humor therapy can release the stress that comes with being a caregiver. Caregivers and those they care for can practice humor therapy together, and both may have better health as a result!

- Read a funny book
- Watch a funny movie or sitcom
- Catch a funny video on You Tube
- Tell a joke
- Listen to a funny podcast

It is really important to keep your sense of humor. Providing care can be overwhelming and make us forget that there are funny things in life. Quite often, our care receivers provide the light moments. (We obviously aren't laughing AT our care receiver but there are many moments in caregiving where we have to laugh.) There are moments when joy and laughter can be shared openly and warmly!

SLEEP

Caregivers find themselves exhausted. Frequently. Despite the exhaustion, it can be difficult to get to sleep. We worry. Our minds race. We sleep with "one eye open" in case our care receiver needs something. Maybe we have to get up during the night which interrupts our rest.

Sleep deprivation not only makes us cranky but it also affects our physical health. Obesity and high blood pressure, negative mood and behavior, decreased productivity, safety issues at home, on the job, and on the road can all result from lack of sleep. Our judgment and mental alertness are negatively affected. If our care receiver has sleep disturbances, this further impacts our sleep wellness.

Here are some tips:

- Turn off the computer and other devices about half an hour before you go to bed. The light from the device heightens your alertness.
- Avoid caffeine, especially in the late afternoon and evening.
- Avoid long daily naps.
- Keep a sleep routine. Go to bed at the same time, get up at the same time. (This isn't always possible for caregivers, but try.)
- Avoid alcohol before bed. It will cause you to wake up during the night.
- Use your bedroom for sleep only. Avoid having a TV in your room.
- Keeping your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet is conducive to sleep.
- White noise can help with sleep. A fan or white noise machine may help.
- Diffuse an essential oil for relaxation (check warnings about pets and children!) or rub lavender-scented lotion on your body.
- Meditate, pray, or do a relaxation exercise to prepare for sleep.
- Chamomile tea may help you relax.
- Nap when your care receiver naps.

Consult your primary health care provider for help with sleep issues.

(17)

EASY CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

MINDFULNESS GLITTER JAR

Have you ever been mesmerized by a snow globe? Make your own version with a glitter jar. Here is one recipe for your glitter jar.

Supplies:

Mason jar with lid or jar of your choice

Hot Water

Dish Soap

Glitter - regular size

Glitter Glue or Clear Glue

Food coloring (optional)

1. Fill the jar almost to the top with water. Add glitter, a few drops of dish soap, and glue (the glue makes the glitter move more slowly), and a few drops of food coloring.
2. Place lid on the jar and close tightly
3. Shake it up! If needed, add a few more drops of dish soap and/or glitter glue
4. When you need a break, shake up the jar. As the glitter settles, breathe deeply and let your thoughts settle just as the glitter settles in the jar.

The glitter in the jar represents all the negative thoughts and feelings racing through your mind: chores, errands, your care receiver's needs, family obligations, financial stressors, medical appointments, or other responsibilities. Focus on breathing as the glitter settles to the bottom of the jar. The water becomes more clear. Just as the water clears, your mind will become more clear as you take time to focus on your breathing and accept what is.

(18) & (19)

CALMING STRESS BALL

Use *heavyweight balloons*. Make sure to use *thick, heavy duty balloons* as regular or thin balloons can easily break or tear when used as a stress ball.

- You can use cornstarch, rice flour, sand, and uncooked rice to fill the balloon. Regular flour works well - it's squishy, and calming to squeeze, without being too hard. If you like a firmer stress ball, try sand. If you find texture comforting, try uncooked rice.
 - Essential oils add to the sensory experience. Essential oils are parts of plants that are reduced to their basic elements which have varied uses such as aroma. Certain oils or combinations of oils can offer a calming effect, for example lavender, orange, cedarwood, vetiver, eucalyptus, spruce, spearmint, ylang ylang, bergamot, Roman chamomile, patchouli, cypress, frankincense, and sandalwood.
 - Funnel
 - Water bottle - to fill balloons
1. With the funnel, pour $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cup of flour into the water bottle
Tip: Adjust the amount of flour to the size of the stress ball you want to make. One-half cup will make a small stress ball (child hand-size) and one cup will be larger (adult hand-size).
 2. Add 10 drops of essential oil to the flour in the bottle
Tip: Use quality essential oils. [Know what you are buying](#). Essential oils are not created equal. Read about the [ratings of oils](#).
 3. Cap the water bottle and shake well (flour and essential oils) to mix. Mix well!
 4. Blow up the balloon to about twice the size of the finished ball.
Tip: Doing this makes it easier to get the flour in the balloon
 5. Attach the balloon to the water bottle
 6. Turn the balloon and water bottle upside down and squeeze the flour mixture into the balloon

CALMING STRESS BALL - CONT

7. Remove the balloon from the water bottle, being careful to pinch the end of the balloon closed. Keeping the balloon mostly pinched closed, slowly open the balloon a little bit to let a little of the air out of the balloon.

Tip: Do this slowly. If you open it too much, the flour mix will come out of the balloon and fly everywhere. Open enough to release air but retain flour mix.

Tip: Don't let all the air out. The amount of air you leave in the balloon determines the "squishiness" of the stress ball.

For a hard, firm stress ball, let out almost all the air.

For a super-soft stress ball that's easy to squeeze, leave most of the air in.

For a "firm-squishy" stress ball, let air out leaving enough in so that the flour mix can move around easily.

8. Tie off the end of the balloon and wipe off any excess flour mix.

Squeeze and destress!

(20)

NOTE: see Aromatherapy / Essential Oils section for more information on the use of essential oils.

Learn about essential oils through books or classes. Consult your primary health care provider for any contraindications.

CALMING PLAYDOUGH

Wow! Homemade playdough!

Most of the recipes that I found online for homemade playdough consist of 5 basic ingredients: flour, salt, cream of tartar, water, and oil. You can add food coloring for some brightness and/or essential oil to make a calming playdough.

1 cup flour

1/3 - 1/2 cup of salt

2 teaspoons cream of tartar

1 cup water

1 tablespoon coconut oil, olive oil, or other cooking oil

Food coloring (optional) It only takes a few drops.

10 - 20 drops of essential oil

1. In a saucepan, add flour, salt, and cream of tartar.

Tip: The salt bonds the flour to the water (added later). Because of this, the salt adds texture and body to the playdough which helps keep it from sticking to your hands and fingers. The salt also acts as a natural preservative to keep the dough from getting moldy. The dough can last 3+ months.

Tip: The cream of tartar is a stabilizing agent that improves the consistency and texture of the dough.

2. Add 1 cup water

3. Add 1 tablespoon of oil. Turn your stove burner on low and stir the mixture well.

Tip: Most liquid oils work well (vegetable oil, olive oil, fractionated coconut oil)

Tip: The oil acts as a lubricant for the dough which makes it soft and pliable.

Tip: The mixture will be lumpy at this point. Not to worry. The lumps will disappear as the dough heats and thickens.

4. Optional: Before the dough gets too thick, add a few drops of food coloring and stir well.

Tip: Add a few drops of food coloring to start. You can always add more. Depending on the vibrancy of the color, the brand, and your preference of color, you can add 2 - 20 drops.

CALMING PLAYDOUGH - CON'T

5. When the food coloring is mixed in, turn up the heat a little. (Medium low) Stir constantly. Make sure to scrape the bottom of the pan as you stir. The dough will start to thicken. Continue stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan. It could take from 30 seconds to 3 minutes to fully thicken. When the dough comes away from the pan and isn't wet anymore, remove the playdough from the pan.
6. Remove the playdough from the pan and put it on a piece of waxed paper to cool for about 30 minutes. After the dough has cooled, knead the dough in your hands for a minute or so until it's elastic and smooth.
7. Add 10 - 20 drops of essential oil, then knead the dough to mix the oils thoroughly with the dough. There are some more ideas for oils / blends in the appendix.
Tip: Poke a few holes in the dough and put essential oil in the hole. This will help the essential oil get incorporated into the dough and not on your hands.
8. Store the aromatherapy playdough in an airtight container
Tip: Glass, stainless steel, and certain types of plastic (such as PET plastic #1 or HDPE plastic #2) are good choices. Make sure the lid has a tight seal so your playdough stays fresh and doesn't dry out.
Tip: If your playdough dries out over time, you can knead in a few drops of water to revive it.
Tip: If your aromatherapy playdough loses its scent, you can add more essential oil to revive the scent.

How to use aromatherapy playdough:

- Sit in a comfortable and peaceful spot
- Play some calming music
- Pinch off some playdough and roll it in your hands
- Hold the dough a few inches from your nose and inhale, taking long deep breaths
- Play with the dough. You can form it anyway you want.
- As you play with the dough, use visual imagery. Imagine you're sitting on the beach or by a mountain lake. Where is your happy place?
- When you're done playing, put the playdough back in the airtight container so it stays soft and pliable. This dough can last several months.

(21) & (22)

Or - you can just get Play Doh® brand and create your sculptures. I tried to find information regarding adding essential oils to Play Doh® but couldn't find anything. I did find that the unique Play Doh® scent we all remember is a [trademarked scent](#) with many aromatic signatures so adding essential oils may not be a good idea.

EASY ACTIVITIES

Do you get lost in crafting? There are many things that you can do that won't take a lot of time, and the psychological benefits can make a huge difference in your well-being.

Do you enjoy scrapbooking or making greeting cards? You can combine de-stressing and creativity, and save some money! Make a birthday card or thinking of you card. Create a scrapbook for your care receiver with pictures of family, friends, and vacation spots and add embellishments that memorialize important occasions.

- Search your browser for websites and check for videos on You Tube. You can find books and magazines on papercrafting at bookstores, libraries, and online. Pinterest is a good source for ideas.

Do you like to draw or paint? You don't have to be a Monet or a Picasso. You can get materials to go "free hand" or buy paint by number or color by pencil crayon sets.

Do you like photography? Take pictures. Do you have a cell phone? You can make a lot of adjustments to photos on your cell phone! Get creative. Explore what your phone can do. Or - get out the camera and do it the old-fashioned way!

I took the pic on the cover as well as these three with my iPhone.



What about a collage? You can save important parts of pictures and create a collage with a lot of memories. There are also apps that you can use to create photo collages from the pics on your phone.

What about knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, or sewing? Old t-shirts, flannel pants, pennants, and other items can be used to make quilts. How-to videos show you how to do needle crafts. Many people do their needlework while listening to music or a podcast.

Would you like to learn an instrument? Piano? Accordion? Guitar? Sitar? Kazoo? There are instructional videos on YouTube!

How about coloring? Adult coloring sheets can be downloaded from Internet. Coloring books can be found in book stores, garage sales, thrift stores, hobby stores, and in dollar stores. You can use crayons, pastels, pencil crayons, or whatever coloring medium you choose.

Flower arranging can be relaxing. What colors? What fillers? What containers? You can use different ways to display your arrangement. Check out the pumpkin "vase" below!

Gardening doesn't have to be a huge space. Use containers for flowers or vegetables.

Would you like to know where you come from? Look into genealogy and your ancestors. There are numerous sites that can help you find your roots. Some are free, some are not.

Do you enjoy learning about other places? You can learn about history on The History Channel and "travel" via various shows on Aerial America and The Travel Channel. Online searches can take you anywhere and teach you about that place.

You can find ideas on Pinterest. Subscribe to pages that focus on your hobby. There are pages on social media for different interests.

Work on a project that you will enjoy. You don't have to complete your project in one sitting.

Remember - the joy of the activity is in the process!



DE-STRESSING ACTIVITIES

TAKE SOME TIME WITH YOUR MEMORIES

Photos, Albums, or Videos

Bring out those photos, photo albums, or videos. Reminisce about those times and think about the people and places in the photos. You can use this as an activity with your care receiver, if you wish.

Memory Box / Shadow Box

You may also want to create a memory box. You can make your own shadow box, order one online, or get one at a hobby or craft store. Make the box representative of your "happy place". You can fill it with souvenirs or other memorabilia. Your 'Beach Box' may have shells, beach pictures, sand, and other beach trinkets.

You can create a memory box for your care receiver with pictures of important events (weddings, vacations, military service, family), children, grandchildren, and items that symbolize the memories such as veteran medals, dried flowers, and other items that may trigger memories.

Memory Board

Get a bulletin board of whatever size, cover it with fabric, tack elastic ribbon or braid in place to hold your items in place. Decorate it with your mementos.

WORK TO CREATE RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are vital to our well-being. We need others in our lives for companionship, support, fellowship, and a sense of connection. How can we nurture our relationships?

Think about your supports. Friends, family members, church family - who are the people that help make your life better? Make a list of those people you turn to when you need support.

Connect with friends and family online. Reach out. Send a card or a letter, make a phone call, send an email. Connect to other people.

Take a class. Attend an event. (Do you need someone to stay with your care receiver? There are agencies that offer in-home assistance.)

MUSIC

Music can be blues, rock, orchestral, or anything you like. William Shakespeare said "Music has charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak". Let music take you away. Paul Simon. The theme from 'Exodus' (one of the most powerful pieces ever written IMHO). Narada. Rascal Flatts. BB King. Christone Kingfish Ingram. Beethoven. Mozart. Adele. Endless choices. Perhaps you prefer ocean sounds or other nature sounds. You can find anything from a variety of sources. Let your mind go to your happy place carried along by your favorite music.

MORE THINGS YOU MAY WANT TO TRY

LISTEN TO A PODCAST

Podcasts cover every topic! These are series or stand-alone presentations of audio files which a user can download. Podcasts are often available for subscription and can be downloaded on your phone or computer. Check the App Store, NPR, or use your browser to search for podcasts of interest.

LISTEN TO A BOOK

You can listen to audio books while you do other tasks. You can listen to audio books on the way to the doctor or grocery store.

GET A PRAYER ROCK OR COMFORT STONE

A prayer rock or comfort stone may help you focus. You can use these to center yourself for meditation, prayer, or relaxation. Hold the stone and rub it while thinking about a problem, a prayer, or to focus while meditating. You can find stones or gemstones at craft stores or online, or perhaps you have a stone from a special place that will help you concentrate.

FOCUS ON CLUTTER TO DE-STRESS

A lot of clutter can create more stress in an already stressful situation! The more you ignore the build-up of "stuff", the more effort it takes when you tackle the job! Here are a few things to focus on to get started:

- Organize your important papers. You can use a notebook, protective sheets, or file folders to organize your important documents. You may want to divide your papers into categories that represent your needs such as Medical, Veterans, Medicare, Medicare Supplement, taxes, etc. You can save documents digitally so you have a copy but you need original hard copies of many documents.
- Organize medications. Do you need a simple pill box or do you need something more elaborate such as an electronic pill minder? Perhaps you / your care receiver would benefit from 'blister pack' pre-packaged medications from your pharmacy?
- Do you have your appointments organized? Use an appointment book or your phone.
- Sort your stuff: Keep, Donate, Trash.
- There are professional organizers to help you get organized. Call and price a professional if your space is too overwhelming.

ANYTHING YOU FIND ENJOYABLE AND DE-STRESSING

You know what you enjoy. You know how much "free" time you have, and what you can accomplish in that time. You know what your caregiving demands are.

Perhaps your time today allows for a cup of tea and a few minutes of "ahhh...". That's the time that you don't have to do anything, you don't have to be anywhere, and you don't have to focus on a task. Perhaps you have a little more time, and can consider an activity that takes a little longer. Make a list of things you would enjoy or make a "De-Stressing Jar" filled with activities that you enjoy, grabbing a suggestion when you have time.

AND IN CLOSING

The whole purpose of this booklet is to focus on self-care for you. There are ideas that you can do in a few minutes anywhere. There are activities that take a little longer and involve a little planning. You can adapt the activities so they serve your needs.

Make notes. Add your ideas for self-care.

Remember to take care of you.

One day, you will no longer be a caregiver. Your loved one may downsize which may give you some breathing space. They may go into a long term care facility. (You will still be a caregiver but your role changes.) They may pass away.

You will get through this and you want to get through it in the best condition possible.

You need to be aware of and attentive to your physical health needs (regular check-ups, screening exams, eye exams, mammograms / PSA, and vaccinations). You need to watch your diet. Keep up with family and social contacts.

You also need to be aware of and attentive to your mental health needs.

You probably noticed that your breathing was very important in the meditation and grounding exercises. Taking a few minutes to just breathe can help calm you and put you in a better place. Breathe in for a count of 8 through your nose. Exhale for a count of 8 through your nose. Do this 4-5 times.

Like this breathing exercise, many of the things in this booklet are short and take no great effort.

Be aware of your needs. KNOW and NO your limits. KNOW when you have too much on your plate and be able to say NO to taking more on.

Ask for help. There are a lot of resources for information, services, and support.

Be good to yourself.

SOURCES

- 1 - Family Caregivers Provide Billions of Hours of Care Annually, AARP, <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/financial-legal/info-2019/family-caregiver-contribution-study.html>
- 2 - Real Life Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity, NIA/NIH, <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity/real-life-benefits-exercise-and-physical-activity>
- 3 - You Tube, Yoga4Caregivers: Yoga and Wellness for Caregivers <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzVsyixbUh2bzMIarKuDzkw/videos?reload=9&app=desktop>
- 4 - Breathing Techniques for Stress Relief, WebMD, <https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-relief-breathing-techniques>
- 5 - Exercising to Relax, Harvard Health, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/exercising-to-relax>
- 6 - Caregiver Relaxation Series, Family Caregiver Alliance, <https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiver-relaxation-exercises-series-english/>
- 7 - Are Puzzles Good for Your Brain? 7 Top Cognitive Benefits, Readers Digest, <https://www.rd.com/article/what-happens-to-your-brain-when-do-a-puzzle/>
- 8 - A perfect match: The health benefits of jigsaw puzzles, The Baylor College of Medicine, Houston TX, 10/29/20 <https://blogs.bcm.edu/2020/10/29/a-perfect-match-the-health-benefits-of-jigsaw-puzzles/>
- 9 - The benefits of journaling for stress management, Verywellmind.com, <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-journaling-for-stress-management-3144611>
- 10 - 30 Quick Journal Prompts That Reduce Caregiver Stress and Improve Health, DailyCaring.com, <https://dailycaring.com/30-quick-journal-prompts-that-reduce-caregiver-stress-and-improve-health/>
- 11- Meditation: A simple, fast way to reduce stress, Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858>
- 12 - Stress Management, Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368>
- 13 - Balance.com, Using the Five Senses Grounding Technique, <https://balanceapp.com/blog/5-senses-grounding-technique>

14 - Aromatherapy: Do Essential Oils Really Work?, Johns Hopkins Medicine, <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/aromatherapy-do-essential-oils-really-work#:~:text=What%20Are%20Essential%20Oils%3F,single%20bottle%20of%20essential%20oil>

15 - Do's and Don'ts of Essential Oils, WebMD, <https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/ss/slideshow-essential-oils>

16 - Stress Relief from Laughter? It's no joke, Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

17 - Good Sleep for Good Health, National Institutes of Health, NIH News in Health, <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/04/good-sleep-good-health>

18 - Best Glitter Jar Recipe for Calmness, BrightLittleOwl, <https://brightlittleowl.com/glitter-jar-recipe/>

19 - How to Make a Glitter Jar for Mindfulness <https://heartmindkids.com/how-to-make-a-glitter-jar-for-mindfulness/>

20 - How to Make a Stress Ball: A Step by Step Guide, <https://www.calm.com/blog/make-stress-ball>

21 - Calming Aromatherapy Playdough to reduce Stress and Anxiety, OneEssentialCommunity.com, <https://oneessentialcommunity.com/calming-aromatherapy-playdough>

22 - DIY Lavender Aromatherapy Playdough for Stress, Healthline, <https://www.healthline.com/health/diy-aromatherapy-playdough-for-stress#DIY-aromatherapy-playdough-for-stress-relief>

Photos by Ann Kogler unless otherwise noted

APPENDIX: WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Resources cited in the Appendix are NOT endorsed by Altnheim Resource Services or MC Wellness Coaching. You need to check with your primary health care provider before initiating exercises or alternative therapies. Research information to your satisfaction.

The websites worked when this booklet was completed.

GENERAL RESOURCES

You Tube

Pinterest

Search the topic through your preferred search engine

Library

EXERCISE / MOVEMENT

National Institutes of Health / National Institute on Aging, Exercise and Physical Activity

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity>

National Institutes of Health / National Institute on Aging, order publications

https://order.nia.nih.gov/?_gl=1*8qcdoj*_ga*MjAzMDY4OTAxMy4xNzEyMDg3MTI5*_ga_TK3CE80DBZ*MTcyNzgxMTY4My40LjEuMTcyNzgxMTg3Ni4yOS4wLjA.

National Council on Aging, Exercise and Fitness

<https://www.ncoa.org/older-adults/health/exercise-fitness/>

*PUZZLING ACTIVITIES

There are online jigsaw puzzle sites.

Jigsaw Planet: <https://www.jigsawplanet.com>

Jigsaw Explorer: <https://www.jigsawexplorer.com>

*WORD SEARCH, ANAGRAMS, CRYPTOGRAMS

Cryptograms, word search, and more can be created at <https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>

There are numerous apps for phones (Scrabble, Hooked on Words, and more) Look where you get apps

*JOURNALING

"4 Best Journaling Apps of 2024", <https://zapier.com/blog/best-journaling-apps>

"Better Health for Aging, Tools for Caregivers: How Journals Can Help"

<https://betterhealthwhileaging.net/tools-for-caregivers-how-journals-can-help/>

Make your own

"How to Start and Keep a Journal" - <https://www.samuelthomasdavies.com/journaling-template/>

"How to Write a Reflective Journal with Tips and Examples" - <https://penzu.com/how-to-write-a-reflective-journal>

Journal (book) sources

Wal-Mart, Staples, Hallmark, CVS, Amazon, Target, craft stores, book stores

Spiral bound notebooks, 3-ring binder, computer

*MEDITATION

"How to Meditate", Mindful.org, <https://www.mindful.org>

"How Meditation Could Change the Brain", <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/13/health/meditation-science-wellness/index.html>

Faith-based: "How We Grow", <https://jasonbybee.com/2024/04/07/how-we-grow-meditation/>

Guided imagery exercise: "Taking Charge of Your Wellbeing",
https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/survivorship/sites/default/files/PDFs/Guided%20Imagery%20S_cript.pdf

Try recording this to help with your concentration

*POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

"40 positive affirmations for better self-care and brighter days", Kaiser Permanente,
<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health-wellness/healtharticle.40-positive-affirmations>

*USE YOUR SENSES

"How to Use Your Five Senses to Manage Stress Levels", <https://www.verywellmind.com/coping-with-stress-using-self-soothing-skills-2797579>

You may not be able to travel but you can still see some interesting places on Aerial America, through You Tube videos, and in books.

Massage

Massage incorporates touch and quite often music (hearing) and smell (aromatic massage oils).

Under the Elder Tree, Wheeling WV, 304 909-3050

<https://www.undertheeldertree.com/>

Oglebay Resort, West Spa, Wheeling WV 304 243-4130

<https://oglebay.com/the-west-spa/>

Your local Chamber of Commerce may have business members offering massage

Search "Massage Therapy Near Me" through your preferred search engine

American Massage Therapy Association - find a therapist

<https://www.amtamassage.org/find-massage-therapist/>

GROUNDING MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUE

Here is another technique. The author makes the script available for download.

"Body Scan Prayer", <https://esthermariesmith.com/body-scan-prayer-with-instructions-and-script/>

Here is the script for another body scan meditation from the Veterans Administration.

<https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/docs/Script-Body-Scan.pdf>

The Emotional Wellness Guide from Kendall at Oberlin may be a helpful resource

https://resources.kao.kendal.org/emotional-wellness-guide?qad_source=1&qclid=Cj0KCQjwmt24BhDPARIsAJFYKk27bFdisdnUj-8rFIu7kQalhjEIB2X-CQDS783A4QPCRKqjL1bXz24aAsezEALw_wcB

ESSENTIAL OILS / AROMATHERAPY

Be cautious with sources of essential oils (EO). Some are 100% EO, some are blended with a carrier oil. Others have other ingredients. Fragrance oils are NOT essential oils. Look for 100% EO.

Essential oils can be relaxing or energizing. Cedarwood, clary sage, and lavender are examples of calming oils. You can use individual oils or you can use blends. Learn about the properties of EO and the blends that you may find helpful. Make sure to use quality oils.

"11 Essential Oils: Their Benefits and How to Use Them", <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/essential-oils-101-do-they-work-how-do-you-use-them>

"How to Use Essential Oils", <https://www.doterra.com/US/en/using-essential-oils>

"Ten Best Essential Oil Brands" - one bloggers opinion

<https://www.essentialoilhaven.com/best-essential-oil-brands>

Products and blogs

Plant Therapy - <https://www.planttherapy.com>

Rocky Mountain Oils - <https://www.rockymountainoils.com>

Piping Rock - <https://www.pipingrock.com>
Vitality Extracts - <https://www.vitalityextracts.com>

Membership companies: Mid-Level Marketing
doTerra - <https://www.doterra.com/US/en>
Young Living Essential Oils - https://www.youngliving.com/en_US

Dementia Society of America, "Dementia and Aromatherapy",
<https://www.dementiasociety.org/post/dementia-and-aromatherapy>

"The Complete Book of Essential Oils and Aromatherapy", Valerie Ann Worwood, New World Library, November 15, 2016, is recommended by The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy.

There are many books on essential oils. Check at the library or online.

HUMOR

"The Healing Benefits of Humor and Laughter", UW Integrative Health,
<https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/files/webfm-uploads/documents/outreach/im/tool-healing-benefits-humor-laughter.pdf>

"105 Short Jokes Anyone Can Remember", <https://www.rd.com/jokes>
Joke of the Day, Laugh Factory, <https://www.laughfactory.com/jokes>

Laughter is good for us. Read "[The Healing Benefits of Humor and Laughter](#)". There are physiological and psychological benefits to laughing. Check out the article.

You Tube: Search for "humor"

SLEEP

Have you tried a white noise machine? You could use a fan or a machine that puts out a sound that can be conducive to sleep.

"How Noise Can Affect Your Sleep Satisfaction", talks about noise and sleep
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/noise-and-sleep>

"Top 18 White Noise Machines to Help You Sleep", Good Housekeeping,
https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/q39124522/top-white-noise-machines/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=mgu_ga_ghk_b1_md_dsa_comm_mix_us_19716985917&qad_source=1&qclid=EAiaIQobChMIytP8hMzziAMV3aZaBR3jFzoyEAAYAyAAEgIYp_D_BwE

"Best White Noise Machines", Consumer Reports,

https://www.consumerreports.org/health/sleeping/best-white-noise-machines-a3738329132/?EXTKEY=ZC09GDM1&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIytP8hMzziAMV3aZaBR3jFzoyEAAyBCAAEgLcw_D_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds

You can find inexpensive white noise machines on Amazon.

EASY CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Recipes for glitter jars are much the same across the sites I visited. This site offers more details in

How to Make Calming DIY Glitter Jars : <https://www.hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/handmade/how-to-make-glitter-jars>

EASY ACTIVITIES

Senior Navigator offers several ideas for easy activities in their article "[Family Caregivers Activities and Entertainment Ideas](#)"

DE-STRESSING ACTIVITIES

"[20 + Activities for Managing Caregiver Stress](#)" from UPCAP in Michigan offers some de-stressing activities.

Music

You Tube has any type of music. Sirius radio, Music Choice on cable, Spotify, and many other options are available. However you get your music - play it.

Instant Relief from Stress and Anxiety, Birds Singing in the Forest, Deep Healing Music for The Body from [Open Heart Music](#)

MORE THINGS YOU MAY WANT TO TRY

De-Cluttering

There are professional organizers who can help you with de-cluttering.

National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals

Do a search: <https://napo.empowereddirectory.com/>

Answers to Anagrams:

Anagrams

Unscramble the words to make a 'caregiving' word.

STRE = REST

RINGAC = CARING

YLHETAH = HEALTHY

SFTA EY = SAFETY

E E I Y S R N T = SERENITY

S N I F R E D = FRIENDS

T R A G E D U I T = GRATITUDE

L F P H O E U = HOPEFUL

S S R V E E I C = SERVICES

H F T A I = FAITH

Y F L A I M = FAMILY

Cryptograms can be challenging!

CRYPTOGRAMS offer us the opportunity to try to figure out what a scrambled quote is when we're given two or three key letters.

KA'CA RGG YIPV KRGDOHQ ARXE ZVEAC EZUA. CIUO
C = R R = A U = M

WE'RE ALL JUST WALKING EACH OTHER HOME. RUMI