

For Carers, by Carers: Looking After Yourself



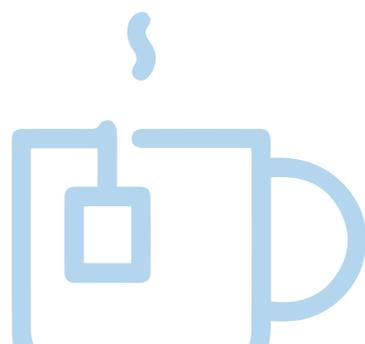
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When caring for someone with dementia, it is so easy to have all of your time taken up caring for that person that you don't think about yourself. It is extremely important to look after yourself to ensure that you continue to have the physical and mental wellbeing to continue your caring role. There may also be times when you realise that you might need a wee bit more support. If you are honest about the person you are caring for, then, by accepting extra support, either temporarily or complementing your own caring role, you can enhance the positive care which you provide to the person with dementia while maintaining your own wellbeing.

What works for one person may not work for another. Figure out what works for you - you probably already know!



“If you get sick, it’s very difficult to support the person with dementia. The best advice is to look after yourself first. That’s extremely difficult for a carer, but essential when looking after a loved one.”

“Try to keep in touch with the people you care about, and who care about you. This can be a great source of support if you’re struggling.”

What carers would like to share with you:

Look after your health

- “Make sure that you do some sort of regular physical exercise, like going for a walk, to keep your strength up and take your mind off things.”
- “Try your best to eat a varied diet and drink lots of water.”

Look after your happiness

- “Try to maintain hobbies and interests, even if on a reduced scale. Keep doing the things that make you “you”.”
- “Take time to enjoy the simple things in life. Pet a dog, smell a flower, go outside and look up to the sky. Be sure to treat yourself, you deserve it.”
- “Above all, try to keep a sense of humour. This helps to maintain a positive attitude and will help you carry on when things aren’t going your way.”

Talk to people

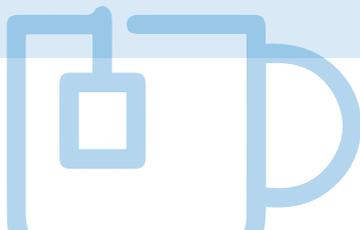
- “Talking to other carers is very important to share experiences and coping mechanisms.”
- “You never know what other help is available till you ask. Always worth a try!”

Go easy on yourself

- “Don’t feel guilty about taking a break. Sometimes you need a break from your caring role to recharge.”
- “Be kind to yourself when you have a bad day. If you need a good cry, have one and don’t feel bad about it.”
- “Don’t rush yourself. Be honest with yourself about what you can and cannot do, and give yourself a bit more time to do things.”
- “Do not compare yourself to others. You are doing a wonderful job in a way only you can do it.”

Did You Know?

1. Your Local Authority can assist you with respite from caring for a person with dementia. For more information, ask your local carer organisation or contact your Local Authority directly.
2. Self-Directed Support (SDS) is available via Local Authorities. Self-Directed Support is about people having more choice and control over their support. If



you are offered a service from a social worker, you must be made aware that there are other options available. Check with Alzheimer Scotland or your Social Worker on how to access it.

3. Local Authorities have a legal duty to offer the 4 options of Self-Directed Support to everyone who uses social care, including people with dementia.
4. There are a range of social security benefits you may be entitled to as a carer. These can be quite complex, and it is a good idea to seek professional advice. To find out more, contact your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau or visit them online at: <https://www.cas.org.uk/>
5. Your Local Carers Trust and Organisations are there to help you. Ask them for advice.
6. The Alzheimer Scotland Freephone help line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week: Tel: 0808 808 3000

