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5 Steps to Being the Best Caregiver You Can Be



Most people care for loved ones at some point in their lives, according to the Family Caregiving Alliance. This may mean helping a family member or friend with tasks such as taking him or her to medical appointments, doing grocery shopping, looking after legal and financial matters, and assisting with daily medications. Are you new to the caregiver role? Here are some steps you may want to take.

- 1 Determine where you're needed most.** Every care situation is different, and circumstances can change over time. So it helps to understand what the person in your care may need help with from day to day, including:
 - Health care: medication management, [all medical appointments](#)
 - Emotional care: companionship, conversation, encouragement
 - Household care: cooking, cleaning, laundry
 - Personal care: bathing, eating, dressing
 - Everyday care: running errands
- 2 Create a care plan.** Once you know the needs of the person in your care, you can create a written care plan. This plan will help you look after the person in your care—and yourself. Keep in mind that a care plan will always be a work in progress, as needs and priorities change over time. When creating your care plan, consider:
 - Making a list of things you have time for and are able to do for the person in your care
 - Writing down what you'll need help with—either now or in the near future. Think about who can help you look after the person in your care (for example, family, friends, neighbors)
 - Creating a schedule for the tasks included in your care plan
- 3 Ask about financial and legal matters.** Most people tend to keep their finances and legal affairs private, but the person in your care may need help with paying the bills, investing, or other financial matters. Assisting with these things can be a sensitive matter, so you might start by sitting down with the person in your care to discuss how you can help. If necessary, you may need to contact a lawyer for help reviewing or drawing up legal documents, such as a living will or a power of attorney.



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- 5 **Take care of yourself, too.** When you're caring for a loved one, you may at times set aside concerns about your own health and well-being. That is why it's important to make time for yourself when you can. For example, getting regular physical activity can help you feel better and boost your energy levels. It's important to eat regular, nutritious meals as well, and to get your scheduled medical checkups. All of these things can help you stay healthier and more energized, which can help you do your best when caring for a loved one. You'll find more valuable tips [here](#).

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