

Reclaiming small pockets of time

by Nicole Byers

We often encourage caregivers to take care of themselves, too. One of the most common responses I hear is, “there is no time”. And it can certainly feel that way when you’re a caregiver. After cooking all the meals for the day, completing personal care tasks, doing several loads of laundry, attending appointments and finally getting your care recipient into bed, you’re exhausted – with nothing left in the tank for yourself.

I get it. I’ve been there.

What if you didn’t have to wait until everything was done to make space for yourself? What if you could reclaim small pockets of time throughout the day? Let me share **three ways** I’ve been able to do that.

While the coffee brews

In the morning, while my coffee brews, I do a few stretches at my counter. I stretch out my calves, do a modified standing downward dog and sometimes a little ragdoll pose, folding forward, letting my arms be heavy, then slowly rising back up. This little sequence takes about two minutes, it loosens my body and clears my mind for whatever the day is going to throw at me. You can also sneak in a few deep breaths during these stretches!

Gentle movement

I spend a lot of time in the kitchen. Like, a lot. When I am cooking or emptying the dishwasher, I’ve started to put on music to boost my mood and to encourage some gentle movement. Sometimes I shimmy between the trips from the dishwasher and the cupboard. Or, as I cut up my veggies for supper, I take a second to belt out a few lines of the song on the radio.

Lately, I’ve been tuning in to 96.5 FM for their non-stop Christmas music. It’s a real crowd-pleaser in my house. Just kidding – it mostly pleases me. My two-year-old is only happy with “She’ll be coming ‘round the mountain,” and my partner usually responds with a smile and a teasing eye roll. But it brings me joy, so I keep saying yes to this.



Finding time to breathe

Some days are packed with appointments, leaving little time to breathe. Even without medical visits, there can be a lot of rushing from here to there! So lately, as I walk from an appointment to my car, I try to take in my surroundings. The cool fall air on my cheeks, filling my lungs. It’s crisp and makes me feel alive. The wind, the street traffic, the people passing by – they remind me I’m not alone in this.

These are just three ways I’ve been able to carve out small moments for myself throughout the day. Try them on, see if any of them work for you.

And remember: we’re all doing our best out here. You’re only one person, and you can only do what you can do. So please, go easy on yourself, and give yourself permission to take care of you, too. You not only deserve it, but your body demands it.



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