

Caregiver Summer Self-Care Guide



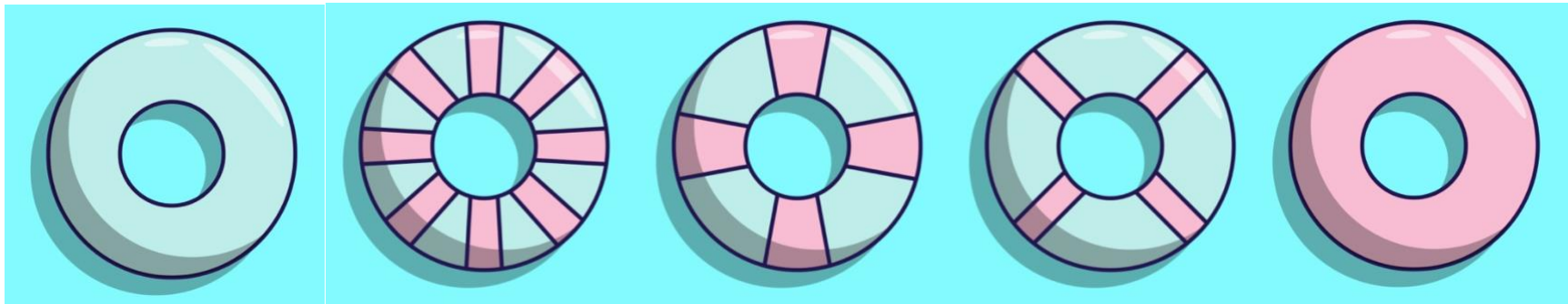


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Foreword

It's summer! The sun is out, the days are longer, and there are so many activities to do! It can also feel like a busy time with no school for the kids to go to. It's important to take the time to care for yourself and make sure you can get some R & R. This guide includes a variety of self-care and fun activities to support you throughout the summer.





Take Care of Your Body



Our mental health is connected to our physical health, so it's important to make sure we are taking care of our bodies this summer. We can do this in several ways:

- **Drink plenty of fluids:** Women should have about 11.5 cups/day; men should have about 15.5 cups/day. Fluids can include water, other beverages, and food.
- **Balance movement and rest:** Movement helps the body and mind. Movement aids in our physical health, as well as boosts energy levels and mood. For rest, physical, mental, and emotional rest helps our bodies and minds to recover.
- **Get enough sleep:** Sleep helps with energy conservation and storage, self-repair and recovery, and maintenance for the brain. Getting the right amount of sleep helps us to function well during the day! See the Sleep Hygiene Handout for more info.



Spend Time in the Fresh Air



Spending time in nature leads to a variety of health benefits. Being outside can help with boosting the immune system, cleansing the lungs, reducing stress, improving sleep quality, and increasing cognitive function (including memory, attention, and creativity). Here are some ways you can enjoy the outside:

- Take a walk on a nature trail or around your neighborhood
- Lounge outside instead of on the couch (e.g., lawn chair, blanket)
- Spend some time by a body of water
- Go to your local Farmer's Market
- Have a cookout, barbecue, or garden party
- Go on a nature scavenger hunt with the kids in your care
- Start a garden or join a community garden

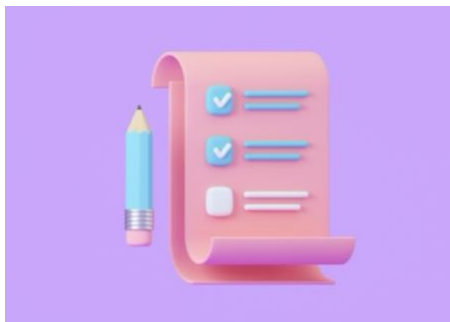




Keeping a Structure



A summer schedule for you and your family is usually different from your schedule throughout the rest of the year. Keep some structure and stay organized with these tips:



- Create a calendar (either a hard copy or virtually with Google calendar, Outlook Calendar, Fantastical, Calendly or the calendar on your phone)
- Set reminders for at least 1-day prior to an event and 1-hour prior
- Prioritize what is on the to-do list for you and for your family
- Set boundaries – it's okay to say no to things are not necessary and will wear out your energy



Summer Activities at Home



- Make a DIY refreshing spray – add cool water and peppermint/spearmint essential oils into a spray bottle
- Make a reading nook – set up a comfy nook for yourself either outside or inside where you can relax and enjoy summer reading
- Set up a summer playlist – pull together your favorite upbeat songs
- Make popsicles or a homemade ice cream bar – you get to pick which flavors and toppings you use for your home ice cream shop
- Take a digital detox – spend a day (or just a few hours) away from your phone and other electronics
- S'more fun – make s'mores by a campfire or inside with the microwave

Conclusion

Summer is thought of as a season of growth, but it can also be a season to reset and, hopefully, relax a bit. As a caregiver, you are constantly growing through your experiences and becoming a better version of you, day-by-day. It's important to also take some self-care time and reward yourself for all that you do!

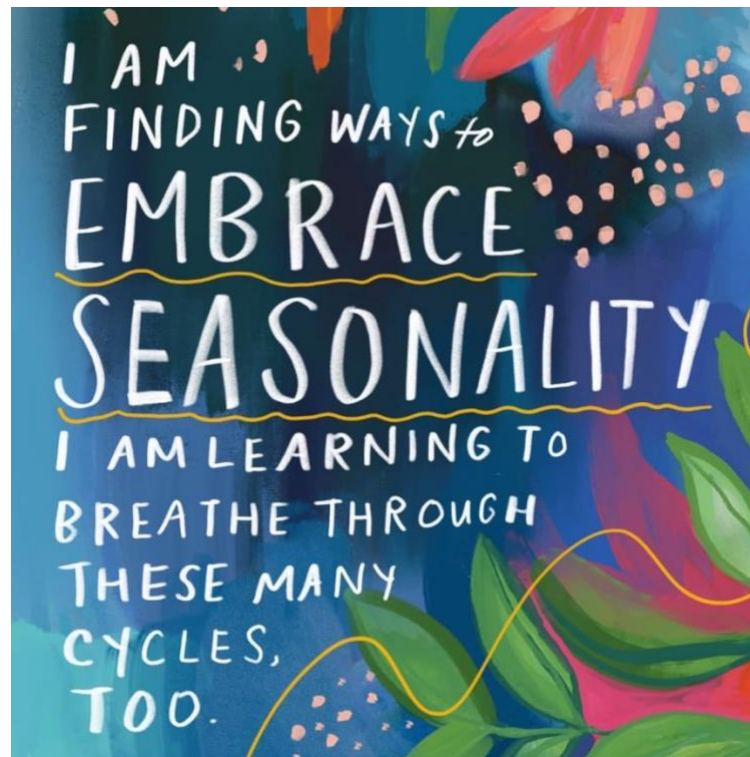


Image credit: Morgan Harper Nichols