



Coping with caregiver fatigue


If you care for a loved one with a chronic or terminal health condition or disability, you've probably felt exhausted at times, both physically and emotionally.

Caregiver fatigue is a term that experts give to the chronic fatigue that many [caregivers](#) face. Chronic fatigue that's not relieved by sleep is the main symptom of caregiver fatigue. Other signs and symptoms may include feeling anxious or helpless; feeling anger toward your loved one that leads to guilt, irritability or poor concentration; limiting contact with friends and family; and losing interest in hobbies or activities outside of the home.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Your friends, family, neighbors and church can all lend a hand in some way if you ask them. Social workers also can be helpful. Your doctor may refer you to one, or you can locate social workers in your area online at <http://www.helppro.com/nasw/BasicSearch.aspx>.

While there are no easy solutions to caregiver fatigue, you can lessen its effects. Here are some ideas.

- Spend time with people who understand your situation or join a caregiver support group. If you can't easily leave your home, reach out to others by phone or through social media.
- Schedule respite care for your loved one to give yourself a break. Try in-home respite, adult care centers, short-term nursing homes or day hospitals.

 **Take care of yourself. If you're not healthy, you can't care for your loved one effectively.**



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Turning the page: Get Mayo Clinic health information online

You're holding the final issue of the *Mayo Clinic Healthy Living* newsletter, formally known as *EmbodHealth*.

With more and more patients turning to online sources for health information, Mayo Clinic has decided to discontinue this newsletter and focus on digital publication. The *Healthy Living* newsletter will no longer be mailed to the homes of active and retired carpenters covered by

the Carpenters Health and Security Trust of Western Washington.

Since introduced to our membership in 2006, this newsletter has been a vitally important source of health information for participants and their families. The Trust remains committed to providing well-researched information and innovative tools to help you improve and maintain your health.

Mayo Clinic's reputation is unsurpassed in the areas of medical care, research and education. Through online delivery, carpenters and dependents can still access and benefit from the work of more than 3,300 physicians, scientists and researchers at Mayo Clinic who are working to improve patient care and quality of life.

Email newsletter: If you're not already a recipient, you're encouraged to subscribe to

continued on back cover



EXPERT INSIGHT

Healthy relationships at work

BY GREGORY (GREG) P. COUSER, M.D.

Dr. Couser is the medical director of the Employee Assistance Program at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

How well you get along with your co-workers affects how well you do at work and how much you enjoy it. Build good [relationships](#) at work with these tips.

Keep shared goals in mind. A common goal can strengthen the bonds between co-workers and help you work together better.

Give credit where it's due. Simple compliments go a long way.

Solve problems together. Everyone brings unique talents to the table. It's important to be willing to work as a team.

Respect each other. No one is right all of the time. Good working relationships allow for valid differences of opinion. You can

disagree with someone else and still do it with respect for that person.

Accept each other. In great relationships, you accept others, warts and all.

Set – and respect – boundaries. Respecting physical space, knowing when to back off when someone's busy and not giving too much information are all examples.

Listen. Making sure that others feel heard and understood will help strengthen your workplace relationships.

Injury prevention for computer use

If you use a computer at work, try these tips to help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome.

Repetitive motion injuries are a serious concern at work. Repetitive motion, including using a computer, can lead to conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Relax as much as possible at the keyboard. Type with a light touch.

Stretch your fingers, hands, arms and torso for a minute or two every 30 minutes.

Tilt your keyboard tray away from you so that you don't have to bend your wrists to type.

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Want access to the health experts at Mayo Clinic?

This newsletter provides it. Mayo Clinic's 3,700 physicians, scientists and researchers help develop and review articles in this publication. Our editorial board also reviews each article to ensure that we're offering accurate, action-oriented information.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Top 7 tips from Mayo Clinic experts

BY STEPHANIE K. VAUGHAN, MANAGING EDITOR, MAYO CLINIC

A journalist for 15 years, Ms. Vaughan is managing editor of this newsletter at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

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If you're like me, you've read or heard things that have stuck with you. Maybe it's a favorite quote or a piece of advice that's helped shape the way you look at life and the choices you make.

In my seven years at Mayo Clinic, I've been inspired by many things I've heard and read while working on this newsletter. To commemorate the final issue of this newsletter, I'd like to share the top seven pieces of Mayo Clinic advice that have become a part of my daily lifestyle in the seven years I've worked on this newsletter.



#7 – Matthew M. Clark, Ph.D., L.P.

“You likely are doing well in some areas of wellness but are challenged by others. Remember to give yourself credit for the things you're doing well. Then, look at the areas that could use improvement and think about positive changes you can make.”



#6 – Laurie J. Spresser, L.M.S.W.

“Never underestimate the value of family. Life is a journey we share with those who surround us. Good or bad, lessons are learned, strengths are gained, and laughs, even in the darkest moments, can be shared.”



#5 – Maria L. Collazo-Clavell, M.D.

“Here's one more very personal reason to move more: because you deserve to feel good. Physical activity can help you do just that. So don't think about exercise for weight loss; focus on how good it can make you feel.”



#4 – Donald D. Hensrud, M.D.

“A healthy diet is a plan that works for you – one that includes the right types of foods in the right amounts, in a way that you can enjoy and sustain long term.”



#3 – Katherine M. Piderman, Ph.D.

“Spirituality is an opportunity to experience life at the deepest level. It gives you a way to approach each day with wonder and gratitude, grace and generosity, meaning and purpose.”



#2 – Amit Sood, M.D.

“When you're facing a stressor, ask yourself, *Will this matter in 20 years?* If the answer is no, let it go.”



#1 – Brent A. Bauer, M.D.

“Always make sure you have a good foundation for wellness – daily exercise, a whole-foods and plant-based diet, 30 to 60 minutes each day of activities that help you manage stress, and connecting regularly to those who bring meaning to your life.”

These quotes inspire me to live life to the fullest. I hope they inspire you, too, and help you think about quotes and phrases that can motivate you along your wellness journey!



WELLNESS@WORK

I have been an avid stair climber for about 30 years. Not only does stair climbing improve cardiovascular health but also builds muscle mass, tones your lower body, burns a lot of calories and helps prevent osteoporosis. I have encouraged my co-workers to take the stairs more often, and many of them are doing so. – **Glenda M., education administration coordinator**

Short bouts of exercise: A good idea?

National physical activity guidelines say that adults should get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate activity, 75 minutes a week of vigorous activity or a combination of the two. The guidelines also say that this activity should be done for at least 10 minutes at a time.

But new research is challenging this 10-minute rule. In a recent study, researchers learned that people who exercised using high-intensity [interval training](#) were less likely to be overweight. This was true even when they exercised for less than 10 minutes at a time.

Does this mean you should ignore the guidelines and just get short, intense bouts of physical activity? No. Research shows that getting at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week leads to better health and lowers health risks. It's unclear if you'll get these same benefits and maintain weight loss if you rely solely on high-intensity interval training.

Spring into spring training

Get in shape for spring and summer sports with these tips.

Get back to basics.

Drink the right amount of water before, during and after your workouts. Always take the time to warm up and cool down.


Watch what you eat.

If your healthy-eating habits lapsed over the winter, now is the time to revert to healthier habits. A nutritious, balanced diet can help strengthen your muscles, increase your endurance and prepare you for an active summer.

Ease into your activity.

Exercising too much, too fast, can cause injury and leave you sidelined for the season. If you've been inactive, recondition your body slowly and gradually increase your activity level.

Be realistic. Exercise at an intensity that matches your age and fitness level. Set small, realistic goals to increase your intensity over time.

 **Stay on track with your physical activity even when summer ends.**

Living well with diabetes: 7 daily tips

1. Test your blood sugar as often as your doctor recommends.
2. Wash and dry your feet daily, drying carefully between your toes. Also check your feet every day for red spots, cuts, swelling and blisters. Using a hand-held mirror can help. If you find something of concern, call your doctor.
3. Take medications as directed.
4. Brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss at least once a day.
5. Keep your skin clean, dry and moisturized.
6. If your doctor says it's OK, get at least 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity a day most days of the week.
7. Eat healthy foods. Include fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats and poultry, dried peas or beans, lentils, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.


integrative insights

Drug-free options for chronic pain

If you have chronic pain, you know how hard it can be to manage – physically, emotionally and mentally. Although medication is often used to treat pain, there are other ways that you can manage it, too.

Therapy	What the research says
Acupuncture, in which needles the width of a human hair are inserted along certain points on the body	Linked to fewer or less painful headaches. Helps low back, neck pain, fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis.
Massage therapy	Helps low back, shoulder pain. May help fibromyalgia, neck pain.
Dietary supplements	Supplements such as fish oil and glucosamine and chondroitin can help ease pain in some conditions. Supplements riboflavin and coenzyme Q10 and herbs feverfew and butterbur are linked to fewer or less painful headaches. Devil's claw may help osteoarthritis pain. Ginger may help arthritis pain.
Exercises that involve meditation, mindfulness, relaxation and deep breathing, such as yoga, tai chi, qi gong	Tai chi may reduce osteoarthritis pain. Yoga may help low back pain. Yoga and tai chi may help neck pain. Meditation can help low back, neck, shoulder pain, headache. Mindfulness can help reduce chronic pain.
Chiropractic care, in which a licensed doctor uses leverage and exercises to adjust your spine and correct alignment problems	Can help relieve low back, neck, shoulder pain, headache.

These approaches shouldn't replace your medical treatment. If you're interested in or already using one of these strategies, talk with your doctor to ensure that it's right for you. Your doctor can also advise you on the right dosages if you're interested in supplements.

 **Practices like these aren't a quick fix for pain. But as part of your everyday habits, they may help you manage your pain with less medication. Ask your health care team if these approaches may help you.**



MYSTORY

Jon Hanson

Jon Hanson lives by three simple words:
now, here, this.

Now is today. *Here* means “I’m with you.” *This* means “I’m doing this with you.”

“Now, here, this” helps Jon focus on the present moment. This has become especially important now as he faces the end of his life.

In 2012, Jon got grim news. “They said, ‘You have stage 4 cancer. It’s in your lung, back, pelvis and lymph nodes. There’s very little that we can do.’ What I thought I heard was I was going to be dead in two to three months. I just wanted to make it through Thanksgiving and Christmas,” Jon says.

Jon takes each day as it comes by taking care of his emotional health. Here’s what he focuses on every day.

- **“Relationships are number one. Work on them,”** Jon says.
- **Taking care of animals.** Jon and his wife have two dogs, and Jon has spent many years rescuing

animals. “It’s given me peace. I thank God that I get to do that.”

- **Spirituality.** In part because he struggles with not knowing what happens after you die, Jon has started learning more about religion and spirituality.
- **Helping others.** “My main goal in life is to always be there to try to help out,” Jon says.

As Jon takes his journey toward the end of his life, each day is full of meaning and purpose. This is largely because he always tries to take care of his emotional health. For Jon, this includes being good to others.

“It’s something I work on every day,” Jon says. Sharing his best advice, he says, “Try your best to brighten someone’s day. Be that somebody to help somebody. Time goes by in a flash. You don’t want to be the person that looks back at their life and thinks, ‘If I only would have.’”

Editor’s note: Jon Hanson died Jan. 27, at home, surrounded by his wife, family and good friend, Jeff.

End-of-life care: How you can help a loved one

When someone you care about is facing the end of life, you can help just by being there and remembering that your loved one is still the same person. From there, let these cues help guide your support.

► **When months or years are left,** most people often want to talk about their disease and expected death, but not all the time. They don’t want it to be the center of their lives.

► **When months or weeks are left,** your loved one will likely want to take care of any issues related to future events or planning.

► **In the last days and hours,** comfort and saying goodbye are the biggest concerns. Your loved one will likely want to see the people he or she holds most dear.

► **At the very end of life,** having close friends and family near is most important.

“At any stage, treat people who are facing the end of their lives as they’ve always been treated,” says **Timothy J. Moynihan, M.D.**, who specializes in end-of-life care at **Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.** “Adjust what you do based on who they are.”

Ready in
25
minutes

Serves
8

(1¼ cup each)

Quick and tasty chicken vegetable soup



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Nutrition analysis per serving:

130 calories, 1.5 g total fat (5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 g monounsaturated fat), 20 mg cholesterol, 200 mg sodium, 17 g total carbohydrate (3 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars), 9 g protein

- 1 28-oz. package frozen vegetables
- 8 cups no-salt-added chicken broth
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 T finely chopped fresh parsley or 1 T dried parsley
- ¾ cup whole-wheat noodles
- 6 oz. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, diced

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a large pan and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 9 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.
2. Remove cover and add parsley, noodles and chicken. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove from heat and serve.



MYSTORY

Nutrition: Ron Norton

Two years ago, Ron Norton was admitted to the hospital with congestive heart failure. While in the hospital, Ron took classes geared toward helping people with heart disease make healthy-eating decisions.

For the next year, Ron tried to apply what he'd learned. But he needed more help.

Through nutrition classes at a local wellness center, he learned to plan meals and create heart-healthy dishes.

Here are some lessons Ron learned.

- Swap ingredients in recipes for what you have on hand. If you don't have one vegetable, for example, use another.
- Herbs add enough flavor that you don't have to add salt or fat to your foods.

- Knowing how to use a knife makes it easier to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables, which means you're likely to eat them more often.
- It's helpful to know which oils are healthy and which ones are suited for cooking vs. salad dressing.

All of these skills have made a difference in Ron's life. "When I eat healthier, I feel better," he says.



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6 ways to spring-clean your diet

1. Eat 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables each day.
2. Opt for [whole grains](#) over refined versions.
3. Limit foods with added sugars.
4. Opt for low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
5. Choose lean proteins, such as fish, skinless poultry, beans, egg whites and nuts.
6. Include small amounts of healthy fats, such as olive or canola oil or nuts.

HealthQuestions

Q Can fainting be a sign of heart trouble?

A Yes. Disturbances in the rate and rhythm of your heart can cause fainting. Problems with the structure of your heart that change how your blood flows also can cause fainting. For people with heart problems, fainting can be a warning sign that sudden cardiac arrest may occur.

But at the same time, there are many other causes of fainting, some that aren't as serious. In fact, most fainting spells are not a warning sign of sudden death. A fainting spell may be a warning sign if it's brought on after minimal symptoms or happens during exercise, especially swimming or sprinting. If you faint after hearing a sudden noise, such as a car horn honking or a doorbell ringing, this also could be a warning sign. If any of these describe your fainting spell, see your doctor.

If you faint after feeling dizzy or lightheaded, this is likely not serious, and your doctor can give you tips for trying to keep this from happening again in the future.

Get Mayo Clinic health information online

continued from front cover

the e-newsletter, *Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth This Week*. With your permission, Mayo Clinic will send it to you weekly free of charge. If you're a registered user of the EmbodyHealth website (www.carpentershealth.org), Mayo Clinic already has a valid email address on file for you. Signing up for the newsletter requires just a few mouse clicks.

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EmbodyHealth website: If you can subscribe to the email newsletter, you obviously have another way to tap Mayo Clinic's vast expertise on healthy living.

The EmbodyHealth website (www.carpentershealth.org) is not your typical health website. Unlike many public sites, EmbodyHealth is not papered with drug ads and commercial messaging. The Carpenters Health and Security Trust pays a monthly fee every month so health plan members have the benefit of credible, research-based articles, information and advice. There is no out-of-pocket cost for members, but medical eligibility (non-Medicare) is required.

EmbodyHealth caters to everyday people with busy lives. The site can be personalized so it presents information related to topics you're interested in learning about. On the Home page, find My Health Interests in the right sidebar and select Edit to see a menu of topics. With your interests defined, you're more likely to see and find what you want in a shorter amount of time.

EmbodyHealth is more than just a library of information about diseases, conditions, drugs, tests and procedures. The website is a health management toolbox, offering dozens of ways to take better care of yourself.

- Healthy recipes from Mayo Clinic's best-selling cookbooks
- Fitness, weight and stress programs
- Tools for setting goals, logging activities, and tracking progress
- Self assessments and calculators
- Online symptom checker

Remember: High-quality healthcare is about getting the right care at the right time for the right reason. With trusted resources from Mayo Clinic at your fingertips, you get information based on fact, not hype, so your decisions are more likely to produce the best outcomes and highest value for your healthcare benefits.