



Having one of *those* days?

Try these pick-me-ups: 10 minutes to yourself that reverberate much further into your day.

1. Read something funny.

Laughter has been shown to trigger the relaxation response, lower heart rate and blood pressure, and even boost the immune system and ease pain. It might seem corny to dive into a comic book collection, a joke book, or a few minutes of *America's Funniest Home Videos*, but the effects are real.

2. Crank the volume.

Music therapy is often used to calm or stimulate dementia patients, but it can have similar effects on anyone. Playing music with a strong beat has an energizing effect. Melodic orchestral or acoustic tunes can improve thinking and focus. To get the full pick-me-up effect, raise the volume so that the music fills the room. Really *listen*.

3. Take a power nap.

Ten minutes of shut-eye might not sound like much, but it can be enough to feel restorative, especially if

you've had a disrupted night's sleep. Mid-afternoon rest, when the body clock is at a natural lull, is thought to be especially productive.

4. Pump a little iron.

Lifting free weights tones your arms and strengthens your bones -- but those are long-term extras on top of the energy boost this simple (and not too sweaty) workout provides. If you've never used a handheld weight, start with two- or three-pound dumbbells. Lift the weights in sets of 8 to 10 slow repetitions, increasing the amount of the weight over time.

5. Write a letter.

Simmering resentment, anger or frustration can sap energy. Psychologists sometimes use this tool to help people let go of energy-blocking ruminations: Write a letter to yourself or your loved one. Put in everything you're feeling. Describe specific incidents. Imagine what you wish had happened instead, or what you wish for in general.

(Source: www.caring.com)

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Caregivers CORNER

A quarterly newsletter for
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bits & pieces

- Americans over age 65 who will get Alzheimer's disease: 1 in 8. Those over age 85 who will get Alzheimer's: 1 in 2.



HOME
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Protect the elderly against scams

While it seems unconscionable to most, unscrupulous men and women often target seniors for devious scams to rob them of their money or identities.

Here are some common schemes – and why they're especially dangerous for seniors:

Prescription Drug Scams: Seniors often take a myriad of prescription medication, which can be quite expensive. It's no wonder seniors are likely to fall for online schemes that promise discounted medication. But once shoppers hand over a credit card number, their money is taken – and they'll never receive any medication.

Charity Scams: Scammers posing as charity workers contact seniors and offer a sad story, which, of course, concludes with a plea for funding. Such a scam takes advantage of a senior's compassion, which can make it especially hurtful.

Help Scams: A scam artist calls up the unsuspecting target, and with some basic information convinces the senior that he or she is a grandchild in a dire situation. Then, the scammer asks for financial help because of an accident or other emergency. The scammer then has money wired directly into his or her hands. Of course, the real grandchild is perfectly fine, oblivious that his or her name has been used to execute a scam.

PLAY IT SAFE

- Be suspicious
- Ask questions and get information
- Never give personal information online
- Don't make hasty decisions.

(Source: www.moneycrashers.com)

Staying Well in Winter

As a caregiver, you are no doubt very active, and it's easy to forget that you need to take extra care of yourself during the winter months too. Here are some ways to warm up in the months ahead:

- Wear several thin layers of clothes rather than one thick layer
- Choose clothes made with wool, cotton or fleecy materials
- Wear bed socks and a hat, as well as thermal nightwear
- Fit draft proofing to help seal gaps around windows and doors
- Check that your heating system is working properly
- Have at least one hot meal a day and have hot drinks regularly through the day

(Source: caring.com)



The possible side effects depend on which type of vaccination you get. There are two ways to be vaccinated against the seasonal flu: You can get the intramuscular injection (commonly called the flu shot) of inactivated influenza, which contains killed virus. Or you can get the nasal spray vaccine (also known as FluMist), which contains live but weakened influenza vaccine.

The flu shot can cause a sore arm, and it sometimes causes mild fever, achiness, and fatigue that can feel like a mild case of flu to some people. But those symptoms generally don't last for more than a day or two. The nasal vaccine has been linked to symptoms such as runny nose, cough, and sore throat.

Both vaccine types contain traces of chicken eggs, which can be a problem for those with egg allergies.

You should know that only the inactivated influenza vaccine (the shot) is recommended for adults older than 50, or for those with known weakened immune systems (such as those with HIV).

Keep in mind that even though it's not uncommon to notice some mild side effects in the days after you get a flu vaccine, the risks associated with not getting vaccinated -- and getting the flu -- are quite serious. On average, every year 36,000 Americans die from seasonal influenza.

If you're younger than 50, talk to your doctor to help you decide which form of vaccination makes the most sense for you.

(Source: www.caring.com)

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Winter is a special time for celebration. It should also be a time for added caution for an older adult in your care. It is the season for falls, slips on icy streets and other dangers that can be especially harmful.

Some of the most pressing concerns mature adults have about their health and safety during the winter:

- **The flu.** Influenza is a serious illness that can be fatal in older adults, who often have chronic medical conditions. The vaccine offers some, if not complete, protection against the flu.
- **Hypothermia.** Thermostats should be set to at least 65 degrees to prevent hypothermia. Hypothermia kills about 600 Americans every year, half of whom are 65 or older, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- **Icy streets.** Navigating through icy streets can be intimidating. Comfortable shoes with anti-slip soles are recommended. If your client uses a cane, the rubber tip should be replaced before it is worn smooth and becomes slippery on the wet ice.
- **House fires.** Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms should be in working condition.
- **Falling in the home.** Winter means fewer hours of daylight. Older people often need brighter lights in the home, but there should be no great lighting contrasts from one room to another. Also, night lights, especially in the bathroom, should be used. Loose extension cords should be taped to the floor, and rugs should not be wrinkled or torn in a way that can trip your client as he or she walks..
- **Dehydration.** Four to five glasses of fluid every day are recommended, even though your client may not feel as thirsty as in the summer months. As one gets older, the body can dehydrate more quickly.
- **Winter itch.** This usually occurs because of dry skin. More protective creams and lotions are recommended to prevent the dry and itchy skin commonly experienced in the colder months when humidity levels are lower.
- **Home emergencies.** For older persons living alone, it is a good idea to have a way to communicate quickly with other persons or medical personnel. Cell phones and personal emergency response system—a device worn around the neck or on a bracelet that can summon help if needed — are recommended.

(Source: www.caregiving.com)