

The Empowered Caregiver

Together With You on Your Ceresti-Caregiver Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

It's National Yoga Awareness Month - Yoga for the Caregiver

Engaging in a regular yoga practice is an effective way to reduce stress and increase flexibility and strength. When combined with mindfulness and meditation, yoga can be helpful for people facing mental health challenges as well. This can be particularly helpful for family caregivers, who face mental and physical health challenges well-beyond that of the general population.

With limited time for self-care, family caregivers are more likely to ignore their own mental and physical health symptoms. Because the caregiver-role can continue for years, long-term stress can become chronic, and this is unsustainable without causing other health problems.

How to practice yoga at home

The basics of yoga can be practiced standing, seated, or on a floor mat. Although it may be tempting to try poses on your own, it's important to have professional guidance if you're a beginner. You can find yoga instructors at your local gym or at your neighborhood yoga studio. If you're 65 or older, you may be eligible to participate at no cost in a [SilverSneakers](#) program, which is offered by many Medicare Advantage programs. These programs are offered at gyms, YMCAs and online, if you prefer to participate in classes from home.

Here are three tips to get started with your own yoga practice:

Make a decision to practice yoga everyday – Consistency is the best way to create a habit.

Choose a time and place that's quiet and free of distractions - Dedicate a specific time and space for your yoga practice. If you're practicing on your own from home, set up your tablet or laptop so you can play soft, relaxing music or a video of your instructor while you practice. Otherwise, choose a yoga studio or gym where you can focus and feel comfortable, regardless of your level of fitness and abilities.

Make sure to have props to help you avoid injury – There are yoga props available, such as soft blocks to help support your body in a pose that may feel more challenging. You may even want to try practicing chair-yoga to make the poses safer and more doable for you. Using props like this can help you avoid injury during yoga poses.

Yoga is self-care - a few minutes of quiet time just for you. And when properly done, it can restore your mind, body and spirit giving you more resilience to provide the compassionate care that you give every day.

**Always consult your physician before initiating any new movement or exercise program.*

CALMING THE CAREGIVER MIND

ANGER

Have you ever experienced a feeling of rising anger or intolerance toward your loved one while providing care?

A short fuse caused by the frustration of being relied upon on an ongoing basis is a normal emotion. As a human being, it's impossible to be in complete control of your emotions at all times. This is especially true with anger, as it is a particularly strong emotion.

Your job as a caregiver can be even more difficult, particularly if your loved one is combative or resistant to your care.

How to cope with feelings of anger in caregiving

Finding constructive ways to express your anger can be cathartic. Try keeping a daily journal. Getting your feelings down on paper can be an effective way to ventilate, acknowledge and validate them. Talk to a trusted friend or family member. Be sure to seek out professional counseling if your anger becomes more frequent or difficult to manage on your own.

BITE-SIZED TIPS FOR A BETTER BRAIN

Do a Digital Detox

Do you ever find yourself scrolling through your devices - only to realize that fifteen or twenty precious minutes (or more) have been swept away? It starts out innocently enough as a way to shut down your brain for a *few minutes* - a way to think about something else.

Perhaps it's a subconscious attempt to procrastinate before getting started for the day, or before going to sleep. So, you start scrolling and suddenly, the headlines draw you in, causing you to click on articles that probably don't contribute to your life in any positive way.

Often, scrolling can cause an increased feeling of anxiety or sadness.

If you're looking at social media, you might see friends and family members attending parties, having fun, spending time with children and grandchildren. This can make you feel as if you're missing out.

Reading about politics, the state of the country or the world as a whole can cause you to feel helpless or angry and in some cases, it can make you feel a loss of hope.

This is no way to start the day - or end it. So, if scrolling has become a habit for you and you're experiencing these feelings, a *digital detox* may help. Not long after you begin, you'll begin to notice lower stress levels and perhaps even more happiness.

Here's how to begin in three simple steps:

- *Create a digital detox schedule.* Dedicate times of the day to remain technology-free. Use that time to engage in human-to-human contact rather than scrolling a device.
- *If necessary, create boundaries to your devices.* If you have trouble separating yourself from your screens in the beginning, consider moving your devices to another room during that time-frame. This will get easier over time.

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BITE-SIZED TIPS FOR A BETTER BRAIN

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- *Read on paper.* Read books, newspapers and paper magazines. Reading on paper is gradually becoming a lost art. Plus newspapers and magazines are self-limiting, so you won't get caught in an endless rabbit hole of information.

Doing a regular digital detox has been shown to improve mental health by reducing stress. Staying off screens, especially at night, also enhances sleep by reducing exposure to the blue-light from screens. Blue-light reduces the melatonin our brains release – the chemical that makes us feel sleepy when it's time to go to bed.

A digital detox will also allow you to discover other ways to utilize that precious "extra time" such as exercising, taking a walk or even meditating.

What could be better for you than that?

CERESTI COACH CHRONICLES

Introducing Sarah!

Hello! My name is Sarah Bernas and I'm excited to be a Caregiver Coach with Ceresti Health!

I live in Upstate New York with my husband and three children, ages eight, five, and two. My career began as a pediatric dental assistant in an orthodontics office. After 5 years of improving smiles on the outside, I decided I wanted to help brighten smiles on the inside - so, I became a social worker!

I earned a Master's in Social Work and began working in various settings that shaped who I am today. I began my new career at the American Cancer Society. After that, I worked at a palliative home care service ultimately, providing hospice support. Then, I had the honor of serving veterans at a VA hospital offering crucial resources to those who needed it most.

Through this varied set of experiences, I discovered that working to support seniors and their families felt like home to me. Through the years, I discovered there is nothing more rewarding than helping families work together to see each other's perspectives.

When my husband and I were expecting our third child, we were unsure how to manage the work/life/daycare balance. However, our baby was delivered at 29 weeks and had challenges of her own, so, our decision was made for us. I needed to stay home to care for her. That led me to find Ceresti Health.



When I was offered this job, it felt too good to be true. Supporting and educating caregivers is one of the biggest gaps in our healthcare system - and it's what I wanted to do. I believe that caregivers are the heart and soul of their loved one's success and the education and support provided by Ceresti Health is a crucial part of that success. We are always looking for more ways to ensure that people are safe, supported, and informed.

I am so happy to be working with the Ceresti Caregivers. It's a great feeling to be able to do what gives me joy - offering support and empowerment to people who are so appreciative and dedicated to the wellbeing of those they love.

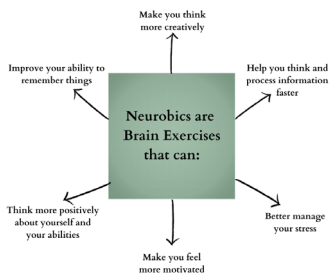
As a supplemental benefit of your health plan, you have access to a caregiver support program available through Ceresti Health at no cost to you.
To determine if you are eligible for this program, contact: (877) 222-5055.

TIME OUT FOR BRAIN FITNESS

The Benefits of Neurobic Exercises

Neurobics is a brain workout you can do anywhere, anytime. For an activity to be *Neurobic*, all you have to do is change your routines and your brain will remain switched-on!

The benefits of Neurobic exercises go on and on, some of which contribute to our day-to-day success! See the graphic below:



Here are a few Neurobic exercises to try.

- Write your name with your dominant hand.
- Write your name with your nondominant hand.
- Write your name backwards with your dominant hand.
- Write your name backwards with your nondominant hand.

- Write the letters *B, Q and M* with your dominant hand.
- Write the letters *B, Q and M* with your nondominant hand.
- Write the letters *B, Q and M* backwards with your dominant hand.
- Write the letters *B, Q and M* backwards with your nondominant hand.
- Write the number 254 with your dominant hand.
- Write the number 254 with your nondominant hand.
- Write the number 254 backwards with your dominant hand.
- Write the number 254 backwards with your nondominant hand.

Practice neurobic exercises for at least 15 minutes each day for best results.

**All of the Neurobic exercises in the Grow Your Brain section of The Empowered Caregiver Newsletters are based on excerpts from the book "Keep Your Brain Alive" by Dr. Lawrence Katz and Manning Rubin. Workman Publishing, New York.*