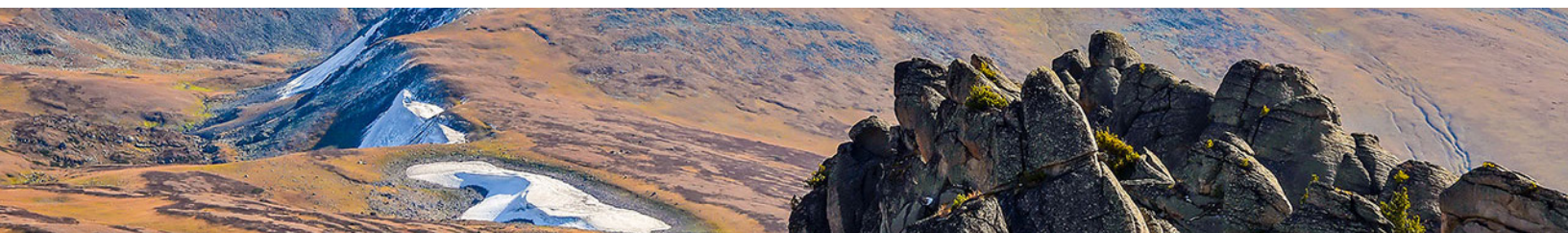


September 2025

The Empowered Caregiver



Together With You on Your Ceresti Caregiver Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

Finding Your Balance: How Yoga Can Help Caregivers Stay Strong and Centered

September is National Yoga Awareness Month, so it's the perfect time to talk about how this ancient practice can help modern-day caregivers manage stress, build strength, and stay grounded in their important role. If you're caring for a loved one with dementia, you know how challenging and emotional each day can be. It's easy to put your own needs last. But taking care of yourself is not a luxury, it's a necessity. Yoga offers a simple, effective way to recharge your body and calm your mind, even when life feels overwhelming.

What Is Yoga, Really?

Yoga is more than just stretching or deep breathing. It's a mind-body practice that includes gentle movement, focused breathing, and mindfulness. It helps build strength and flexibility, lowers stress levels, and improves focus and sleep. The best part? You don't need to be flexible or fit to start. You can do yoga while standing, sitting in a chair, or even lying down. Whether you have 5 minutes or 30, there's a way to make yoga work for your lifestyle.

Why Yoga Is Good for Caregivers

As a caregiver, your body and mind are constantly in "go mode." You're juggling tasks, managing emotions, and sometimes running on empty. Yoga can help you slow down, tune into your needs, and reset your nervous system. Here are a few caregiver-specific benefits:

- **Stress Relief:** Yoga encourages deep breathing and mindfulness, which lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol. This helps you feel calmer and think more clearly.
- **Better Sleep:** Regular yoga can improve the quality of your sleep, which is often disrupted by nighttime caregiving or worry.
- **Improved Focus:** Mindful movement and breathwork can help you stay centered and improve attention—important when managing medications, appointments, and routines.
- **Pain Management:** Caregiving can be physically demanding. Gentle yoga stretches can ease tight muscles and

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reduce aches from lifting, bending, or long hours on your feet.

- **Emotional Support:** Yoga offers a sense of peace and emotional balance. It gives you space to process your feelings and reconnect with yourself.

Easy Ways to Get Started

You don't need special gear or a yoga studio to begin. Many free online videos are designed for beginners or older adults. Look for terms like "gentle yoga," "chair yoga," or "yoga for stress." Even a few minutes of deep breathing or mindful stretching each day can make a difference.

Try starting with a simple breathing exercise: Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and slowly inhale for four counts. Hold for a moment, then exhale for four counts. Repeat for one to two minutes. This easy practice can calm your mind, lower your heart rate, and help you feel more present. If you prefer to move, try a short yoga flow like

cat-cow stretches, seated twists, or forward folds. These gentle movements can improve circulation, ease stiffness, and help you feel more connected to your body.

You Deserve Support, Too

At Ceresti, we understand that caregiving can be rewarding, but also exhausting. That's why our caregiver program offers tools, education, and personalized coaching to help you feel more confident and less alone. We provide tips on managing dementia-related behaviors, supporting your loved one's health, and, just as important, taking care of yourself. Learning how to care for your own well-being, through activities like yoga, is a big part of staying strong for the long haul.

Remember, being a great caregiver doesn't mean doing it all on your own. With Ceresti by your side and small practices like yoga in your routine, you can find better balance, one breath, one stretch, and one step at a time.

Written by Marilyn Abrahamson, Brain Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health

If you know someone who could benefit from Ceresti and is on traditional Medicare, **please let them know that Medicare now covers the cost of Ceresti for people who have a diagnosis of dementia and live at home.**

Through the GUIDE model, Medicare began offering free access to Ceresti Health's caregiver program on July 1, and Ceresti is helping people with the eligibility and enrollment process. Ceresti will provide:

- Step-by-step help with GUIDE eligibility and enrollment

Once enrolled, Ceresti will also provide:

- 1:1 support from a dedicated, vetted Caregiver Coach
- Personalized dementia education, caregiving tools and resources
- Connection to a partner to fulfill Medicare's fully funded \$2,500 respite care.

This program is fully funded by Medicare, with no out-of-pocket costs to patients or their family caregivers.

Learn more today: <https://guide.ceresti.com/>

Managing Stress to Protect Brain Health (and Health Overall)

September is *National Yoga Awareness Month*, a perfect time to talk about stress and how managing it can help protect your brain. If you're caring for a loved one with dementia, stress can feel like a constant companion. But did you know that chronic stress can actually increase your risk of cognitive decline and dementia?

When we're stressed, our bodies release a hormone called cortisol. While cortisol helps us respond to immediate challenges, too much of it over time can harm the brain. High cortisol levels may affect areas important for memory and thinking, like the hippocampus. This makes it harder to concentrate, remember, and manage daily tasks, all things caregivers need to stay sharp and healthy.

So, what can you do? Practicing stress management techniques regularly can lower cortisol and support brain health.

Yoga is one excellent tool. It combines gentle movement, breathing exercises, and mindfulness, which have been proven to reduce stress and improve mental clarity. You don't need to be an expert or spend hours practicing. Even 10 to 15 minutes of yoga or deep breathing daily can make a difference.

Other helpful stress reducers include walking outside, listening to calming music, or simply taking a few moments to pause and breathe deeply during a busy day.

Remember, taking care of your brain is just as important as caring for your loved one. By managing stress, you can help protect your cognitive health and stay resilient through the challenges of caregiving. This National Yoga Awareness Month, consider trying a few stress-relief techniques. *Your brain will thank you!*

For more tips and support, Ceresti is here to help you on your caregiving journey.

RECOGNIZING CHANGE

SLEEP PATTERNS: UNDERSTANDING DISTURBANCES AND THEIR CAUSES

Sleep changes are common in people living with dementia. As a caregiver, it's helpful to know what to look for, and why it may be happening.

Your loved one may have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or may wake up confused during the night. Some may sleep too much during the day and be wide awake at night. These changes can affect their mood, energy, and overall health, and they can leave caregivers feeling exhausted, too.

There are several possible causes of sleep disturbances in dementia. Changes in the brain can affect the body's internal clock, leading to confusion between day and night. Pain, discomfort, or side effects from medications may also play a role. Anxiety, depression, or unmet physical needs, such as hunger or needing to use the bathroom, can cause restless nights.

Sundowning is another common challenge. This refers to increased confusion and agitation that often occurs in the late afternoon or evening, making it harder for your loved one to settle down at bedtime.

To help improve sleep, try to keep a regular daily routine, limit daytime naps, and encourage light physical activity. Keep the bedroom dark, quiet, and cool at night, and well-lit during the day to support the body's natural rhythm.

If sleep problems continue, talk to your loved one's doctor. There may be a medical reason behind the changes, and some problems can be treated.

Recognizing changes in sleep is the first step in finding solutions that support both you and your loved one.

FAST FACTS FOR CAREGIVERS

SLEEP HYGIENE: TIPS TO IMPROVE SLEEP QUALITY FOR BOTH CAREGIVERS AND CARE RECIPIENTS

Sleep is essential for brain and body health. But for caregivers and their loved ones with dementia, getting quality sleep can be challenging. Poor sleep can lead to memory problems, mood swings, and a higher risk of health issues. Practicing good sleep hygiene, which are daily habits that support better sleep, can make a big difference.

Tips for Better Sleep:

- ✓ **Keep a Routine:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- ✓ **Create a Calm Space:** Keep the bedroom quiet, dark, and cool. Use blackout curtains or a white noise machine if needed.
- ✓ **Limit Naps:** Short naps (20–30 minutes) earlier in the day are okay. Long or late naps can hurt nighttime sleep.
- ✓ **Avoid Stimulants:** Skip caffeine, nicotine, and heavy meals close to bedtime.
- ✓ **Wind Down:** Try relaxing activities before bed, like reading, soft music, or a warm bath.

For care recipients with dementia, try to limit evening stimulation and increase natural daylight exposure during the day.

Better sleep can help both you and your loved one feel more alert, calm, and ready to face the day ahead. Start small, every step toward better sleep counts!

DAILY MEMORY BOOST

Brushstrokes for the Brain: A Daily Creative Boost

Here's a brain-boosting activity you might not have thought of: Spend 10 minutes a day doing simple, creative art together. It doesn't have to be painting or drawing perfectly. Just doodling, coloring, or making shapes with clay can help.

Creative activities engage different parts of the brain, improving memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.

For your loved one with dementia, this can spark joy and help express feelings without words. For you, it offers a peaceful break and a chance to relax your mind. Even if your loved one can't create much, watching or guiding them through the process still stimulates brain activity and builds connection.

Try to carve out some time every day, or even a few times a week to bring color, calm, and brain benefits into your caregiving routine. It's a simple, creative way to nurture both your minds together.

*To learn more about brain health, visit Ceresti's Brain Health Education portal at brainhealth.ceresti.com. If this is your first visit to the portal, use the code **GIVECARE** when you register.*