

Nurturing Yourself While Caring for an Ill Pet

Caring for an ill pet can be physically and emotionally exhausting. It is very important to remember to take as good care of yourself as you are with your pet. If you are having trouble remembering to do this, keep asking yourself who would care for your pet if you fell ill or became too tired to do so yourself. Your wellness is just as important as your pet's care. First, start with fundamental necessities.

Remember to eat.

Remember to stay hydrated on healthy fluids. Overconsumption of alcohol can depress your immune system.

Remember to get good sleep.

Other than the basic ways to care for yourself, it is also important to do things for yourself that will help reduce stress. Special time for yourself may even have to be scheduled into your daily agenda to make sure you attend to *you*. Here are some ideas of ways to nurture yourself.

- Listen to my favorite music
- Enjoy a long, warm bubble bath
- Go for a walk
- Share a hug with a loved one
- Relax outside
- Exercise (of my choice)
- Spiritual prayer
- Attend a caring support group
- Practice diaphragmatic breathing
- Do stretching exercises
- Reflect on my positive qualities: "I am..."
- Watch the sunrise/sunset
- Laugh
- Concentrate on a relaxing scene
- Create a collage representing "the real me"
- Receive a massage
- Reflect on "I appreciate..."
- Write my thoughts and feelings in a journal
- Attend a favorite event or watch it on TV
- Do something adventurous
- Read a special book or magazine
- Sing a happy tune
- Swing/slide/teeter totter
- Play a musical instrument
- Work with plants
- Learn a new skill
- See a special play, movie, or concert
- Work out with weights
- Ride a bike or motorcycle
- Make myself a healthy meal
- Draw/paint a picture
- Swim/float/wade/relax in a pool/whirlpool
- Do aerobics/dance
- Visit a special place I enjoy
- Smile/say "I love myself"
- Imagine myself achieving my goals and dreams
- Go horseback riding
- Reflect on my most enjoyable moments
- Practice a relaxation exercise (or listen to a relaxation tape)
- Spiritual meditation
- Enjoy a relaxing nap
- Take time to smell the roses and other flowers I like
- Visit a museum/art gallery
- Practice yoga
- Relax in a whirlpool/sauna
- Enjoy a cool, refreshing glass of water or fruit juice
- Enjoy the beauty of nature
- Count my blessings: "I am thankful for..."
- Play as I did as a child
- Star gaze
- Window shop
- Daydream
- Attend a special workshop
- Go sailing/paddle boating
- Reward myself with a special gift that I can afford
- Take myself on a vacation
- Create with clay pottery
- Practice positive affirmations
- Pet an animal
- Watch my favorite TV show
- Reflect on my successes: "I can..."
- Write a poem expressing myself
- Make a bouquet of flowers
- Relax and watch the clouds
- Make myself something nice
- Visit a park/woods/forest
- Read positive, motivational literature
- Reflect on: "What I value most in life..."
- Phone a special friend
- Go on a picnic in a park
- Enjoy a cup of gourmet herbal tea/decaf coffee
- Participate in a favorite game/recreation
- Practice the art of forgiveness
- Treat myself to a nutritious meal at a restaurant
- Participate in a hobby
- Create my own unique list of self-nurturing activities
- Tell myself the loving words I want to hear from others

