



Reducing Stress Through Routines

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Senior Management Services

Routines are a large part of our lives as caregivers. They help us keep balance, align our schedules and ensure we keep our appointments for both us and our loved ones. Did you ever think however, that routines are helpful for the seniors in our lives?

A day that is unstructured and unpredictable can be very difficult for older adults and cause unneeded stress in their lives. Older adults are already losing control of many parts of their lives. It may be due to a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's Disease. It could be due to general frailty and inability to care for oneself. Whatever the cause, a consistent routine can help give your loved one a sense of increased control and predictability.

Creating this routine may take involvement from you as a caregiver. Helping your loved one set up a schedule will include personal care routines, medications, appointments and general errands and social engagements.

When planning the routine with your loved one there are many considerations before etching out a plan. Some include:

- What was their past routine?
- What activities need to be accomplished in the day? (mealtimes, dressing, household chores, social activities, creative activities and intellectual activities for example)
- What are your loved one's regular waking and sleeping times?

It is helpful to have the routine in writing and posted somewhere you and your loved one can refer to it throughout the day (especially if he or she has any cognitive impairment). Consider when you are writing the routine what days or times seem to have too much or too little going on. Remember that this routine is just a way to help your loved one move throughout their day and does not need to be a minute by minute schedule. Make sure to build in plenty of time for rest and for the tasks at hand.

For additional information about Eldercare, please contact Quest at 1-800-364-6352.