

# Managing Tasks

As with any job, caring for someone else will involve all of the management skills that you can muster. Depending on the elder's needs, you will be managing a variety of things—from medication dosage to bathing to providing transportation. The more organized you are, the easier it will be to perform these tasks diligently. Organization will give you a sense of control and help you to provide the best care possible. Here are some tips for managing the day-to-day tasks of caregiving:



*Involve the family in caring for an elder by assigning chores and keeping track of them on a family calendar.*

## **Write Things Down**

Keep a small notebook where you can write important information or ideas as they come up. These can be to-do lists, phone numbers, medication names—anything important that you need to record. Then you will always know where to look first when you need to remember something.

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*Organization is the key to managing the complex job of caring for a loved one.*

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## **Use a Calendar**

Keep a calendar on your desk or by your phone for recording dates, appointments and tasks to do on specific days.

## **Organize Paperwork**

You may be surprised to find how much caregiving involves paperwork. Brochures from nursing homes, copies of wills, electric bills, store receipts, medication inserts; the paperwork can easily overwhelm you if you allow it to pile up. Take control. Devise a system (a file cabinet, a box or shelves) where you can label and file the paperwork for future reference.

## **Look for Help**

Getting others to help—delegating tasks to other relatives, for instance—is a great way to get things done. Just as managers use their staff wisely to get work done, you too can use managerial skills to make sure that all tasks are completed. There are tasks that others can quickly and easily accomplish, and there are some tasks that other people may actually enjoy or fulfill better.

## **Don't Be Afraid to Say "No"**

As tasks, chores and needs escalate, you may find yourself agreeing to things that are beyond your capabilities or desires. For your sake—and that of the elder—keep in mind that you don't have to do everything. Determine the necessity of any given task. If it isn't necessary, you may want to let it go for a while. If it is necessary but beyond your means, look to others to fill in the gaps.

## **Set Rules and Responsibilities**

If you are living with your elder, or even if you aren't, it is helpful to set rules and responsibilities for both of you. Consider assigning chores—even small ones—to your care recipient, to give him or her a sense of responsibility. Establish what you will do and what you won't. These kinds of rules will make the daily life of everyone involved more harmonious.