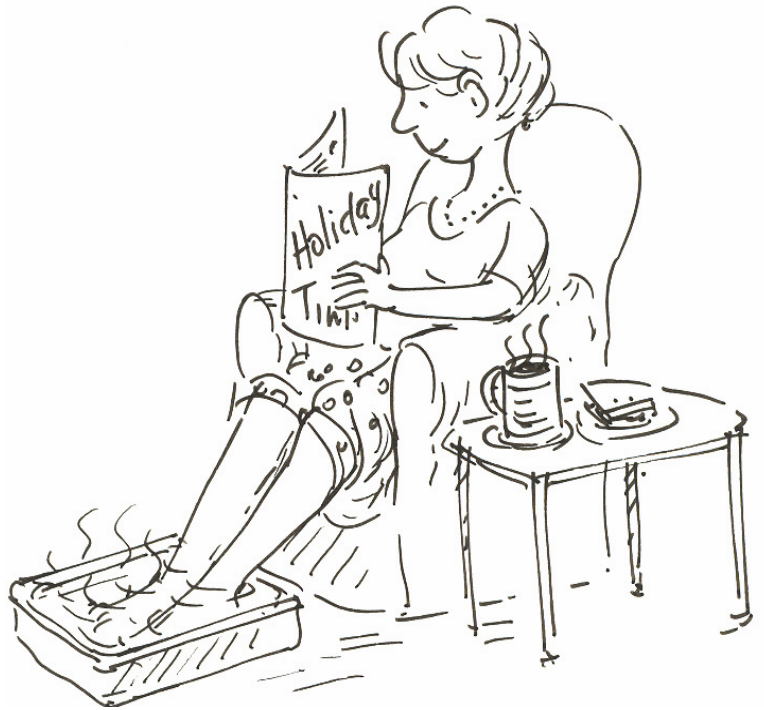


CARING FOR YOURSELF

Busy looking after your teenager? Feel like a taxi driver? Endless things to worry about? No time for yourself? Exhausted and irritable? Chances are that you are neglecting to take care of yourself. “Sure”, you say, “when am I going to find the time to take care of me?”

Here are three reasons to make time:

1. You will cope better with the stress and daily hassles of parenting a teenager if you also take time to rest and recharge your batteries.
2. By looking after yourself, you show your teenager how a responsible adult creates a balance between meeting their own needs and the needs of others.
3. Parents are only human. Everyone needs to pay attention to their own quality of life.



Self-care begins by insisting that your own rights be respected. Your teenager's needs are important, but they are no more important than the needs of any other member of the family. Expect reasonable behaviour from your adolescent, ask for what you want, protect your privacy and refuse unreasonable requests. Make a commitment to look after yourself better. This means doing things that you find enjoyable, relaxing and energising. Find time to pursue your own interests even if this means that you can't do everything your adolescent wants you to do.

Finally, looking after yourself involves keeping an eye on the future and planning for the time when you will not be looking after children. Show your adolescent that you have a life of your own and a clear sense of what you want from your life. This will allow your adolescent to pursue their own goals free from worry about how their growing independence might affect you.

Prepared by the Parenting Research Centre

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