



## Mini-holidays keep the stress at bay

*by Josie Padro*

One of the easiest things for caregivers to put aside is caring for themselves. Staying healthy, though, is important for your own quality of life and it ensures you can continue to support the person you are caring for.

Taking a break not only helps you re-energize and but it can also allow you to step away from worries and stresses and gain a new perspective. An extended vacation or a day-long visit to the spa may not be an option, but small acts of self-kindness can make a difference. Here are some suggestions for how to inject a little self-renewal into your day.

**Take deep breaths.** It's surprising how this simple exercise can help dispel stress and worry: take a slow deep breath; hold it briefly, then exhale slowly. Repeat three to five times.

**Go for a walk.** A short walk, no matter what the weather, is a great refresher on many levels. Of course it gets the muscles moving, the heart pumping and the lungs expanding, but it also gets you outside to notice nature and the seasons. Even a walk around a mall will give you a chance to see new things and a whole variety of people – from children to the elderly.

**Sing.** If you're shy about joining a choir, try singing in your car. Choose the tunes and turn up the volume. If you really don't want to sing along, just listening to your favourite music will add some joy to your day.

**Write.** Sometimes putting down your thoughts is a good way to reflect on what you're feeling. It's also a way to express yourself, and sort through difficult issues.