



Guide to Becoming a Caregiver



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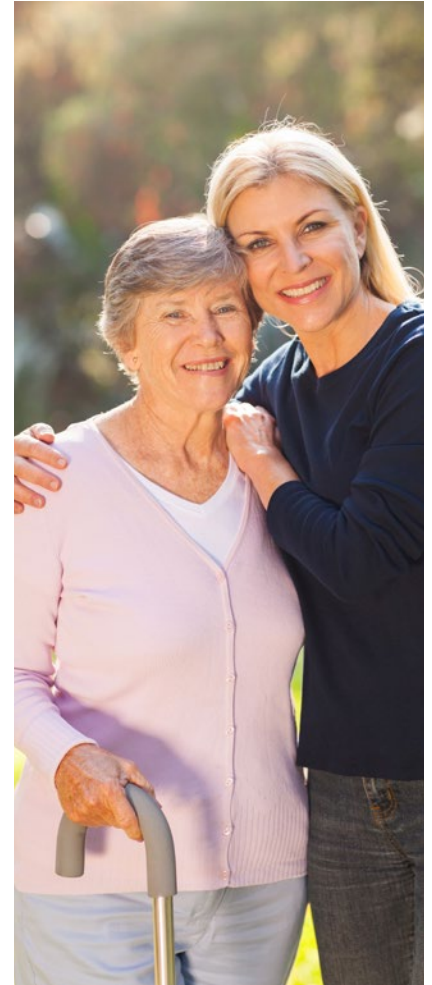
Have you ever considered becoming a home caregiver? If you're someone who is passionate about caring for others and helping people live life to its fullest, then perhaps becoming a caregiver is your calling.

An Introduction to Home Care

Home care allows people who are getting older, are chronically ill, recovering from surgery, or are disabled, to get the personalized care they need while continuing to live in their very own home. Home care services include things like personal care, homemaking, cooking, medication reminders and transportation.

Daily assistance and support in a person's own home allows them comfort, dignity and the ability to maintain their independence. Research shows that people live a healthier, more fruitful life in an at-home setting rather than a healthcare facility.

An admirable profession, becoming a caregiver is a commitment to the well being of the clients in your care. Caregivers often receive an improved sense of wellbeing, increased self-confidence and self-esteem and are often connected to a larger network of friends. Because of this, caregiving is beneficial and incredibly helpful to both the client **and** the caregiver.



Who is a Home Caregiver?

Caregivers are professional home health aides, personal care aides, nursing assistants, in-home companions, and medical aides. Essentially, home caregivers are professionals who can provide the vital physical, practical, emotional, and sometimes medical support to a person who is elderly, disabled or impaired.

Caregivers are not intended to replace medical professionals or family members. They primarily act as additional help to maintain the needs of the activities of daily living. Medical tasks, like administering an IV, must be done by a qualified medical professional and not your home caregiver.



“...caregiver professionals have a true passion for what they do and will treat their clients with the respect they deserve.”

The Ideal Caregiver Candidate

Caregivers tend to show strong initiative, are enthusiastic about life, are excellent communicators, and are passionate about being an advocate for their clients whenever necessary. These special qualities are proof that caregiver professionals have a true passion for what they do and will treat their clients with the respect they deserve.

Other admirable and recommended traits of a caregiver:

- Shows sound judgment and is confident with the care they provide
- Shows initiative by being one step ahead and being quick to respond
- Is enthusiastic for the work they do and who they are working with
- Maintains the client's place of residence and respects their space
- Considers the home care plan as a whole with all the many elements that go into caregiving
- Friendly, but assertive and able to re-direct clients when needed
- An excellent communicator with a desire to be helpful and build rapport

Does this sound like you? Then you just might be an ideal candidate for home caregiving!

Day In The Life Of A Home Caregiver

Home caregivers are incredibly patient and really take the time to learn about their client's needs and interests. Caregivers are committed to understanding the needs of their clients and taking a collaborative approach to ensure the best care is given.

Home caregivers can work a variety of schedules depending on their personal preference and the clients they are matched with. Some clients require a live-in companion, while others may need assistance a few hours a week. A quality agency works to pair their caregivers abilities and availability with the care requirements of the client. A plan of care is outlined for each of the caregiver's clients that provides details of the client and their needs.

Home care-giving includes a wide variety of services. Some of these services can include: companionship, personal assistance and personal care, and homemaking services. Frequently, a caregiver would perform many of these tasks, if not all for their clients.

COMPANIONSHIP

- Social engagement and conversations
- Read aloud stories and books
- Games and cards
- Hobbies and activities
- Assistance with projects
- Accompanying to outings and events
- Appointment reminders
- Morning wake-up calls
- Evening tuck-ins
- Gardening and outdoor assistance
- Assistance with entertaining
- Recording of memoirs
- Scrapbooking
- Assistance with attending religious services
- Respite care
- Correspondence and writing assistance



PERSONAL ASSISTANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Personal Assistance:

- Bathroom assistance
- Ambulation
- Assistance with eating and drinking
- Recording of food intake
- Recording of urinary output
- Monitor bowel function
- Transfers

Personal Care:

- Bathing
- Incontinence care
- Grooming assistance
- Dressing and changing
- Bathroom assistance
- Medication reminders
- Mobility assistance
- Re-positioning to avoid bedsores

HOMEMAKING SERVICES

- Meal planning and grocery shopping
- Meal preparation
- Running errands
- Shopping assistance
- Transportation
- Light housekeeping
- Laundry and Ironing
- Changing bed linens
- Pet care
- Plant care
- Home organization

What To Expect Throughout The Hiring Process

The best caregiving agencies to work for typically have a rigorous hiring process to ensure they attract the best caregivers.

The finest agencies take more time to identify the right candidates because of the hope that their caregivers will continue with them long-term. These agencies frequently invest in their professionals with health insurance and 401K benefits. More importantly, these agencies highly value and respect their caregivers. These agencies are dedicated to this process because of their relentless desire to deliver the highest quality of care to their clients.

The employment and hiring process can be quite rigorous for potential caregivers. The process typically starts with the completion of an application that is thoroughly screened and, if approved, is followed by several in-depth interviews. It is essential for home care agencies to know which personality traits and professional skills candidates have and if they will make a good match with the agency. A fingerprint background check and references are verified to complete the process.



Beware of agencies that do not conduct multiple interviews.

These agencies often have quick interview processes to fill their positions because of high employee turnover rates.

Some unscrupulous agencies do not hire caregivers as employees, with benefits and employment rights, but as independent contractors who bear all liability without job security.



Many agencies require pre-employment and/or ongoing random drug tests.



Top Challenges of Home Caregivers

Caregiving can be very rewarding, but like any profession, has its challenges. Some of these can include:

- **Time management**—Caregiving takes time and dedication to the client. This can sometimes require being called-in for an unscheduled shift to meet the needs of the client.
- **Competing Demands**—Balancing the care for your client with the tasks that are associated can be a challenge. For example, you may need to prepare lunch for your client, while scheduling their doctor's appointments. Or, you may have to balance care for both a husband and wife.
- **Physical and mental stress**—For those providing care for long periods, the physical and mental stress can add up. Transferring a client from a wheelchair can be physically demanding. Clients who have dementia often need constant reminders and supervision, which can be challenging.



Top Rewards of Home Caregivers

Caregiving is a unique experience, reserved for the most open hearted and loving people. A caregiver is someone who feels that the opportunity of being there for another person is something they were destined or meant to do. Although caregiving has its challenges, they are greatly outweighed by the benefits and rewards of choosing such a career path.

- **Flexible work schedule**—Being a caregiver allows for a flexible schedule which will help you maintain a happy work-life balance.
- **Good Health**—The physical and emotional activities required can often reap many benefits. Physically, the job allows you to be active and build strength. Helping others and building close relationships with your clients and their families lend to a happy and fulfilled heart.
- **Serving a greater purpose**—Taking care of someone else is a huge responsibility and has a drastic affect on the life of your client. It feels good to offer the kind of support that increases a sense of meaning and purpose in your own life.

Anyone can clock in to a 9-to-5 job and walk away with a paycheck. But being a caregiver means so much more. While you are able to have flexible hours, stay physically active, and yes, get compensated, you also get rewarded by knowing you will be serving a greater purpose.

Choosing to be a caregiver requires compassion, selflessness, and a willingness to take on new responsibilities. You're not only helping someone's loved one live a better life, you're bettering your own as a result. Being a caregiver is not, and never will be, just a job. Caregiving is a calling.



About Cherished Companions Homecare

Cherished Companions Home Care was founded by Douglas Wilber to meet the growing need for care in our community. During his 21 years in the Health Care and Pharmaceutical Division of Procter and Gamble, Doug developed a special understanding of the needs of medical patients, particularly seniors. Having experienced the effects of aging in his own family, he decided to apply his unique knowledge and concern professionally, in order to help those in need of non-medical care at home. Doug's goal was to create a company that provides unsurpassed compassionate care at an outstanding value, thus allowing more people to enjoy independence in the comfort of home. Cherishing people, and their need for independence, is at the very heart of Cherished Companions.