

## Worried about ageing parents?

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Life can be busy and complex for the ‘sandwich generation’ who find themselves stuck between caring for grandchildren and ageing parents. Most people are unprepared for aged care because let’s face it, no one wants to get old – but if we are lucky, we will.

Families are better off being prepared. Apart from the emotional side of supporting ageing parents, there are many practical issues to consider including assessing care needs, deciding whether to live with parents (in your home or theirs), legal issues, moving or modifying the home and making it all affordable.

This article looks at four tips to help remove some of the stress and be better prepared.

### **Tip 1 - Get an assessment**

If you notice that a parent is finding things difficult, register with My Aged Care for an assessment.

Your parents may put up some resistance, as they may fear they are opening the door for someone to swoop in and take control, and before they know it, they will be shuffled off to an aged care home.

But the assessors aren’t there to tell you what to do. Their role is to help to identify what aspects of daily living the person needs help with and to determine eligibility for government-subsidised services, either at home or in residential care.

### **Tip 2 - Moving in with parents**

If residential care doesn’t sound like a great plan you might think about inviting your parents to live with you or move in with them. This could be the best idea you’ve had, but you might also need a reality check on the practicalities.

Multi-generational living may be a way of downsizing for parents and can provide access to live-in care and company from people they love. And this can have two-way benefits. But sometimes the arrangement can be harder than expected. A loss of privacy might become a problem, family relationships can become strained, and disputes may arise over the finances.

### **Tip 3 - Support for carers**

If you are caring for parents, it is important to ensure you also care for yourself. You might need a break or additional support to fit in other family, work or personal commitments, without running yourself into the ground.

Respite and home care services might become your best friends. The Carer Gateway ([carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)) is a good place to start to understand what support is available for you.

### **Tip 4 - Making decisions**

Life decisions can be hard to make, especially when they are decisions you would prefer not to make. This process can be even harder if you:

- Don’t have enough information or have an overload of information
- Have too many people involved
- Find family members are conflicted
- Let emotional attachments (for example to your home) stop you from making changes in your life.