



Strategies for Parental Burnout

Regulate Your Nervous System

1. **Protect a small window of sensory downtime.** Ten minutes with soft light and low noise, held as non-negotiable, can do more than an hour of "self-care" squeezed in around everything else.
2. **Try body doubling when starting feels impossible.** Ask someone to sit nearby while you tackle a task. Their quiet presence often does what willpower can't.
3. **Let your body curl up or rock if that's what it wants.** Bed, a swing, a blanket cocoon. Contained, rhythmic positions can bring you back down when things feel like too much.
4. **Use movement to reset, not to exercise.** Slow swinging, pacing the hallway, bouncing on a yoga ball. The point is regulation, not fitness.
5. **Cut the noise when you can.** Noise cancelling headphones, earplugs, white noise. Auditory relief is relief, full stop.
6. **Keep something weighted nearby.** A lap pad, a vest, a heavy blanket. Useful for the moments you feel like you're shutting down or flooding.
7. **Let your breath follow a rhythm instead of trying to control it.** Box breathing, or just music with a steady, slow beat.

Support Your Own Executive Function

8. **Write your own day down, not just your kids'.** A simple visual outline cuts the mental tax of deciding what comes next.
9. **Pick five or six meals and rotate them.** Removing "what's for dinner" from your daily decisions frees up more energy than it sounds like it would.
10. **Break chores into pieces smaller than you think you need to.** Not "clean kitchen," but "wipe bench." Then "load the dishwasher." Momentum starts smaller than pride wants it to.
11. **Take the help, even the imperfect kind.** NDIS support, a cleaner, meal delivery. Accepting it isn't giving up, it's getting some of yourself back.



12. **Use timers to work around time blindness.** External reminders for transitions and breaks stop everything from depending on you to track time you don't have to spare.
13. **Keep a visible record of what you got done.** Even "got dressed today" belongs on it. Burnout convinces you nothing is happening. This proves otherwise.
14. **Keep a notebook or app just for offloading.** Somewhere the spinning to-do list can go so it stops looping in your head.

Honour What Your Body and Emotions Need

15. **Practise a no that doesn't need a reason attached.** "That doesn't work for me right now" is complete on its own.
16. **Give yourself the same transition warnings you'd give a child.** A countdown, a cue, a small ritual before switching tasks or leaving the house.
17. **Learn your own early warning signs.** Tight chest, sensory overload, a shorter fuse. Catching these early is the difference between a rough hour and a rough week.
18. **Choose lower stimulation settings when you have the choice.** A quieter cafe, an off-peak grocery run, dimmer light. Small adjustments, real difference.
19. **Narrate what's happening to yourself.** "I feel foggy, maybe I need food or movement" turns a vague bad feeling into something you can actually act on.

Let Connection Happen on Your Terms

20. **Ask for connection in the form that works for you.** "I'd love to catch up, can we text instead of call?" is a completely reasonable ask.
21. **Co-regulate with your child without needing conversation.** Sitting quietly together, breathing side by side, or cuddling under a blanket counts as connection too.
22. **Find people who already get it.** Other neurodivergent parents, online or in person, where you don't have to explain the basics first.
23. **Say the validating thing to yourself that you'd say to a friend.** "I'm doing my best. I'm allowed to feel this way. My needs matter too."
24. **Set sensory boundaries without justifying them.** Sunglasses inside, skipping the loud event. You don't owe anyone the explanation.



25. **Let yourself unmask at home.** Stim, move, rest, speak however feels natural. Nobody there needs you to perform regulation you don't have.

Build Routines That Can Actually Hold

26. **Aim for rhythm, not rigid routine.** Something like "mornings are slow, food, then outside" leaves room to bend without the whole day collapsing.
27. **Build recovery time before you need it, not after you've crashed.** A quiet stretch after an outing, appointment, or sensory heavy task should be planned in, not squeezed in as an afterthought.
28. **Treat rest as part of the work, not a reward for finishing it.** Stillness isn't the break from your regulation cycle. It's a stage of it.