

Senior Scene



Hobbies to get seniors out and about

The threat posed by social isolation has been known to medical researchers and health care professionals for years, but the issue gained wider attention during the pandemic. Restrictions on social gatherings during the pandemic opened millions of people's eyes to the ill effects of social isolation, and while that threat proved temporary for the majority of people across the globe, many seniors continue to live largely isolated lives.

According to the Mayo Clinic, depression, anxiety, increased risk of suicide, and various chronic health problems are some of the outcomes associated with loneliness. That's a troubling assessment that becomes even more disconcerting when considering a general decline in socialization as evidenced by the 2021 American Perspectives Survey. Survey participants indicated they have fewer close friendships than they once did, speak with their friends less often and rely less on friends for personal support. That's challenging for adults of all ages, but it can be especially difficult for aging adults, who may be dealing with the loss of a spouse or other close confidantes they would otherwise rely on

when confronting personal problems. Hobbies that promote socialization can help aging adults reestablish friendships and build new ones, paying dividends that can have a profound impact on their overall health. With that in mind, adults who feel as though their social circles are shrinking in mid-life or in retirement can look to these activities as means to rebuilding their social lives.

- **Book club:** A book club offers multiple benefits to adults. Book clubs are inherently social and tend to bring like-minded individuals together, which can help build new and lasting friendships that extend beyond weekly discussions. A 2021 study published in the journal *Neurology* also linked regular reading to a lower risk of developing dementia.

- **Sports:** Sports provide another avenue to socialize with like-minded individuals. Golf is not a team sport, but it is typically played in groups of two or four, making it an ideal activity for adults with free time on their hands to get out and about and meet other people. Leagues for softball, bowling and pickleball also provide opportunities to socialize, and many adults

are participating in such leagues for that very reason. A CivicScience study released in 2025 found that 49 percent of adults who planned to participate in adult recreational sports

leagues were doing so for social interaction and the chance to make friends.

- **Travel:** Travel can provide another means for aging adults to make friends. Group tours to foreign countries, day trips to local

attractions arranged by township recreational offices or even overseas trips with friends you've fallen out of touch with can be a great means to build new friendships and reinvigorate old ones, all the while

getting you out of the house.

These are just some ways for men and women to get out of the house and socialize with others their age, a worthy endeavor that can be highly beneficial to adults' overall health.

A home-buying guide for empty nesters

The day a child leaves home can be bittersweet for parents. Although a son or daughter being successful and mature enough to move on to new opportunities can be a source of pride, parents typically lament the quiet that comes from empty rooms and a change to the daily routine they'd grown accustomed to when the kids were around. After some time, some couples decide to downsize to a home more befitting the empty nester lifestyle.

Downsizing presents an option for homeowners whose kids have left the nest. New analysis from a survey of 2,500 empty nesters commissioned by Regency Living found that 30 percent of empty nesters choose to downsize and move from their original family homes. When retirement is just around the corner, many professionals shift focus to how they want to live and

where. Moving to a new home presents plenty of opportunities for older adults, including a chance to choose a home based on what's right for them in this stage of life. There are questions homeowners can ask themselves as they ponder if downsizing is right for them.

1. How much upkeep can I handle? A lifelong family home may be well-loved, but chances are it requires significant upkeep and repairs. Empty nesters may choose to move on to a home that offers lifestyle benefits like less maintenance. Homes in lifestyle communities or those overseen by a homeowners' association tend to have certain maintenance built into a monthly fee.

2. Is this layout still a fit? Many empty nesters may not immediately feel the effects of aging, but before selecting a next home, individuals should think about aging in place

and any unique needs they may have. Opting for a single-level home, or at least one with the owner's suite on the main level, can be advantageous.

3. Can I make due with less square footage? A cavernous home with many rooms often isn't desirable for empty nesters. All of that square footage requires heating, cooling and maintenance. Rattling around inside a big, empty house may precipitate the decision to downsize. Downsizing also can free up home equity, which can be used to fund retirement needs.

4. Which features do you desire? Many empty nesters want the next home to focus on some luxury items they may have bypassed in the first home when priorities lay elsewhere. Upscale environments like gourmet kitchens, spa-like bathrooms and outdoor living spaces may be in the budget

when moving into a home with a smaller footprint.

5. Will my home be secure while I travel? Empty nesters might want to choose homes in gated communities or condominium complexes for safety reasons. Should they opt to spend a portion of time at a vacation rental or second home as snowbirds, secure communities enable residents to leave their primary residence with the peace of mind that those homes will be less vulnerable to thieves.

6. Does this home have enough light? The American Optometric Association says many adults start to have problems seeing clearly beginning at age 40. Homes with more light from large windows and artificial lighting can reduce accident risk.

Moving to a smaller home is a consideration for many empty nesters. Various features offer benefits to adults who want to age in place.



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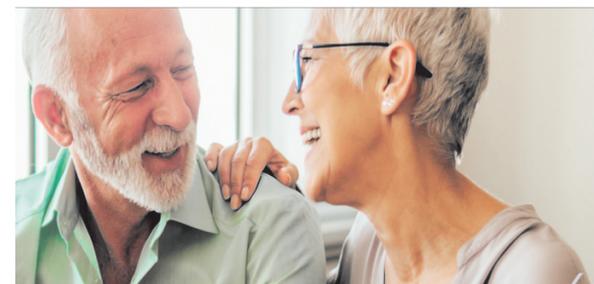
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