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Aging & Exercise

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before beginning a
new fitness regimen

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Exercise is just as beneficial for older adults as it is for children and young adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, engaging in regular physical activity is among the most important steps older adults can take as they seek to safeguard their overall health. Such activity can prevent or delay many age-related health problems and strengthen muscles while improving balance, which can reduce risk for falls and injuries such as broken bones. The CDC notes that certain physical activities can be characterized as multicomponent activities, which means they combine aerobic activity, muscle strengthening and balance training. Examples of such activities include dancing, yoga, tai chi, gardening, and even sports participation.



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Seniors can backstroke their way to improved health



Exercise provides a number of measureable benefits for people of all ages, including older adults. Swimming is one exercise that may be especially beneficial for seniors. Many people learn to swim in childhood and sharpen that skill as they get older. Though swimming devotees may get in the water for fun rather than fitness, this popular, joyful and relaxing pastime may be the ideal exercise for seniors looking to improve their overall health, particularly because it is very low-impact. Because the water provides buoyancy while swimming, there is little risk of injury and minimal strain on the body. Water exercises, including swimming, work all the muscle groups, so it can be a complete exercise, says American Senior Communities. Swimming also is a great cardiovascular exercise that can strengthen the heart muscle and improve lung function and endurance. Because it lowers blood pressure and improves circulation, swimming is a great way to get the heart pumping. A gentle, 30-minute swim can burn up to 200 calories, which is more than walking. A faster swim can burn

calories more quickly than running or cycling. However, since water supports up to 90 percent of the body's weight, this activity will put less stress on muscles and joints while one is exercising.

Individuals with mobility issues or arthritis pain may find that swimming helps relieve discomfort and improves range of motion. Again, because the water is doing much of the work holding up the body, it will take the stress off of joints, helping a person to feel better while stretching and moving gently in the water. Even seniors who don't know how to swim can still reap the benefits of water exercise. Walking in shallow water, or using a kickboard to stay above the water can be effective. Using foam dumbbells or even pushing and pulling one's arms through the water can serve as a great resistance exercise that builds strength. Swimming and additional water activities are great ways for seniors to stay in shape. As always, individuals should speak with their doctors before beginning any exercise regimen to ensure that it is safe.

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Seniors can boost energy with the right foods

A nutritious diet is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. And for seniors, the right diet can be a key part of treating any number of health issues. In fact, changing one's diet may be something seniors can consider if they are feeling sluggish.

Food can be a helpful ally for seniors dealing with fatigue and low energy. WebMD says eating a balanced diet is one of the ways to improve low energy levels, and that balanced diet should include certain foods that are natural energy boosters.

• **Whole grains:** Switching refined grains for whole grains is a good way to boost energy. These grains are full of complex carbohydrates that help boost metabolism and provide energy. They'll also work longer in the body than the more

refined options. Swap out "white" products like breads and rices for whole wheat or brown rice.

• **Lean protein sources:** While protein does not give the same quick boost of energy as a high carbohydrate meal, it will help fuel the body and keep a person feeling full longer. According to Discovery Senior Living, protein helps increase concentration levels, produces stronger muscles and helps maintain optimal blood sugar levels. Chicken, tuna and legumes are some notable protein sources.

• **Nuts:** Most nuts are a complete package that provide healthy fats, proteins and amino acids that are good for the body. The fiber and carbohydrates in nuts digest more slowly and help provide a steady supply of energy throughout the day. Replace

croutons in salads with nuts, or sprinkle some nuts on oatmeal at breakfast.

• **Fruits and vegetables:** Berries, sweet potatoes, dark, leafy greens, and other produce are

low-calorie, low-sugar options for snacks and sides that boost health. They're full of fiber and antioxidants that can ward off illness, and they can provide an energy boost as well. Berries

and vegetables can be added to smoothies or salads. The right foods can help seniors restore energy levels and promote overall health.



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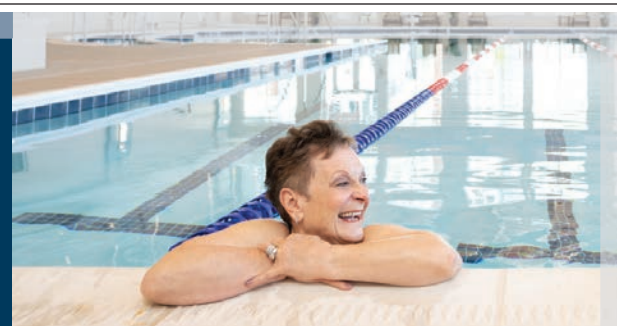
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Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. The current Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

indicates adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. But what constitutes moderate-intensity physical activity? Moderate-intensity physical activity gets the heart

pumping, but only around one in five adults and teens get enough exercise to maintain good health, says the American Heart Association. It may be because people are having difficulty figuring out what constitutes moderate-intensity activity. Here is a more detailed explanation of the types of activities considered moderate-intensity.

- Walking very briskly (roughly four miles per hour)
 - Heavy cleaning, like washing windows, vacuuming and mopping
 - Mowing the lawn with a power mower
 - Bicycling with light effort (10 to 12 miles per hour)
 - Playing recreational badminton
 - Playing doubles tennis
 - Slow dancing
 - Shooting a basketball
 - Water aerobics
 - Playing volleyball
 - Heavy gardening
 - Painting and decorating
- Anything that doesn't increase heart rate and



breathing speed will not count as moderate-intensity activity towards the recommended amount of activity. However, any exercise is better than no exercise at all. As long as an activity breaks up long periods of sitting still, doctors say it is still beneficial.

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Dating later in life

People are living longer, a reality that can be traced to a number of factors, including advancements in medicine and greater dissemination of information regarding preventive health care. **According to data from the United Nations Population Division, the average life expectancy in the United States is 81.65 for women and 76.61 for men. Canada has even higher life expectancies, at 84.74 for women and 81.15 for men.**

As people live longer, some may outlive their significant others and ultimately find themselves once again interested in sharing experiences with a special someone. Seniors ready to re-enter the dating pool may find that things are quite

different from what they experienced as naïve teenagers or young adults. Dating used to be about hanging out with friends and meeting people at shared events, such as school dances or work parties or even while enjoying a night out with friends. Nowadays, dating often begins in cyberspace. This can be confusing and anxiety-inducing for adults who didn't grow up with technology guiding their every move.

According to a report in The Atlantic, more than one-third of baby boomers are not currently married, and this generation has had higher rates of separation and divorce and lower rates of marriage than the generations that preceded them. Many boomers have years ahead of them to devote to new relationships.



Here's what they may want to know before navigating twenty-first century dating waters.

- **You're not in this alone.** While online dating may be portrayed as a young person's game, plenty of older adults are now finding connections online. In fact, many different dating apps are geared toward the senior set, including SeniorMatch, eHarmony, Singles50, OKCupid, and Silver Singles, among others.
- **You have more time for fun.** As a senior, you may have more time to devote to recreation and leisure. This can be a great

opportunity to get out and meet someone who shares your passions and interests.

- **Online dating has its advantages.** While online dating apps and websites may have certain things working against them, particularly if their algorithms for pairing people are not fine-tuned, they also can be helpful. Online dating can expand social circles beyond local neighborhoods or even states, provinces or countries. You're casting your net over a much larger body of water. Furthermore, dating app profiles typically

spell out exactly what another person is seeking, which can save seniors from having to revisit awkward dating moments from years past. Seniors may have to

navigate new waters in modern dating. But with a good mindset and a little persistence, it is possible for seniors to find a special someone in cyberspace.



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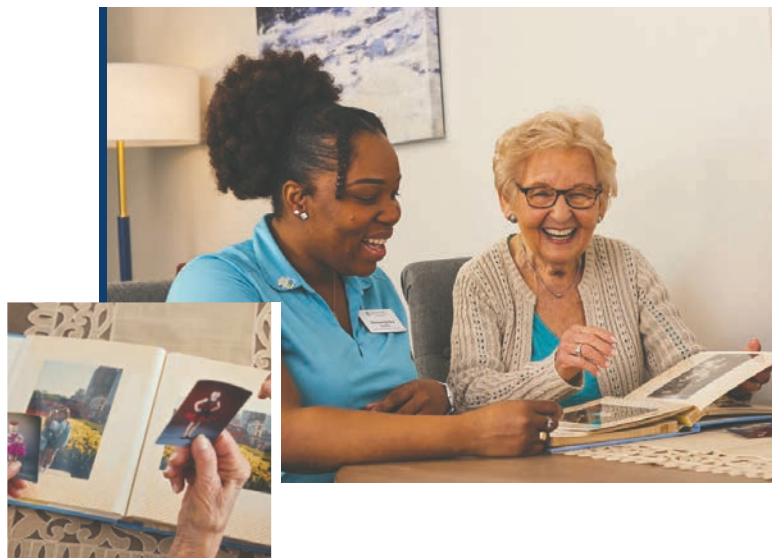
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Great part-time jobs for retirees

Many adults nearing retirement age count down the days until they can bid adieu to the daily tasks of commuting and working so they can enjoy much more time for recreation, travel or whatever is they aspire to do. As enticing as unending free time may seem, some retirees find it is not ideal to be entirely free from the responsibility of working. As current seniors can attest, inflation can drive up the costs of living, meaning that seniors who were once able to afford a certain retirement lifestyle may no longer enjoy that hard-earned luxury. Others may miss the daily opportunities to socialize that working provides, or the way problem-solving on the job stimulates the brain. But even retirees who miss working may not be ready to return to the workforce full-time. That can make part-time employment an ideal fit for mature workers. Here's a look at some part-time positions that could be a good fit for older adults reentering the workforce

Retail sales associate

Working in retail opens seniors up to a wide array of responsibilities and scenarios. Jobs may include greeting customers, making sales, putting out inventory, and helping customers select merchandise. Being personable and having good customer service skills are necessary traits to have when working in retail. Many stores offer part-time employees flexible hours so schedules can be customized.

Consultant

Retirees who loved their job but wanted to spend less time doing it can return as consultants. According to The Balance: Money, individuals often find they earn more per hour working as consultants than they did as full-time staff members. Consulting is a way to share expertise and experience without making a full-time commitment.

Customer service representative

A customer service representative is tasked with helping customers solve problems and ensuring customer satisfaction. He or she may work in a traditional office or store location, or answer calls and resolve issues from home.

School positions

Retirees may want to consider jobs working in schools or in related capacities. Driving a school bus is

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an option if people are willing to undergo the proper training and licensing to operate this type of vehicle. Seniors also may consider working as lunchroom aides or lunch service providers, crossing guards, substitute teachers, and paraprofessionals. School employees will only work

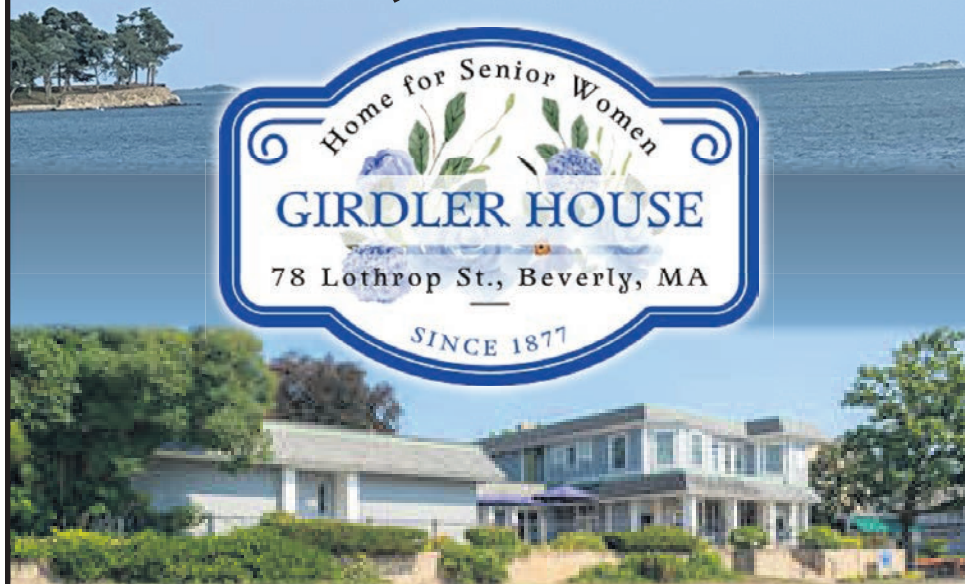
a few hours during the day. They'll also enjoy many holidays off as well as summer vacations.

Receptionist

Receptionists greet patients or customers in office settings. According to AARP, they are the welcoming faces of organizations. Answering phones and light clerical

work also may be required of receptionists. Those who want to work off-peak hours can think about working nights and weekends in hospitals or skilled nursing facilities. Seniors have many different options if they decide they want to return to the workforce in a part-time capacity.

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3 questions to ask before beginning a new fitness regimen



Exercise is widely recognized as a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. Despite that, a recent analysis of data from the 2020 National Health Interview Survey found that more than two-thirds of individuals are not getting enough exercise. Though the survey was conducted amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which suggests the overall figures might be somewhat lower than they might have been had the data been collected in a more typical year, just 28 percent of respondents

were meeting the physical activity guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Routine exercise is beneficial for people of all ages, and seniors are no exception. Aging adults who want to be more physically active but think they are among the 72 percent of individuals who aren't meeting CDC exercise guidelines can speak with their physicians and ask these three questions to ensure the transition to a less sedentary lifestyle goes smoothly.

1. Should I get a heart checkup?

Doctors may already be monitoring aging individuals' hearts even if they have not exhibited symptoms of heart problems in the past. However, it's best to discuss heart health in greater detail prior to beginning a new fitness regimen. In an interview with Penn Medicine, Neel Chokshi, MD, MBA, medical director of Penn Sports Cardiology and Fitness Program, noted the risk of heart attack or cardiac complications slightly increases when individuals begin to participate in a moderate or intense activity. So a physician might want to conduct a heart checkup in order to determine if a patient has an underlying heart condition.

2. Which types of activities should I look to?

A physician also can recommend certain activities depending on a person's age and medical background. Though exercise is beneficial for everyone, certain activities may not be. For example, AdventHealth notes that high-impact activities like jogging and jump rope may not be suited for individuals with arthritis. In addition, aging individuals with physical limitations that require them to use a wheelchair should not write off their ability to exercise, as physicians can recommend exercises for patients with mobility issues as well.

3. Should I take extra caution while on medication?

Prescription medication use is another variable that must be taken into consideration before beginning a new exercise regimen. The CDC notes that roughly 84 percent of adults between the ages of 60 and 79 use one or more prescription medications. Each medication produces different effects, and a 2016 study published in the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal* noted that certain medications evoke an acute drop in blood pressure, which can disturb balance and increase fall risk, while others actually facilitate greater improvements in health outcomes. That means the dynamic between medications and exercise is unique to each medication, which underscores the importance of speaking with a physician whenever a fitness regimen is started or tweaked and/or a new medication is prescribed. These are just three of the questions seniors can ask when discussing exercise with their physicians. Seniors are urged to ask any additional questions they might have during such discussions.

What people can do to prevent stroke

Stroke has been described as a "brain attack." Stroke occurs when blood flow to a part of the brain becomes blocked or when a blood vessel in the brain breaks, which can damage or kill brain cells. The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion says stroke is a leading cause of death and long-term disability in adults. It also can cause irreversible damage to the brain. Individuals who experience stroke may end up with memory problems or experience difficulty thinking or forming words. Mobility issues like difficulty walking or paralysis and weakness may occur. Some individuals also may experience incontinence and other issues resulting from neurological damage.

Although stroke can come out of the blue and is not always preventable, there are several steps people can take to help reduce their risk for stroke.

- **Reduce blood pressure numbers.** High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a significant risk factor for stroke, says Harvard Health. Doctors may advise patients to work to lower blood pressure to between 140/90 to 120/80.



- **Work to lower BMI.** Overweight or obesity increases risk for stroke, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Losing weight and maintaining a health body mass index can help lower stroke risk.
- **Exercise more often.** Routine physical activity can not only help a person lose weight, but also lower cholesterol

and blood pressure levels — all of which are risk factors for stroke. The U.S. Surgeon General recommends individuals get a minimum of two hours and 20 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.

- **Get a cholesterol check.** High cholesterol can increase risk of stroke, which makes routine cholesterol checks important. The Office for the Assistant Secretary of Health says people should get their cholesterol checked at least every four to six years, with some needing to get it checked more frequently.

- **Drink only in moderation.** Alcohol can increase risk of high blood pressure. Individuals should reduce their alcohol intake, with one drink or less for women and two drinks or less for men per day.

- **Know your family health history.** Knowing one's family health history may illustrate a risk for genetic health conditions that can make a person more likely to experience stroke.

- **Treat heart disease.** Do not delay medical treatment for heart disease. Heart conditions like coronary artery disease or atrial fibrillation should be addressed promptly to prevent stroke. Stroke is a serious medical condition that can leave a person debilitated. That is why it is key to reduce risk of stroke throughout one's life.



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3 fun and effective outdoor exercises for seniors



The benefits of spending time in the great outdoors are significant. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, spending time outdoors may improve mental health and help to reduce stress, and the vitamin D the body absorbs while outside can have a positive effect on blood cells and the immune system.

Seniors can benefit from the great outdoors as much as anyone. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium, which strengthens bones. That's especially beneficial for seniors, as the National Council on Aging notes that bone density often decreases after age 50, which can increase the risk of fractures. That's especially so in women over the age of 50, as a 2021 report from Amgen, Inc., indicated women can lose up to 20 percent of their bone density within five to seven years of menopause.

Spending time in the great outdoors also provides a social benefit, encouraging individuals from all walks of life, including seniors, to get out of their homes and spend time with other people.

With so much to gain from spending time outside, seniors can consider these three outdoor exercises as they seek to maintain or improve their overall health.

1. Walking: Walking is free and effective. In fact, WebMD notes that a brisk 30-minute walk can improve blood flow, contribute to a stronger heart, strengthen bones, and even help people sleep better at night. In addition, a 2022 study published in the journal *JAMA Neurology* found that people between the ages of 40 and 79 who walked about 9,800 steps per day were 51 percent

less likely to develop dementia than people who didn't walk much at all.

2. Cycling: Riding a bike is both fun and a great form of outdoor exercise. Though many studies regarding the health effects of cycling have looked at the value of riding a bike to work, a scenario that does not apply to retirees, the results of such studies still offer insight into just how valuable it can be to ride a bike. For example, a 2020 study published in the journal *The Lancet* found that people who cycled to work were 24 percent less likely to die of heart disease and 11 percent less likely to develop cancer. Seniors, whether they are still working or retired, can incorporate cycling into their daily routines and enjoy all the fun and health benefits that riding a bike provides.

3. Hiking: Hiking is a bit more strenuous than walking, particularly when individuals choose to traverse steep and/or rocky terrain. WebMD notes that hiking after age 60 can help people reduce their risk of falls and fractures; lower their risk for a host of ailments, including coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes; reduce blood pressure, even in adults who have already been diagnosed with hypertension; and maintain healthy bones and joints. Hiking is not a one-size-fits-all activity, so seniors, especially those who would characterize themselves as novice hikers, are urged to speak with their physicians prior to hiking trails that are not flat.

Seniors can consider these three fun activities and others as they answer the call of the great outdoors. Walking, cycling and hiking offer a great reason to get out of the house and reap the health-related benefits of spending time outside.

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Tips to help seniors travel safely

Travel was once a key component of the picture working professionals created of their ideal retirements. While the COVID-19 pandemic put many retirement travel plans on hold in recent years, jetting off to distant locales is once again on retirees' radars.

A 2022 survey from AARP found that individuals 50 and over were poised to not only get back on the road, but also spend significantly more money on travel. **Prior to the pandemic, Americans 50 and over spent \$7,314 annually on travel, according to data from AARP. By spring 2022, individuals in that same age bracket indicated a readiness to spend \$8,369 on travel.** Eagerness to get back on the road, in the air or on the high seas could make it easy to overlook some principles of safe travel. However, such

an oversight could lead to complications that could make it hard to enjoy time away from home. The following tips can reduce the likelihood that seniors encounter trouble while traveling.

- **Determine if any health issues are affecting your desired destinations.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a website devoted to travel vaccines ([cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines)), and that page can be an invaluable resource for individuals planning a vacation. What's more, the CDC even provides a specific list of destinations and the latest travel health notices for each of those nations. That list, accessible at [cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) can help seniors determine if there are any health-related safety issues in countries they hope to visit.

- **Speak to your physician.** A pre-trip consultation with a physician can uncover any issues that might arise while you're away. Such issues may be easily managed for domestic travelers who are not planning to visit any especially remote locations, but they will not necessarily be as easily navigated when traveling overseas. Physicians can recommend certain vaccinations or measures to ensure your health while

away. In addition, a pre-trip doctor visit is a great time to refill prescriptions that you will need while you're away.

- **Take financial precautions as well.** Of course, not all travel-related concerns are medical. Finances also require some pre-trip attention. Inflation has caused a sharp spike in the price of various commodities since the start of 2022, so travelers should study up on the cost of food and attractions at their destination to ensure

they have enough money to enjoy themselves. Baggage costs have risen significantly in recent years, so seniors traveling on a budget may want to pack less and do laundry while traveling in an effort to save money. In addition, the unpredictable nature of travel since the onset of the pandemic has underscored the utility of travel insurance. Seniors can look into travel insurance that could reimburse them in the case of delays or cancellations.

- **Privately share your itinerary.** Prior to departing, share your itinerary with friends and family. Avoid sharing the itinerary on social media platforms, which can make you a target for criminals at home and at your destination. The itinerary should include where you're staying, the dates you're visiting certain locations and the dates of activities you'll be engaging in on your trip. Seniors rediscovering the joy of traveling can take various measures to make their trips more safe.



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How seniors can overcome a lack of motivation to exercise

Exercise has its fair share of devotees and millions of others who recognize its value but still struggle to include workouts in their daily routines. Motivation can be a significant hurdle when it comes to exercise, and recent studies are a testament to that difficulty. In a 2021 survey from the global fitness brand Orangetheory® Fitness and Kelton Global, 43 percent of respondents indicated they suffered from a lack of motivation to exercise. Lack of motivation can affect people of all ages, including seniors. However, seniors may be uniquely positioned to overcome their lack of motivation to exercise, particularly if they're retired and have time on their hands. Seniors who aspire to exercise more frequently can consider these strategies if motivation becomes an issue.

- **Exercise away from home.** During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a phenomenon that has been characterized as "basement burnout" developed. That referred to the lack of enthusiasm to exercise at home when gyms and other fitness facilities were forced to close as a public safety measure. Home workouts can become monotonous since most people do not have enough room at home to house the same array of equipment that's available at their local gym. Seniors can overcome monotonous workouts by purchasing a gym membership at a local facility. Many clubs offer discounted rates to seniors and some even offer senior-specific fitness classes like yoga and Pilates.
- **Employ the buddy system.** Seniors also can enlist friends and family members to join them



when they exercise. Encourage neighbors or friends to come along to the gym for a favored fitness class, or invite friends and family on hiking excursions or daily walks. The National Institute on Aging notes that turning exercise into a social activity is a great way for seniors to maintain their motivation to exercise.

- **Track your progress and**

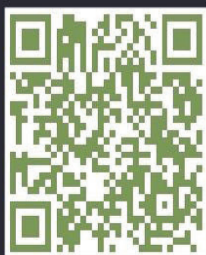
celebrate your successes. The NIA touts the benefits of tracking progress when trying to stay motivated to exercise. As exercise efforts pay increasing dividends, seniors may find it's no longer hard to stay motivated. Success can be measured in various ways. Some might aspire to produce healthier blood test results at the doctor's office, while others may hope to lose a few pounds.

However you define success, celebrate when you achieve your fitness goals. Rewards such as a spa day, a night out at the theater or a weekend getaway can provide all the motivation you need to stay the course.

- **Be flexible with your routine.** Mobility issues and other physical limitations may affect seniors. But such issues need not prevent aging men and women from exercising, even if it does mean they won't be able to hit the gym four or five days per week. Mix up your routine so you can still exercise even if physical limitations make traditional workout routines more challenging. Go for nature walks on days when your body needs a break from strength-training, and check the forecast at the start of each week so you can rearrange your routine if Mother Nature makes outdoor exercise impossible on certain days. Many people find it hard to stay motivated to exercise. Seniors can try a few strategies to ensure they stay the course with their fitness routines.



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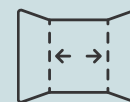
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Falls pose a significant threat to the senior population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says someone age 65 or older suffers a fall every second of every day in the United States. This makes falls the leading cause of injury and injury death among this demographic. The National Council on Aging says one in four Americans fall each year. In fact, the NCOA notes that falls result in more than three million injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms each year, including more than 800,000 that lead to hospitalization. The financial toll of falls among older adults also is significant, and estimates suggest falls will cost \$101 billion annually by 2030. That cost is only expected to increase as the population ages.



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Safely manage multiple medications

Individuals who are 60 and older are accustomed to making routine trips to the pharmacy to fill prescriptions. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that roughly 84 percent of adults between the ages of 60 and 79 use one or more prescription medications. Prescription medications prolong individuals' lives and can make their daily lives more comfortable and manageable. As individuals age, their doctors may recommend various prescriptions, some of which they may need to take long-term. Managing multiple medications at once can be difficult, as it can be easy to lose track of which medications have been taken when individuals are prescribed more than one. In recognition of that difficulty, the National Institutes of Health offers the following tips to help individuals safely manage multiple medications.

- **Maintain an updated list of all medications you take.** The NIH notes a medication list should include both prescription and over-the-counter

medications. OTC medicines include vitamins, supplements and herbal products.

- **Share your medication list with family or close friends.** A medication list should be accessible, and seniors can even share it with close family members, who can then advise medical professionals like EMTs, nurses and emergency room doctors which medicines you are taking in emergency situations when you may not be conscious.

- **Routinely review your medicine list with health care providers and pharmacists.** The NIH recommends individuals discuss their medicines with their physicians during each appointment. Ask if all medicines still need to be taken and if dosages should be changed. When visiting specialists, be sure to provide a list of all medications you are currently taking.

- **Ask questions about newly prescribed medications.** Drug interactions can be dangerous, so it's important to ask if and how any newly prescribed medications may interact with drugs, vitamins or supplements you are already taking.



- **Alert health care providers to any new side effects.** Immediately contact your physician if any new side effects present. The NIH recommends individuals continue to take their medications unless their doctor says otherwise.

- **Use a pill organizer.** A pill organizer makes it easy to manage multiple

medications and can help individuals remember which pills they have taken. Millions of individuals 60 and older take more than one medicine each day. Some simple strategies can ensure seniors safely manage their medications.



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