

2024 Tour Schedule

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JANUARY 2024

Senior Lifestyles

Moderate-intensity activities that can improve overall health

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 says it is still beneficial.



DATE	TOUR	PER PERSON PRICE	DATE	TOUR	PER PERSON PRICE	DATE	TOUR	PER PERSON PRICE
Jan 20	"Annie" / Altria Theatre / Richmond, VA	\$209	Jan 13-19	Mackinac Island / Michigan	\$2,110	Sept 27-29	Neptune Festival / Virginia Beach, VA	\$710
Jan 27	Stephen Freeman / "Echoes of a Legend"	\$130	Jan 15-20	White Mountains / Purple Moose	\$1,900	Oct 4-5	"Daniel" / Pennsylvania Dutch/Lancaster, PA	\$510
Feb 8-16	Florida Grand Tour / Key West	\$3,065	Jan 16-22	Best of Ozarks / Branson / Eureka Springs	\$1,755	Oct 4-14	Jewels of the Rhine	\$6,194
Feb 16-19	Daytona 500	\$1,235	Jun 22	Roan Mountain / Rhododendrons Festival	\$95	Oct 5	Billy Graham Library/Stowe Botanical Gardens	\$90
Mar 7-9	Philadelphia Flower Show/Longwood	\$780	Jun 27-30	Myrtle Beach South Carolina	\$1,110	Oct 5	Brusly Mountain Apple Festival	\$75
Mar 9	Highland Maple Festival/Monterey, VA	\$90	Jul 4-7	New York Yankees v Boston Red Sox	\$1,259	Oct 5-11	New England in the Fall	\$1,750
Mar 16	Highland Maple Festival/Monterey, VA	\$90	Jul 6-13	Summer in New England / Martha's Vineyard	\$2,070	Oct 6-10	Niagara Falls / Toronto	\$1,420
Mar 16	Ashville Outlets / Spring Shopping	\$85	Jul 6-15	Hawaii Honolulu / Waikiki / Aloha	\$5,250	Oct 8-12	Haunted Halloween / Boston / Salem	\$1,425
Mar 30	"Tina" / Stephen Tanger Center	\$157	Jul 7-21	Canyonlands / Scenic Tour	\$3,800	Oct 11-13	Nashville / Music City USA	\$1,045
Apr 5-6	"Daniel" / Pennsylvania Dutch/Lancaster, PA	\$510	Jul 7-Aug 4	Alaska / Canada's Yukon / Motor Coach	\$8,010	Oct 12	Cass Railroad / Cass, WV	\$195
Apr 6	Charlotte Auto Fair/Mascar Hall of Fame	\$149	Jul 9-21	Newfoundland Canada	\$4,935	Oct 12-18	Pioneer Woman / Magnolia Market	\$2,010
Apr 7-9	Wind Creek Casino / Bethlehem, PA	\$540	Jul 13-Aug 6	Best of the West	\$8,595	Oct 19	Lollywood Harvest Festival	\$149
Apr 8-14	Charleston/Savannah/Jekyll Island	\$2,525	Jul 19-21	Nashville / Music City USA	\$1,045	Oct 19	Carolina Balloon Festival / Statesville, NC	\$85
Apr 11-27	The Great Southwest & California	\$4,205	Jul 20	"Back to the Future" / Belk Theatre/Charlotte, NC	\$216	Nov 1-3	Sunshine Tours / Family Reunion	\$935
Apr 12-14	Washington DC/Cherry Blossom Festival	\$665	Jul 20-26	Niagara Falls USA / Erie Canal	\$1,530	Nov 7	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte, NC	\$90
Apr 13	Biltmore House & Gardens/Festival of Flowers	\$175	Jul 31-Aug 2	Greenbrier Hotel & Casino	\$865	Nov 7-10	Biltmore House/Smoky Mountain Christmas	\$1,490
Apr 22-May 1	Texas "Lone Star State"	\$2,530	Aug 1-3	"Daniel" / Lancaster, PA / PA Dutch	\$765	Nov 8	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte, NC	\$90
Apr 27	Biltmore House & Gardens/Festival of Flowers	\$175	Aug 3-4	Tangier Island	\$490	Nov 9	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte, NC	\$90
Apr 28-May 4	Louisiana Cajun Country	\$1,685	Aug 6-25	San Francisco California/The Pacific Northwest	\$5,250	Nov 9	Concord Mills / Bass Pro Shop / Charlotte, NC	\$85
May 3-5	New York City "Springtime"	\$1,250	Aug 18-21	Resorts Casino & Hotel / Atlantic City, NJ	\$765	Nov 9-12	Veteran's Day/Tour of Honor/Washington DC	\$1,175
May 4	Billy Graham Library/Stowe Botanical Gardens	\$90	Aug 17-18	Great Smoky Mountains Railway	\$575	Nov 10-17	Florida Keys Sunset Celebration	\$3,235
May 4	"Mrs. Doubtfire" / Belk Theatre/Charlotte, NC	\$189	Aug 24	Michie Tavern / Monticello	\$95	Nov 20-23	Macy's Thanksgiving Parade / New York	\$1,645
May 7-10	Tulip Festival/Holland Michigan	\$975	Aug 24-25	Atlanta Braves v Washington Nationals	\$435	Nov 27-Dec 2	Currier & Ives Christmas	\$1,985
May 8	Andy Griffith "Mayberry" Mt. Airy, NC	\$85	Sept 3-6	NC Crystal Coast/Atlantic Beach, NC	\$1,365	Nov 30	Premium Outlets Christmas / Charlotte, NC	\$85
May 9-11	"Daniel" / Lancaster, PA / PA Dutch	\$765	Sept 3-6	Washington D.C. / Mount Vernon	\$650	Dec 3	Tanglewood Park / Christmas Lights	\$85
May 11	North Carolina Zoo / Asheville, NC	\$90	Sept 6-8	North Carolina Zoo / Asheville, NC	\$90	Dec 3-7	Gilded Age Christmas / Newport, RI	\$1,535
May 13-17	HGTV "Home Town" / Laurel & Bixby	\$1,920	Sept 7	Charlotte Auto Fair/Nascar Hall of Fame	\$149	Dec 3-9	St. Charles Christmas	\$2,995
May 15-18	Creation Museum / Ark Encounter	\$865	Sept 7	Wind Creek Casino / Bethlehem, PA	\$540	Dec 6-8	Christmas Opryland Hotel	\$1,420
May 17-19	Girls Weekend/Spa Getaway/Charleston, SC	\$1,225	Sept 8-10	Trains of New England	\$3,020	Dec 6-8	Christmas Town USA / McAdenville, NC	\$75
May 18-19	Tangier Island	\$490	Sept 9-21	Nova Scotia / New England in the Fall	\$3,190	Dec 7	Grove Park / Gingerbread House	\$165
May 24-26	Nashville / Music City USA	\$1,045	Sept 11-14	Creation Museum / Ark Encounter	\$900	Dec 7	Biltmore House & Gardens Christmas	\$230
May 25	Michie Tavern / Monticello	\$95	Sept 12-14	"Daniel" / Lancaster, PA / PA Dutch	\$765	Dec 7	Christmas Mystery Adventure	\$1,235
Jun 2-5	Resorts Casino & Hotel / Atlantic City, NJ	\$765	Sept 15-21	Best of Ozarks / Branson / Eureka Springs	\$1,755	Dec 9-12	Radio City Christmas / New York	\$1,420
Jun 2-8	Niagara Falls / Montreal / Toronto / Quebec	\$1,825	Sept 21-22	Gandy Dancer / Tygart Flyer	\$480	Dec 13-15	Christmas Opryland Hotel	\$1,260
Jun 2-20	Hitching a Ride on Route 66	\$5,100	Sept 21-27	New England in the Fall	\$1,750	Dec 14	Biltmore House & Gardens Christmas	\$230
Jun 7-9	Washington D.C. / Mount Vernon	\$660	Sept 22-Oct 3	Buffalo Roundup/Nabraska/South Dakota	\$4,685	Dec 26-31	Christmas Disneyworld / Universal Sea World	\$1,975
Jun 10-14	Mystery Tour...Ssssh! Don't Tell, It's a Secret!	\$1,590	Sept 23-28	Agawa Canyon/Canadian Train/Sault Ste. Marie	\$1,392			

All pricing is for double occupancy. Please call our office for additional pricing/information.

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Three 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



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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.

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Did you know?

Older adults hoping to retire this year may have a new factor to consider. Aspiring retirees may have to play it very smart to ensure they can maximize their savings for the long haul. It's a one-two punch caused by continuously rising costs of everyday items and a bearish market for bonds - one of the most common hedges retirement plans use to offset stock declines. Bonds have been suffering historic losses, according to data from Barclays Aggregate Bond Index. The typical rule of thumb used to be to spend no more than 4 percent of a portfolio's original value each year to plan for retirement.

With no gains or losses, that money would last around 25 years. However, experts at The American College of Financial Services say that, in today's economy, 4 percent and even 3 percent may be too aggressive. According to Nora Dowd Eisenhower, executive director at the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Aging, higher food prices, longer life expectancies and higher rents/housing costs often



lead to financial challenges for people in retirement. Data from the U.S. Current Population Survey shows a trend in the number of people no longer in retirement. In September 2022, the unretirement rate was 2.6 percent, up from 2.4 percent in August.

Wealth advisors indicate retirees need to look long and hard at their spending habits, even spending less than their wealth could support. This can help them ride out the ups and downs of the market that affect prices on goods and services. Working with a good financial advisor also can help retirees manage their savings to maximize their money for the years to come.

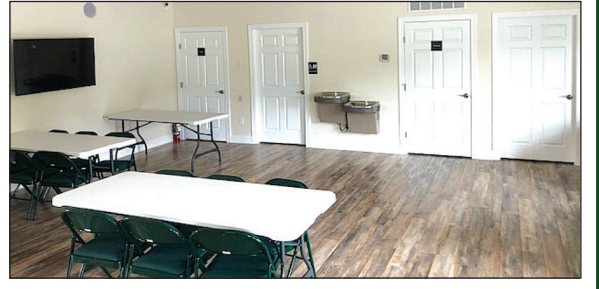
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Visitations, Family Gatherings, Receptions, and meals after funerals. Ray and Bobbi Sloan, the owners, and Karen F. Conner, Manager, and Sue Sweet, Event Center Manager are available to help schedule and plan your event. Please feel free to contact us at (540) 254-1304 or (540) 254-3000 for a price list and availability concerning the Event Center. On behalf of Botetourt Funeral

Home and Crematory we have always tried to have our families' needs foremost in our hearts and we appreciate the fact that we have been chosen to provide for your families' needs during what we know is a difficult time. We again, would like to say thanks to the surrounding communities of Botetourt County for your continued trust and confidence in us over the years.



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Fill up on healthy eating pointers

Diet and exercise are the key components of maintaining a healthy weight and protecting yourself against chronic disease. According to the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, eating smart and being active have similar effects, including reducing risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some cancers, and diabetes. In addition, these healthy living strategies can improve personal appearance and improve overall well-being - helping people live longer and maintain their independence.

People may wonder how to eat better when faced with many diets, each of which promises great results. It can be confusing when navigating all of the options, and there is no magic formula to eating better. Common sense can come into play when attempting to eat better, and individuals also can consider these strategies to make diet work for them as they seek to live healthier.

- Eat colorful, varied, nutritionally dense foods. Medical News Today says each meal should be 50 percent fruit and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Select an array of colorful foods that will provide most of the nutrients needed.

- Choose fiber-rich foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes are good sources of fiber. Fiber helps people maintain digestive health and can help you

to feel fuller longer, reducing the potential for overeating, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Note how you feel after eating. Create a food journal where you jot down notes about how you feel after eating certain foods. If you notice that certain foods or ingredients trigger adverse reactions, it may be worth avoiding that type of food or looking for an alternative. Stomach upset or bloating after eating dairy, for example, may indicate an intolerance for lactose.

- Explore the Mediterranean diet. While you should avoid fad diets that often produce short-term but unsustainable results, a Mediterranean diet has stood the test of time. According to the authors of a new study published in JAMA Network Open in October 2023, middle-aged and older adults with overweight or obesity and metabolic syndrome lost visceral fat (belly fat) and showed a greater reduction in the percentage of total fat while adhering to a Mediterranean diet. They also had delayed loss of lean body mass, which often comes with aging. Mediterranean diets prioritize legumes, seafood, vegetables, and 'good' fats like olive oil.

- Control portion sizes. Sometimes it's not what you eat but how much you eat that affects health. Weighing and measuring food can help you control portions and understand how many calories



you're consuming each day. The National Institutes of Health says eating plans that favor 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day for women and 1,500 to 1,800 for men are good targets to lose weight at a healthy pace when combined with

moderate exercise. Balanced eating is a major component of a healthy lifestyle. While there are many fad diets, eating plans with a proven track record that are supported by the medical community may be your best bet.

Know your osteoporosis risk



Bone is living, growing tissue that changes as a person ages. Although healthy bone can naturally diminish as a person gets older, seniors in particular are at elevated risk of osteoporosis, a bone disease marked by rapid bone deterioration.

Osteoporosis occurs when bone mineral density and bone mass decrease, or when the strength and structure of bone changes, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Bone is constantly being broken down and replaced. When a person has osteoporosis, creation of new bone cannot keep up with the loss of old bone.

Osteoporosis can make bones so brittle that even a seemingly innocuous movement, such as coughing, bumping into something or bending over, can cause bones to break, says the Mayo Clinic. These breaks commonly occur in the spine, wrist or hip.

Osteoporosis affects people of all genders, ages and races. However, white and Asian women, especially those past menopause, are at the highest risk.

The Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation says that osteoporosis is known as a silent disease because bone weakening is undetectable. Subtle signs, such as a stooped posture, a curved back or if someone seems to be getting shorter, may indicate osteoporosis. Breaking a bone is often the first sign of the

disease.

There may be ways to prevent osteoporosis or alleviate its symptoms. A nutritious diet and regular exercise are essential for keeping bones healthy throughout life. This includes getting enough calcium through foods and possibly supplementation. Individuals should work with their doctors to get the right amount of calcium, as too much from supplements may cause kidney stones. Vitamin D also works in concert with calcium to produce strong bones, and many people are deficient in vitamin D. Exercise also is needed for strong bones. Strength training with weight-bearing and balance exercises enjoyed regularly throughout life can help maintain healthy bones as one ages.

Additional lifestyle issues can increase risk for osteoporosis. These include long-term use of certain medications like glucocorticoids and adrenocorticotropic hormones to treat various conditions. Proton pump inhibitors, cancer medications and antiepileptic medicines also may increase risk for osteoporosis. Heavy alcohol consumption and smoking also can contribute to osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is not something to take lightly. A bone-density test can indicate if bones are weakening and if intervention is necessary. However, measures should be taken early in life to prevent osteoporosis in the future.

Did you know?

The burden on health care costs in retirement could be a significant hurdle for retirees without a sizable nest egg or effective strategy to cover such expenses. According to the Fidelity Retiree Health Care Cost Estimate, an average retired couple aged 65 in 2022 could need around \$315,000 after taxes to cover their health care expenses in retirement.

Thought traditional retirement goals like financing travel or relocating to a warmer climate are worthy pursuits, it's vital that individuals of all ages, including those on the cusp of retirement, recognize the importance of saving for health care expenses as well.

Such expenses, which include medication costs, are easy to take for granted when individuals are still working. However, Fidelity notes that generics, branded drugs and specialty drugs account for roughly 17 percent of retirement health care expenses. That equates to around \$53,500 that might be needed to pay for medication alone.



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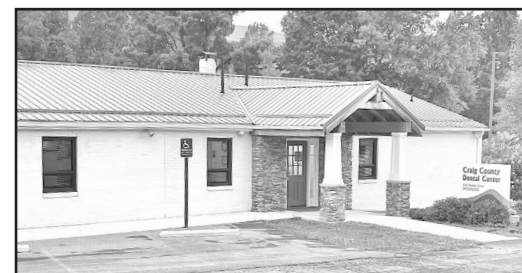
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Craig County Dental Center

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Craig County Health & Dental Centers operate in New Castle, Craig County, Virginia under the management of Monroe Health Center of West Virginia. The medical clinic has been in operation since 2007. The dental center opened in 2010. In addition there is a school based clinic that offers medical and dental services on the public school campus. The staff offers a wide range of services at all facilities including preventative, acute, and chronic care for medical and dental patients. Appointments are encouraged for all visits. To better serve our patients, walk-in or acute care visits are coordinated through same day scheduling. To shorten your wait time, call ahead and arrange an appointment time.

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The Medical Center is open Monday 8:00am-6:00pm and Tuesday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm. The Dental Center is open Monday-Thursday 8:00am-5:00pm. The Health Center can be reached by phone at 540-864-6390 and the Dental Center 540-864-5556. Visit our website at www.monrohealthcenters.com.

What to know about Atrial Fibrillation (AFib)

The heart has been characterized as the engine that makes the human body run. If that metaphor is not exactly spot-on, it still serves as a good indicator as to just how vital a healthy heart is to the human body. Despite the importance of a healthy heart, diseases that affect the heart remain the single greatest cause of death across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death globally, claiming roughly 18 million lives each year. Various factors can adversely affect how well the heart functions, and that includes irregular heart beat, also known as arrhythmia. Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is the most common form of arrhythmia, and it behooves anyone to gain a greater understanding of this condition.

What is AFib? The Cleveland Clinic notes that AFib is an arrhythmia that begins in the upper chambers of the heart known as the atria. When a person has AFib, these chambers beat irregularly, and the American Heart Association reports that, when this occurs, blood pools

in the area because not enough blood is being pumped out of the atria. That pooled blood can clot and pose a serious threat.

What happens if a blood clot forms? The AHA notes that, if a clot forms, the blood can be pumped out of the heart to the brain, which blocks the blood supply to the brain and ultimately results in stroke. In fact, AHA data indicates between 15 and 20 percent of people who have strokes have AFib. In addition, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada reports that one-fourth of all strokes affecting people 40 and older are caused by AFib.

Does AFib produce symptoms? The Cleveland Clinic notes that some people with AFib experience no symptoms. Such is the case in people whose ventricles are beating at a normal or slightly elevated pace. When ventricles begin to beat faster, then individuals may experience symptoms that can include:

- Extreme fatigue
- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart palpitations
- Feeling of butterflies or fish flopping in the chest
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fainting



• Shortness of breath
• Chest pain
Can I lower my risk for AFib?

The AHA notes that adopting and maintaining a heart-healthy lifestyle is the best way to control AFib risk. Such a lifestyle includes:

- Regular physical activity
- Adherence to a heart-healthy diet that is low in salt, saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol
- Controlling blood pressure, including management of high blood pressure
- Avoid excessive consumption of

- alcohol and caffeine
- Avoid smoking
- Maintain healthy cholesterol levels
- Maintain a healthy weight

Researchers behind a 2021 study published in the journal *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases* note that AFib has sometimes been characterized as the cardiovascular epidemic of the twenty-first century. Such a characterization underscores how significant a global health threat AFib can be. More information about AFib can be found at heart.org.

Interesting facts about Alzheimer's disease



Of the roughly 55 million people around the world living with dementia, 60 to 70 percent are estimated to have Alzheimer's disease, reports the Mayo Clinic.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder marked first by mild memory loss that can worsen and lead to problems with communication and an inability to perform the activities of daily life. The condition is named for Dr. Alois Alzheimer. In 1906, Alzheimer noticed changes in the postmortem brain tissue of a

woman who had died of unusual mental illness, which included symptoms of language problems, memory loss and unpredictable behavior. Her brain showed many abnormal clumps and tangled bundles of fibers. According to the National Institute on Aging, doctors now know those clumps are amyloid plaques and the tangles are hallmarks of the disease.

The National Institutes of Health says Alzheimer's disease is the seventh leading cause of

death in the United States and is the most common dementia among older adults. While most people are familiar with Alzheimer's, there is much more anyone can learn. The following are some interesting facts about Alzheimer's.

• The most common symptoms of Alzheimer's involve a gradual decline in memory, reasoning, language, coordination, mood, and behavior.

• The Cleveland Clinic says the buildup of plaques and tangles from an overabundance of amyloid and tau protein production block the communication between nerve cells and cause brain cells to die, thus contributing to Alzheimer's. Nerve cell death starts in the hippocampus, the area of the brain that controls memory. Doctors are not entirely sure what causes this protein buildup.

• Many times family members are the first to recognize a friend or loved one forgetting newly learned information, especially recent events, places and names.

• Issues with thinking and reasoning may include not wearing the right clothes for the weather or not knowing to use oven mitts when taking hot items out of the oven.

• Changes in the brain can begin years before initial symptoms appear, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Age is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's. Researchers believe that genetics may play a role, but a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's does not make it an inevitability.

• A healthy lifestyle, which includes adequate physical activity, a nutritious diet, limited alcohol consumption, and not smoking, may help people avoid Alzheimer's.

• Alzheimer's can rob a person of his or her personality. As the disease becomes more severe, mood swings, anger, depression, and anxiety may occur. This is combined with the patient forgetting who family members are and potentially lashing out or being disinterested in visitors.

• There is no cure for Alzheimer's, but doctors use medical management to improve quality of life for patients and their caregivers. Treatments may help maintain brain health and manage behavioral symptoms.

Alzheimer's disease was first diagnosed at the start of the 20th century. Now, 117 years later, it remains a major health issue affecting millions of people worldwide.

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Did you know?



The National Institute on Aging reports that people with dementia are often incapable of recognizing they are experiencing issues with driving a motor vehicle. Though some people confronting the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia can still drive safely, the NIA notes they will likely need to stop as their condition more profoundly affects their memory and decision-making skills. The NIA suggests family and friends of drivers diagnosed with dementia keep an eye out for signs that could indicate if their loved can continue to drive safely.

Such indicators can include drivers forgetting how to get to and from familiar locales, such as their local grocery store or their homes. Concerned loved ones also can speak with a dementia patient's physician to determine how much their condition may be affecting their ability to drive. During these consultations, loved ones can ask physicians to recommend strategies regarding how to approach letting the person know it's no longer safe for them to drive.

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Injury recovery tips for seniors

There is no escaping the fact that the human body changes as it ages. Some changes associated with aging are beneficial, such as increased wisdom and knowledge from past experiences. Others, particularly changes to health and wellness, can be disconcerting.

Generally speaking, recovering from any injury can be a time-consuming process. For those over the age of 60, the process of recovering from injury can be especially lengthy.

According to Restorative Strength, a fitness and personal training service for seniors, elderly adults generally heal from injuries slower than young people. Caring Senior Services says there are a few reasons why healing can be delayed:

- Having diabetes is one of the most common reasons why seniors have

delayed healing. The disease can negatively impact wound healing because elevated glucose levels narrow the blood vessels and harden the arteries.

- The inflammatory response in seniors drastically slows down as people age. This response is the first phase when blood vessels expand to let white blood cells and nutrients reach wounds. When delayed, the wounds heal much more slowly.

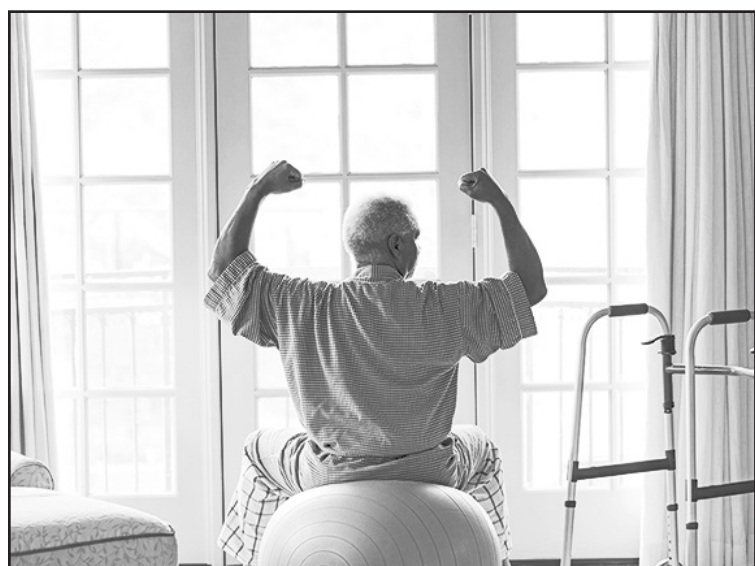
- Reduced skin elasticity and diminished collagen fibers in seniors can contribute to the body's tissues not being able to return to a normal state after injury.

- Sedentary seniors may have lost muscle mass and flexibility, which help physically active individuals regain mobility after an injury. Bones

also may be more brittle, particularly if osteoporosis is present. Although it's impossible to reverse the hands of time, there are steps seniors can take to recover from injuries more quickly, and potentially avoid them as well.

- Slow and steady physical activity: Exercise, including routine strength-training activities, helps strengthen muscles and bones. According to Pioneer Trace Healthcare & Rehabilitation, when complete bed rest is not advised after an injury, getting up and moving even just a little each day can jump-start recovery. Regular activity prior to any injury also may make the body stronger and more flexible to help reduce the likelihood of injuries.

- Maintain a positive mindset. The mind has a role to play in injury



recovery. Minimizing stress levels through meditation, and engaging in positive thinking techniques, can make healing and therapies more successful. Reducing stress can boost the immune system, which also will offer healing benefits.

- Improve diet. The body needs certain vitamins and minerals to function properly. Eating a well-rounded, healthy diet can provide fuel that facilitates healing.

- Work with a qualified professional. Seniors should not take on exercise or recovery efforts on their own. Exercising the right way and following prescribed guidelines can speed up recovery and potentially prevent future injuries.

Recovery from injury could take longer for seniors. But with exercise, positive thinking and guidance from health professionals, there are ways to speed up the injury recovery process.

How empty nesters can repurpose bedrooms in their homes



It can be bittersweet when adult children decide the time has come to move out of the family home. Parents perhaps get their first trial run of this scenario when their children go off to college or enlist in the military. Rooms are left empty, if only for a certain period of time. Eventually, those rooms will remain empty as adult children move out of the house for good.

Converting a child's bedroom into an area for adults may take some planning. It can be exciting to regain space, but at the same time, it can be disheartening to convert a child's bedroom once and for all. When the time comes and homeowners are emotionally ready to tackle bedroom conversions, these tips can help the process go smoothly.

- Repurpose the space for them. Give a childhood bedroom an adult spin without changing too much. If furniture is in good shape, replace the bedding, change the flooring, swap out artwork, and remove 'youthful' items like toys, trophies and other collectibles. When the child comes home to visit, he or she will still feel comfortable in the space.

- Create extra storage. The bedroom can be transformed into a walk-in closet or dressing space. According to the design experts at Houzz, many clients request this type of dressing room situation. There's a bonus if the layout allows the space to connect to the owner's suite or bathroom. This is a major overhaul, so homeowners should enlist a professional contractor.

- Make a fitness center. A bedroom can be turned into a home gym to make working out more convenient. Homeowners should take inventory of equipment they may have and then figure out where existing and new equipment will go. They may need to consult a structural engineer to ensure that the flooring can bear the weight of additional equipment.

- Create a work space. One of the best ways to transform adult children's bedrooms is to convert the spaces into home offices. Those who have been setting up 'desks' at dining room tables or elsewhere may be excited about the prospects of finally having a private, dedicated space to work from home.

- Turn it into a craft room. The bedroom can be converted into a space to explore hobbies and various other interests. A dedicated craft space, a reading nook, a place to store photography equipment, or another function can serve as a useful way to repurpose an empty bedroom. Empty nesters have many possibilities when it comes to converting their children's old bedrooms into adult spaces.



Keep your brain sharp as you age

Cognitive decline is on the minds of many adults as they get older. Memory loss and trouble processing things can sometimes be a side effect of aging, as Everyday Health says the brain changes in size and structure as a person gets older. These changes can affect how well the brain works over time. Furthermore, illnesses affecting the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease, may start showing their symptoms in people when they've reached their mid-60s, says the National Institute on Aging. Cognitive decline and dementia are not a certainty of aging. But older adults interested in strengthening their brains may want to consider these strategies.

Address high blood pressure
High blood pressure can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Maintaining healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels is associated with better cognitive function, according to data published in 2021 in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.

Use all your senses
Harvard Health says the more senses used in learning something, the more of the brain that is involved in retaining the memory. Studies have shown that images paired with pleasant aromas leads to better recall later on.

Exercise regularly
Staying physically active helps

maintain blood flow to the brain, which also helps reduce the risk for hypertension.

Eat brain-healthy foods
According to Cone Health Medical Group, studies show eating fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, like tuna, salmon and mackerel, decreases risk for cognitive decline. People should avoid saturated fats, trans fats and hydrogenated oils.

Read and write frequently
According to a study in the journal Neurology, regular reading and writing in one's older years reduced the rate of memory decline by 32 percent. Joining a book club or simply reading more on one's own can improve cognition. Similarly, writing improves memory and communication abilities and can help strengthen the brain as well.

Drink healthy beverages
Tea and coffee can improve alertness and focus, as they're rich in polyphenols and antioxidants. A Place for Mom says caffeine in these beverages can help solidify new memories. Avoid drinking sugary beverages and limit consumption of alcohol, as neither boasts brain-boosting properties. Keeping the brain sharp is a multilayered process that involves healthy foods and beverages, exercise and brain-stimulating activities.

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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), 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.

Potential dangers of mixing herbal and prescription meds

Medications improve the lives of billions of people across the globe every day. Without access to medication, millions may die while countless others would experience a dramatic decline in their quality of life. Though there's no denying the positive effects of medication, the efficacy of herbal supplements and prescription drugs does not mean each are risk-free. Risks may even be compounded when individuals take herbal supplements and prescription medications concurrently. According to the Mayo Clinic, herbal supplements do not always interact well with prescription medications. For example, herbal supplements can interact with medicines utilized to treat issues affected the heart and blood vessels. That includes conditions like high blood pressure, which estimates from the World Health Organization indicate affects nearly 1.3 billion adults between the ages of 30 and 79.

Mixing medications has always been risky, but a growing reliance on herbal medicines has potentially elevated that risk. That's perhaps due to perceptions of herbal supplements as wholly natural, leading some to conclude that a substance that's wholly natural cannot jeopardize the

human body. However, an analysis published in the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology detailed more than a dozen instances of adverse drug reactions affecting individuals who took herbal medicines alongside various prescription medications. The medications taken, some of which were antidepressants, were prescribed to treat various conditions, including HIV, epilepsy and heart disease.

The potential dangers of mixing herbal and prescription medications underscore the need to engage in honest and open discussions with a physician before taking any herbal or prescription medications. Individuals currently taking a prescription medication should consult with their physician before taking any herbal supplements, while those who take herbal medicines and supplements should bring that up with their physicians if they are prescribed a new medication.

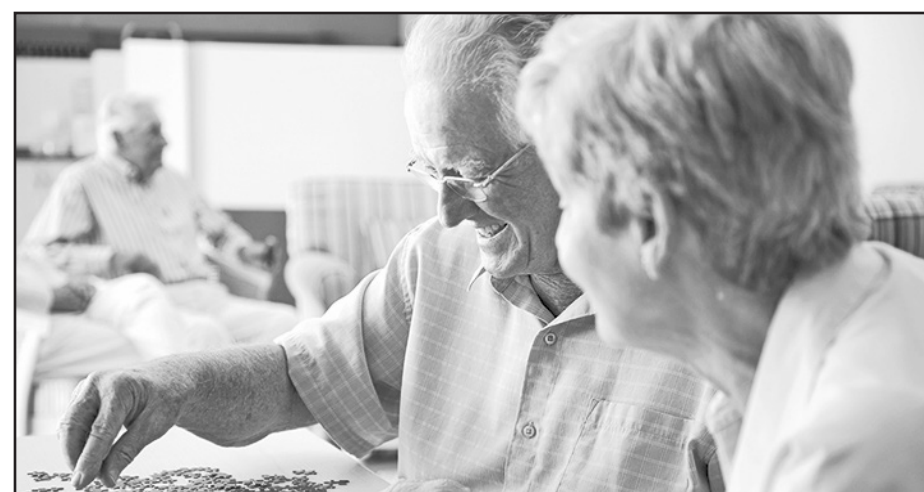
What are some symptoms of herbal and prescription interactions? The Mayo Clinic notes that a fast heartbeat and changes in blood pressure are two indicators of drug interactions. But many additional side effects can indicate a



potentially dangerous or unhealthy interaction is taking place. For example, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration notes that increased dryness or irritation of skin when taking more than one topical acne drug at the same time indicates an unhealthy interaction is taking place.

Herbal and prescription medication interactions can be dangerous. Individuals are urged to contact their physicians before combining medications and to bring up their existing medication regimen whenever they are issued a new prescription.

Habits that affect your cognitive health



The decision to move into an assisted living facility requires careful consideration, and that decision may necessitate even greater deliberation for couples. The organization SeniorLiving.org, which is devoted to empowering older adults to age with ease, notes that many assisted living facilities offer living arrangements for spouses who do not

necessarily require the same level of care and attention as their partners. Though each facility is different, and some may not allow couples to live together when one person requires significant help with day-to-day living, many provide apartment-style living in which housing units are equipped with safety features, such as handrails

and wheelchair accessibility, that can make daily living safer for aging individuals with physical challenges without making life difficult for their partners with no such issues. In addition, SeniorLiving.org notes that, at most assisted living facilities, residents will only pay for the services required, meaning couples will not have to pay for services such as medication management and activities of daily living assistance for the spouse who does not require such help. Such flexibility can make life easier and more affordable for couples who choose to move into assisted living facilities together.

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Tips for seniors to safeguard their mental health

The wide-ranging impact and reach of mental health issues garnered considerable attention during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the virus as well as mandates designed to reduce its spread led to increased feelings of anxiety and isolation. Since then, life has returned to normal for billions of people across the globe, but many people, including seniors, continue to experience mental health issues.



retirees experience a void once their life no longer has the structure that work can provide. According to the independent nonprofit HelpGuide.org, retirement depression can compel retirees to feel as though they miss the sense of identity, meaning and purpose that came with their jobs, which can make some feel depressed, aimless and isolated. Volunteering can help fill the void created by retirement, and the positive mental health effects of volunteering are well-documented. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies have shown volunteering increases positive, relaxed feelings and gives volunteers a sense of meaning and appreciation.

The Pan American Health Organization reports that at least one in four older adults experiences a mental disorder such as depression, anxiety or dementia. And those figures will likely only grow, as population estimates indicate seniors will make up a greater percentage of the global population in the years to come. Seniors dealing with mental health issues may feel helpless, but there's much they can

do to safeguard their mental health.

- **Socialize regularly.** A 2019 study published in *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* found that older adults who socialized with people beyond their circle of family and close friends were more likely to have greater positive moods and fewer negative feelings. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of older adults report

feeling isolated from others. According to the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging that was conducted in January 2023, one in three older adults reported infrequent contact (once a week or less) with people from outside their home.

- **Speak with a mental health professional.** Among the more troubling aspects of the mental health crisis affecting seniors is that

the PAHO reports two-thirds of older adults with mental health problems do not get the treatment they need. Speaking with a mental health professional can help older adults in myriad ways. Such professionals can identify the issue that is prompting seniors to seek help and offer suggestions that can improve overall health and quality of life. Roundstone Insurance notes that reliance

on digital behavioral health tools, including telehealth, was turned to both during the pandemic and ever since, and seniors can utilize such services if they have limited mobility and/or no one to help them make it to in-person appointments.

- **Volunteer.** Many older adults are retired, and while ample free time may have seemed like the ultimate reward after a lifetime of working, many

No one is immune to mental health issues, including seniors. But older adults can take various steps to address their mental health and improve their overall health as a result.

How seniors can get their balance back

Balance issues can pose a serious threat to individual health. When a person experiences issues with their balance, they may experience dizziness, lightheadedness and feel as if a room is spinning. Each of those factors can increase the risk for potentially harmful falls. Seniors may not have the market cornered on balance issues, but the National Institute on Aging notes that many older adults experience such problems. The NIA also notes that people are more likely to have balance problems as they grow older. A number of variables can contribute to balance problems, including medications, health conditions like heart disease and vision problems, and alcohol consumption. The NIA notes that the remedy to balance issues may depend on what's causing them, though some exercises that require individuals to move their heads and bodies in a certain way can help treat some balance disorders. A physical therapist or another professional with an understanding of the relationship between balance and various systems in the body also may be able to help. When a specific cause, such as hypertension

or low blood pressure, is identified, health care teams may be able to recommend various approaches to help seniors get their balance back.

Hypertension
A 2015 study published in *The Journal of Physical Therapy Science* found that hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, can negatively affect balance. The study found that this occurs because hypertension damages the large arteries and decreases microcirculation in specific functional areas, ultimately resulting in impairment that reduces a person's ability to maintain a stable posture. Taking steps to address hypertension, such as eating less sodium, maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly, may also lead to a reduction in balance problems related to the condition.

Low blood pressure
Low blood pressure also can contribute to balance problems. According to the American Geriatrics Society, sudden low blood pressure, which is also referred to as orthostatic hypotension, can manifest when sitting up and standing up. When it does, a person may experience dizziness or



lightheadedness, which may last just a few seconds or several minutes. The AGS notes that dizziness related to low blood pressure also may appear within one to three minutes of sitting up or standing up, which means individuals may be vulnerable to falls even when they initially feel fine after sitting up or standing up. The NIA reports that individuals with low blood pressure can manage the issue by drinking plenty of fluids, including water,

and avoiding alcohol. In addition, pay careful attention to posture and movements and make a concerted effort to stand up slowly.

Balance issues are often linked to aging, but that does not mean seniors are helpless against symptoms like dizziness and lightheadedness that are linked to problems with balance. Working with a health care team and identifying potential causes of balance issues can help seniors improve their health outcomes.

Did you know?

The decision to move into an assisted living facility requires careful consideration, and that decision may necessitate even greater deliberation for couples. The organization SeniorLiving.org, which is devoted to empowering older adults to age with ease, notes that many assisted living facilities offer living arrangements for spouses who do not necessarily require the same level of care and attention as their partners.

Though each facility is different, and some may not allow couples to live together when one person requires significant help with day-to-day living, many provide apartment-style living in which housing units are equipped with safety features, such as handrails and wheelchair accessibility, that can make daily living safer for aging individuals with physical challenges without making life difficult for their partners with no such issues.

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How to use diet to combat age-related bodily changes that can affect your health



The human body is a marvel. How the body transforms over the course of an individual's life is one of its more remarkable qualities, and those changes never cease, even as individuals near retirement age.

The changes associated with aging include physical transformations but also more subtle shifts the naked eye cannot see. For example, metabolism slows as individuals grow older, and aging also can lead to a decrease in bone density and muscle mass. These changes affect how men and women at or nearing retirement age should approach their diets in recognition of the various ways their nutritional needs change at this point in their lives. Any modifications to a diet should first be discussed with a physician, but the following are some ways aging adults can use diet to combat age-related changes to their bodies.

- **Prioritize protein.** The authors of a 2010 study published in the journal *Current Opinion in Nutrition and Metabolic Care* recommended that older adults consume between 25 and 30 grams of protein with each meal. The researchers behind the study concluded that such consumption could limit inactivity-mediated losses of muscle mass and function.
- **Overcome reduced production of vitamin D.** WebMD notes that people over 65 typically experience a decrease in natural production of vitamin D. Vitamin D is not naturally found in many foods, so aging men and women may need to rely on supplementation to ensure their bodies get enough of it. Vitamin D helps with anti-inflammation, immune system support and muscle function, among other benefits. So it's vital that aging men and women find ways to get sufficient vitamin D.
- **Consume ample dietary fiber.** The National Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging notes that fiber plays an important role in the health of older adults. Fiber has been linked with heart health, healthy digestion, feeling full, and preventing constipation, which the online medical resource Healthline notes is a common health problem among the elderly. Though the NRCNA notes that older adults need slightly less fiber than their younger counterparts, it's still a vital component of a nutritious diet. The feeling of fullness that fiber consumption can provide also is significant, as it can ensure adults who aren't burning as many calories as they used to aren't overeating in order to feel satisfied. That can make it easier for such adults to maintain a healthy weight.
- **Monitor intake of vitamin B12.** The NRCNA notes that vitamin B12 is involved in a host of important functions in the body, including nerve function and the formation of red blood cells. Vitamin B12 is most easily found in animal products, which many aging men and women must largely avoid due to other health concerns. In such instances, men and women can discuss supplementation with their physicians as well as alternative food sources of B12, such as fortified cereals, salmon and other items.

Bodily changes related to aging increase the likelihood that men and women will need to alter their diets in order to maintain their overall health.

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Read more to improve overall health



Aging is often associated with minor forgetfulness and loss of cognitive function, but it does not cause the types of issues that arise with dementia. According to Medical News Today, millions of people around the world have dementia, which is a term given to various chronic neurodegenerative conditions that affect cognitive abilities and memory, including Alzheimer's disease.

Research is ongoing in an effort to understand more about what can be done to reduce dementia risk and cognitive impairment. Reading may be something to explore. A study published in 2021 in *Neurology* found that high levels of cognitive activity, such as reading, playing games like checkers and puzzles, and writing letters, can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease by 5 years among those aged 80 years and over. So how can people read more? Consider these five ideas.

1. Carry a book or e-reader. Turn to a book rather than a cell phone for entertainment while waiting at appointments, school pick-up, commutes, and other times when waiting is necessary.
2. Get newspapers delivered. Getting the news online can be convenient, but once you're on the internet it's easy to go down various rabbit holes that take you away from news information sites. Rather, pick up a newspaper and read it each day. You'll be strengthening cognitive health and supporting your local community in the process.
3. Join a book club. Book clubs are popular ways to meet new people and read regularly. Socialization opportunities and reading are great for seniors who may worry about cognitive health.
4. Get a library card. Visiting the library is still a fashionable thing to do. It's often a community hub for activities, and provides the most affordable place to get reading material.
5. Stop into a bookshop while shopping. Make a point of popping into a book retailer while out and about. You never know what might pique your interest, particularly when visiting smaller, independent booksellers.