



It’s not just for kids anymore

Perhaps due to the popularity of social media among a generation of young people who grew up with it, platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are often associated with people born in the 21st century. However, a 2018 study from the Pew Institute found that 65 percent of adults between the ages of 50 and 64 used Facebook and 68 percent used YouTube.

Social media is often on the receiving end of negative attention, but it’s also a potentially valuable tool that can help men and women over 50 stay connected with their communities. That’s not always so easy for adults who no longer have children at home. And as its name suggests, social media can help users connect with others who share their interests. Such connections also can be hard to make for adults over 50.

Adults over 50 may be more comfortable with social media now than they were a decade ago, but it’s still a good idea to brush up on basic security measures that can help men and women protect their privacy as they utilize platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

- Protect your personal information. No social media user has the right to access your personal information, including your address, date of birth or other data unique to you. Avoid interacting with anyone who requests personal information, employing the function to block such users from connecting with you when possible. It’s also important to keep informa-

tion about travel plans private. For example, sharing details of an upcoming vacation can serve notice to potential criminals that no one will be in your house, making it a potential target for burglars.

- Aim for quality, not quantity, when building social media networks. Avoid accepting friend requests from individuals you don’t know. Cyber criminals often gain access to victims via social media, so limit your social media network to people you know and trust.

- Turn off location information. The technology behind social media is impressive and even makes it possible to determine where users are when they tweet or post to other platforms. But many users, especially those concerned about their privacy, don’t want to share location information with anyone, much less strangers. Turn off location information and routinely double check to make sure it’s still turned off.

- Discuss others’ privacy concerns before posting to social media. Social media isn’t for everyone, and some people may not want photos of themselves or their children posted to platforms like Facebook or Instagram. Prior to posting pictures or information about other people, confirm that they’re OK with you doing so.

Adults over 50 are engaging with social media. But no matter how comfortable users become, it’s still best to keep various social media safety protocols in mind. LP227089



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Senior Living

Did you know?

Leisure activities may be widely viewed as fun ways to fill up free time, but the benefits of leisure activities extend beyond beating boredom. A 2011 analysis published in the journal BBA Molecular Basis of Disease found that leisure activities have a positive impact on cognitive function and dementia. The analysis, conducted by researchers with the Aging Research Center in Stockholm who examined various studies regarding the relationship between certain activities and cognitive function, defined leisure activity as the voluntary use of free time for activities outside the home. After retirement, leisure time constitutes a large part of many retirees' lives, and finding ways to fill that time is more beneficial than merely avoiding boredom. The researchers behind the study concluded that the existing research is insufficient to draw any firm conclusions regarding the effects of certain types of leisure activities on the risk for dementia and cognitive decline, though they did note that multi-domain cognitive training has the potential to improve cognitive function in healthy older adults and slow decline in affected individuals. A multi-domain approach to cognitive training involves memory, reasoning, problem-solving, and map reading, among other activities. Aging adults who embrace activities that require the use of such skills may find that they're not only finding stimulating ways to fill their free time, but increasing their chances of long-term cognitive health as well. LP213756

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Senior Living



How to organize a social club

The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic taught the world many lessons, not the least of which was how easy it can be to take socializing for granted. Lockdown was a big part of life during the early days of the pandemic, as people were forced to stay home from work and school and remain largely isolated, even from their own friends and family members.

The sense of isolation that many people developed during those early days of the pandemic likely didn't come as a surprise to medical researchers, particularly those who have studied the effects of isolation on aging populations. The National Institute on Aging indicates that social isolation and loneliness are linked to depression as well as a host of other negative health outcomes, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and cognitive decline.

Social clubs can be a great way for

adults over 50 to avoid isolation and loneliness. Such clubs can provide opportunities to connect with individuals who share similar interests, laying the foundation for new friendships that can be hard to develop in midlife.

Perhaps the best thing about social clubs is that anyone can start one. These tips can help individuals over 50 start social clubs that appeal to locals who are on the lookout for fun ways to meet new people.

- Think of a hobby unique to your location. One of the best ways to attract other locals is to find a hobby that caters to residents in your area. For example, coastal residents may want to start a local fishing club, while city dwellers may draw more interest starting a club focused on local museums or restaurants.
- Take all comers. Individuals over 50 may aspire to meet people in situations simi-

lar to their own, but they should still allow anyone interested in their club to join. Adults in the early stages of midlife (i.e., their thirties and forties) are often too busy with their personal and professional lives to make much time for social clubs, so it's likely that those interested will be 50 or older. But accepting all who are interested can increase the chances of starting a diverse and engaging group.

- Spread the word. Meetup (meetup.com) has been facilitating connections for two decades, making it a great place to start a group for people with shared interests. In addition to utilizing a service like Meetup, founders can spread the word through their social media apps and create fliers to post on public boards at local community centers and libraries.
- Find a public place to get together. It's best to avoid hosting club events and meet-



ings at a private residence, including your own. Instead, prior to starting the club, look around for meeting places, which can include local churches, libraries or community centers. Ask about reserving spaces for meetings and look for places that are accessible for all people, including those with mobility issues.

Starting a social club can be a great way for individuals over 50 to meet new people and explore new or existing passions. LP227087



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