

Living Your Best Life SENIOR NEWS & Resource GUIDE

Strength training for seniors

A balanced diet and exercise, which includes a combination of aerobic activities and strength training, is necessary to maintain long-term health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity is one of the most important things older adults can do to protect their overall health. Exercise helps to delay or prevent many of the conditions that come with age. Adults ages 65 and older should aim for the recommended 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking, and at least two days of activities that strengthen muscles.

When it comes to muscle strengthening, seniors can follow these safety guidelines as they embark on their strength-training journeys.

- Speak with a healthcare provider first. Get the green light to proceed with an exercise regimen before beginning by having a discussion with your general practitioner about your fitness goals. Your doctor can recommend strategies that are safe and point out any exercises that may compromise your overall health.
- Master basic exercises first. Anyone new to strength training, which is sometimes known as resistance training, can start out slowly, even using just body weight, to provide resistance. Resistance exercises can include squats, crunches, modified pushups, planks, and lunges.
- Graduate to resistance bands. When you're ready to move on to something else, consider resistance bands as an alternative to free weights. The bands can help you develop good form before introducing weight. Good form is key to avoiding injury.
- Work with a trainer. Working with a certified personal trainer can help you learn how to use free weights and strength-training machines correctly. A trainer also can create a routine that includes the right number of sets and repetitions to gradually build and maintain muscle mass. If you decide against hiring a trainer, gym staff members may guide you through equipment and demonstrate proper form.
- Exercise with a friend. Strength training with a friend or family member can provide motivation and keep you on target to meet your goals.
- Build up gradually. Your first strength session should only last 10 to 15 minutes, according to Tiffany Chag, C.S.C.S., a strength coach at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. This enables you to gauge soreness. Wait until soreness abates before beginning your next session if you are new to strength training.

Strength exercises are a vital part of maintaining health as a senior. Such exercises help maintain muscle mass and also improve balance and bone health. FP235928

How seniors can help themselves & others through mentoring

The role of mentor is complex and sometimes vulnerable to misinterpretation. According to the employment resource Indeed, a mentor is an individual who acts as an adviser or coach for a less experienced person. Mentors often share their experiences and may even offer advice to their mentees.

Anyone can serve as a mentor, though individuals who accept that responsibility are typically older and/or more knowledgeable than their mentees. Mentors may be athletic coaches, teachers, business associates, or esteemed family members. Mentoring is something older adults can consider as they look to share their knowledge with others.

Mental and emotional benefits

Many successful individuals credit mentors with helping them achieve their goals. However, mentors also walk away from mentoring having gained something significant. According to the caregiving company Seasons, mentoring can keep an aging mind sharp. Being a mentor may help at-risk seniors reduce their chances of developing dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease. According to a 2009 study published in the Journal of Gerontology, gains were shown for mentors in "executive function and in the activity of prefrontal cortical regions in older adults at elevated risk for cognitive impairment."

Mentoring also may give seniors extra reasons to get up and go each day. A scheduled task like mentoring fosters social interactions and changes of scenery. Information published in Harvard Business Review indicates seniors who mentor young people may be three times happier than people who do not.

Qualities of good mentors

Seniors considering mentoring should go over what can make a good mentor-mentee relationship. The following are some characteristics of successful mentors.

- Engage: The mentor should show genuine interest in the mentee, asking about their goals and expectations. Conversation should come easily.
- Participate actively: It's important to make the time for mentoring sessions according to what the mentee can manage with his or her schedule. Lessons should be tailored to what the mentee hopes to gain from the relationship. Gauging success along the way and tweaking things as necessary can keep mentoring sessions on target.
- Listen well: Mentors recognize the importance of listening first and then responding to the questions and needs of the mentee.
- Possess expertise: A mentor needn't have an advanced degree or special certification, but he or she should have more experience in a given field or subject than the mentee.

Mentoring is a consideration for seniors looking to remain active in their communities and share their knowledge with others. FP235935

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. TF232672

The Alzheimer's Association reports that remaining socially active throughout adulthood can possibly delay the onset of dementia. And that's not the only benefit to remaining socially engaged as an adult, which researchers have linked to reduced rates of disability and mortality. The Alzheimer's Association also indicates that social engagement may reduce the risk for depression in older adults. That's a significant benefit, as the National Council on Aging notes that the risk for depression is elevated among older adults compared to young adults. Retirees can consider a host of ways to remain socially engaged, whether it's volunteering, participating in clubs or moving to communities tailored to individuals 55 and older. Such communities may facilitate social engagement among residents by establishing or promoting clubs, organizing group sightseeing trips and arranging for other opportunities for inhabitants to get to know their neighbors. TF232681

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that as much as 5 percent of older adults living in the general community are suffering from clinical depression. Those figures are even higher among older adults who are hospitalized (11.5 percent) and those who require home health care (13.5 percent). The National Council on Aging reports that older adults are at an elevated risk of developing depression, though there's no single, specific cause increasing that risk. Chronic conditions, which the CDC estimates affect as much as 80 percent of older adults; decreased functional ability; reduced mobility; loneliness; and financial issues related to retirement are among the potential causes of depression in older adults. As difficult as depression can be, the NCOA notes that treatment has been found to be just as effective for seniors as it is in younger populations. Aging individuals or those concerned about an aging relative are encouraged to visit the American Psychological Association website at [psychiatry.org](https://www.apa.org) to learn more about the many ways depression can be treated. TF232676



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Living Your Best Life

SENIOR NEWS & Resource GUIDE

How to start a seniors’ social club

Various changes are associated with aging, and these can be physical, mental and emotional. Though each person manages these changes in their own way, there’s no denying that social interaction can benefit people from all walks of life as they navigate their golden years.

The Foundation for Senior Care says socializing can give seniors a sense of purpose, stimulate the mind, relieve boredom, potentially prevent feelings of depression, and give individuals something to look forward to. The senior living center Aston Gardens says socialization provides a significant boost to the cognitive health of older adults, helping to prevent or delay conditions that can affect memory.

Individuals looking to cultivate healthy social interactions may turn to clubs and other groups. If there’s a dearth of opportunities, individuals can start and promote their own social club using this useful guideline.

Decide on the purpose of the group

Social clubs can meet and be organized around any number of themes or interests. Social clubs may meet to discuss gardening, crocheting, reading, or other shared hobbies.

Friends also may be interested in doing food and beverage sampling. In such instances, a luncheon social club makes perfect sense.

Turn to social media

Meeting details can be posted in a community bulletin or on a message board at a local house of worship. However, the internet can be a speedy messenger and help like-minded people figure out how to connect. Facebook groups are one way to organize social clubs, as is the website Meetup.com. The latter is a large online network of offline groups that meet all over the country and the world. The website makes it a snap to organize a local group or find an existing club.

Check for competition

Conduct a search of groups already meeting within a 50-mile radius to see if an existing group already meets your criteria. If not, proceed full speed ahead as you establish your own club.

Establish consistent meeting times

Most people prefer a schedule so they can plan their days accordingly. Choose a regular meeting time and place to



hold the social club; otherwise, it can be confusing to accommodate everyone. Inconsistency also can make it hard to get the club off the ground.

Start small and then build

For those new to hosting social clubs, it may be better to begin with only a few members as everyone gets into a groove. As the group becomes more established, it can be opened up to more members. Although it may be wise to cap membership so that things are more easily managed.

Social clubs are a great way for seniors to stay connected and active. When there isn’t one that meets a person’s interests, it’s relatively easy start one from scratch. TF232680

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. TF237116

New factors to consider before retiring

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. TF232679



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