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Aging in Place.....Aging Well

Oregon Family and Community Education

USE HF #67, 69

Aging is unavoidable and an inevitable process that affects each of us. Aging brings on many changes as a person develops throughout their lifetime. The way one takes care of oneself through the years, both mentally and physically, will affect the way in which one ages. Many lifestyle choices and activities will impact the way one ages thus there is making a strong connection between healthy routine, prevention and longevity.

Some Ways to think about aging are the chronological order, such as birthdays, or what a person can accomplish or do, as to what tasks or activities acknowledges the influences of how people think about aging. Aging can be thought about in terms of how your body functions.

KEYS TO ACCEPTING AGING

- POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Positive attitude can influence mental health and physical performance including the ability to fight disease and infection. Attitude can also effect relationships, social networks and help make success in life more likely. Develop an optimistic attitude by being confident, positive and patient. Accepting change is important with having a positive attitude. Do things that make you happy by building close relationships, care for others, engage in healthy active lifestyles, embrace spirituality, practice positive thinking, embrace a hobby or activity and identify your strengths. A positive attitude about growing old can help you live longer.

- EATING HEALTHY

Eating Healthy has an impression on one's overall health. Nutritional food protects one from various diseases as well as chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, bone loss, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Maintaining a healthy diet can reduce high blood pressure, lower cholesterol, manage arthritis, control diabetes and retain healthy skin, hair and nails.

Eating well throughout life is important for our brains and bodies. As we age, our metabolism and digestion starts to slow down, so we don't need as many calories as we once did. We also start to lose bone mass (bone density), which can lead to osteoporosis. For these reasons, it's more important than ever to make good, nutrient-dense food choices. Nutrient-dense foods are those that contain a high amount of vitamins/minerals, calorie-for-calorie. They also have no to low amounts of saturated fat or added sugars. Examples of nutrient dense foods include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seafood, eggs, nuts and seeds, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry.

Our sensation of thirst seems to decrease as we age. Even so, it's still important to drink plenty of water (~8 cups per day) in order to keep our bodies functioning well and avoid dehydration. It's also recommended to drink a full glass of water when taking medications.

ASK: What are some nutrient-dense foods that you enjoy?

ASK: What tips do you have for nourishing your body as you age?

- **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Physical activity is important also, no matter what your size, shape or age. Physical movement strengthens bones and muscles, improves cardiac health maintains your range of motion and flexibility. It protects against certain health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, colon cancer and depression. It improves mental health, mood and cognitive functioning, protects against dementia including Alzheimer's disease. It helps to control weight, increases energy and improves sleep. It reduces the risk of falling and contributes to longevity. Getting started is sometimes the hardest when it comes to exercise. You should start slow and make it part of your routine. You can listen to an audio book while walking your pet. Try all types of exercise -- aerobics, strength training, balance and stretching. You are more likely to stay active if you stick with it and if you enjoy what you are doing, believe the activities are safe and fit into your daily schedule and are affordable. Regular exercise is the most important thing you can do for your health and optimal aging.

Staying physically active helps to keep our bones, muscles, and heart strong, which helps us perform our daily tasks. It also helps to improve mobility and balance which can help prevent falls. Additionally, regular physical activity increases circulation, improves digestion, elevates mood, decreases hunger, controls weight, increases energy, encourages sleep, and enhances memory. It's a pretty amazing 'drug'!

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that older adults (as well as people of all ages!) engage in both Aerobic activity and Strength Activities each week. Older adults should aim to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. On at least two days per week, older adults should also include strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups. Physical activity can be done in increments of 10 minutes or more for health benefits.

ASK: What are some examples of aerobic activities? (walking, hiking, swimming, dancing, cycling, tennis, mowing the lawn)

What are some examples of strength activities? (yoga, circuit training, chair aerobics, gardening, lifting weights)

What types of physical activity do you like to do?

Is it easy to meet these recommendations? What ideas do you have for including physical activity in your daily life?

While we aim for 150 minutes of physical activity per week, many of us may find this difficult to meet. Don't get discouraged. Some physical activity is better than none at all.

- **THE BRAIN**

The Brain allows one to interact with the world, comprehend, examine, and respond to various surroundings. A healthy brain is vital to survival growth and everyday successes. It's important to be social. Stay in contact with family and friends and join a group or club. Organize a game night or volunteer for your favorite charity. Sign up for a class with an exercise partner. Take a class at your local college. Look over your local newspaper and get involved in community activities.

Mental motivation by exercising your brain can stimulate and enhance brain cell connections and delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Some common forms are puzzles and games. Reading and writing engage the memory component of your brain.

Hobbies can challenge the brain, especially the ones that require eye hand coordination. Hobbies create rich environments and provide a sense of purpose. Emotional/psychological/spiritual commitment escapes from the hurried and material world are helpful. Spiritual practices include prayer, walking, yoga, meditation, quiet contemplation and other relaxation techniques help one slow down and connect with who you are and your value of life.

(If time distribute the Brain Teasers and do one)

- **SOCIAL ACTIVITY**

Social Activity is good for a person no matter what age, or where you live. It improves social skills and academic performance. It gives you a positive attitude and enriched self-esteem. It reduces the risk of illness, diseases and risk of mental disorders such as depression. Social connectedness includes: family, friends, co-workers, and other people with whom you interact as you carry out your daily activities. Social connectedness could be activities that you are involved with in your community or home. Join a community center club or committee, go to a theater, movie, sporting event or festival. Other ways of being social is to travel, eating out, volunteer or taking a class.

- **PRACITICING SAFETY**

Practicing Safety is important because it keeps you out of harm's way. Keys to safe living include: simple lifestyle changes, recognizing where most hazards can be found and how danger and injuries can occur when participating in different activities. Home often represents security and comfort. There is no place more important to keep you safe than your home. Here are some home safety tips to follow. Make sure your house number is visible from the street, in case of emergency, personnel can find the correct home. Install high quality locks on both doors and windows. Have smoke detectors on each floor of your home. Carbon monoxide monitors should be installed near sleeping areas. Check batteries each time daylight saving time changes to keep them current. Plan a fire escape for your family and identify two exits for every room. Keep fire extinguishers handy in key locations of your home. Set your water heater at 120 degrees to avoid burns and save energy. When in a vehicle make sure you have your seat belt on and stay off your cell phone.

Assessing the features of your home can help you decide if it meets your current and future needs for comfort, safety and convenience.

You may wonder where to start with assessments and modifications. Top priorities

usually include: getting in and out of the home; using the bathroom; and moving around inside the home.

The entrance to your home makes it possible to get in and out of your home safely and conveniently. Each home should have one no-step entrance, referred to as an accessible entrance. This need not be the front door, but may be easier to manage at a garage or side door. The accessible entrance should have a wide door, low threshold, be well lighted and be protected from the weather. Some additional features that would make an entrance ideal include adequate level space to maneuver near the door with handrails so no one steps off the edge; a location to place parcels while handling keys; a lever door handle for easy grasp; and a way to communicate, such as a peep hole, video display or intercom system. Communication devices are becoming much more affordable and easier to use. They help you to screen visitors to your door or keep track of activity when you are away from home.

Bathroom Business

Inside the home, bathroom access and safety is a top priority. Many falls and injuries occur in the bathroom.

Bathrooms are usually small areas. To gain extra space, clear away any furniture, garbage cans or household items that may take up space or create trip hazards. Consider removing cabinets and installing a pedestal sink or a wall mount sink to open up more floor space.

An outward swinging door provides more room to maneuver, especially if a caregiver is present. Most door jams are built to allow the door to swing in or out by changing the location of the existing hinges. Swing-clear, or off-set hinges allow a door to swing out of the doorway and back against a wall. These are available at home improvement stores.

Bathroom grab bars are often the first, important effort made to make a home safe for aging in place. Grab bars should be installed before any falls occur.

Grab bars in bathrooms are essential. They should be installed by the toilet and in the shower or tub. Grab bars should be securely anchored, which may require blocking on the outside of the wall, if the studs inside the wall are not in an appropriate place. Beveled edges, texture and matching paint can make the blocking for the grab bar nearly invisible. Fold-up or swing-away bars can clear the area when not in use. A towel rack is never a safe substitute for a properly installed grab bar.

There is a wide selection of grab bar options available. They can be found to match any existing décor and need not make your home look institutional.

Single lever faucets for the sink and bathtub and shallow sinks can increase independence and convenience for users who might have challenges to strength, dexterity or height. A seat for the tub or shower is a great safety and convenience feature. Consider adding a hand-held shower head, especially if the shower head is high on the wall. An on/off switch on the showerhead is suggested. To prevent burns, the water temperature should not exceed 120°F. Check the setting on your water heater.

A higher-seated toilet can be a great convenience as we age. A toilet seat even 2" higher can make it easier to sit and stand without assistance. Raised toilet seats and taller toilets are available at all home improvement and plumbing stores.

ASK: What features do you have in your bathroom that make it more safe and convenient?

Adequate lighting is necessary for safe movement around your home. An 80-year old needs three times the light as a teenager. Thoughtful and adequate lighting in a home reduces the likelihood of falls and increases the activity levels and the mood of inhabitants. Since we live in an area with limited sunlight during much of the year, ensuring that you have good lighting every day will contribute to your overall wellbeing.

No one should ever return to a dark home or enter a dark room to fumble for the light switch. There are many ways to prevent this from happening. Automatic lights that respond to darkness or motion, or lights that are left on at all times are a significant safety and security measures that everyone should consider.

- **KNOW YOUR HEALTHY NUMBERS**

Knowing your Health numbers are important with regular visits to your health care provider. The recommended level of numbers for men and women of cholesterol is less than 200 milligrams per deciliter of blood. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the fats (lipids) of your blood. There are two forms of cholesterol: low density lipoprotein (LDL) also known as "bad" cholesterol—and high density lipoprotein (HDL)—the "good" cholesterol. A fasting triglyceride level of less than 150 mg/dl is healthy. Triglycerides are responsible for the energy tissue that are needed to function. Blood pressure normal is less than < 120. Blood sugar or glucose is the type of sugar that travels through the blood stream. It should be <100 mg/dl. It comes from carbohydrates foods and acts as a basic food for the body. Your Body Mass Index (BMI) is the ratio between weight and height. The normal range for adults is 18.5 to 24.5. Keeping up with your numbers is an important way to maintain a healthy lifestyle and optimal aging.

Maintain Good Vision and Hearing

Taking good care of your vision and hearing are important for staying safe, active and healthy as you age. Vision and hearing loss make it much more difficult and unlikely you will interact with others or continue to pursue your interests and activities. It can also endanger you, making you less aware of hazards around you and more likely you will fall. Vision and hearing can deteriorate slowly over time so you may not realize what changes have occurred.

ASK: Who has had a comprehensive eye exam in the last year? What about a hearing exam?

The National Institute on Health recommends that people age 60 or older, should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

While some changes in vision such as increased difficulty adjusting to glare and distinguishing between light colors can be expected with aging, eye diseases such as macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy are not a normal part of aging. If caught early, all of these conditions can be treated.

You can protect your vision by eating a healthy diet, wearing sunglasses or a wide-brimmed hat in bright sunlight, wearing protective eyewear during sports or around equipment, avoid smoke, keep your hands clean and away from your eyes as much as possible and by giving your eyes an occasional rest when using technology or reading by focusing on an item at a distance before returning to your task.

Some people may not want to admit or do not even realize they have trouble hearing. People who can't hear well may become depressed or withdraw from others to avoid feeling frustrated or embarrassed about not understanding what is being said. Sometimes older people are mistakenly thought to be confused, unresponsive, or uncooperative just because they don't hear well. They may also find it hard to hear doorbells, ringing phones, honking cars and alarms or understand a doctor's instructions.

Some causes of hearing loss are reversible; such as ear wax or fluid build-up or a punctured eardrum. Hearing loss from illness, trauma or prolonged exposure to loud noise may not be reversible, but may be treatable. An annual exam can determine if hearing loss is present and help identify a solution. There have been great advancements in the quality and comfort of assistive hearing devices.

- **FINANCIAL PLANNING**

Financial planning will help you make purchases without adding to your financial stress. Having a budget is a tool to get the most out of your money. Evaluating your income, monthly expenses and use of credit are important. Having 3-6 months of income in a saving account where it is accessible in emergency will make unexpected events easier to manage. Planning on whether to stay in your home or move to a smaller home can help one reduce the cost of living. Reasons for staying in your home for sentimental attachment is common. But sometimes maintenance is hard when one starts aging and making the choice to sell your home can be hard, but downsizing can reduce the financial stress and physical up keep strain.

- **SLEEP**

Sleep is a major part of your general health and quality of life. It is important to have a good night's sleep to look good and perform on a daily basis. Your body needs sleep to repair muscles, regulate hormones and appetite. Poor sleep leads to accidents, impaired job performance and relationship stress. Recommendations to help you sleep for quality and quantity are important. Use the bed for sleep and sex only, use relaxation to reduce tension, exercise in the afternoon or early evening not right before bedtime. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol at least 3 to 4 hours before going to bed. Try to go to bed the same time each night and get up the same time in the morning. Eat a balanced diet and don't eat a heavy meal before bedtime. Sleep is necessary for feeling your best and staying healthy.

- **TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF**

Taking time for yourself is good for the body, mind, and soul. You spend a lifetime making times for others, parenting, caregiving, and working, but how often do you take time for yourself. So age well and take time for yourself.

Questions or comments?

Resources:

- Age Sense: The Caregiving Journey by Kathy Lupfer-Nielsen, Post Rock District Christine McPheter, Meade County; Megan Ferrell, Harper County. KSU
- Keys to Embracing a Positive Attitude, Eating Smart, Physical Activity, Brain Activity, Social Activity, Know your Health Numbers, Practice Being Safe, , Financial Affairs, Sleep, Taking Time for You; by Erin Yelland, PH.D CFLE, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Adult Development and Aging, K-state Research and Extension. Amy F Hosier, Associate Professor, University of Kentucky. LaVona S. Traywick, Associate Professor, University of Arkansas
- <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/fce-lessons>

Aging Well Quiz

1. Is the decrease in sense of smell as we age dangerous?

yes _____ no _____

2. Can taste and smell be affected by anything besides aging?

Yes _____ No _____

List any you can think of _____

3. How many taste buds do we have?

3,000 _____

5,000 _____

10,000 _____

4. How many balance senses do we have? _____

5. How many pain receptors do we have? _____

6. List some benefits to staying active

7. List some healthy nutrient dense foods that are good for you

8. What is the most important element to aging well?

Aging Well Answers

1. Is the decrease in sense of smell as we age dangerous?

Yes. Inability to smell spoiled food, inability to smell a gas leak or fire

Decrease in sense of taste can lead to loss of appetite and nutrition

2. Can taste and smell be affected by anything besides aging?

Yes. Nasal congestion, poor mouth care, drugs, medical treatments and poor nutrition.

3. How many taste buds do we have?

10,000

4. How many balance senses do we have? 3

Ear, fine hairs in the ear carry sound to the eardrum, if they are damaged you can lose balance

Brain has receptors that help maintain balance

Touch, the ability to perceive where their body is in relation to the floor

5. How many pain receptors do we have? 3

Ankles, knees and hip

6. List some benefits to staying active

Strengthens bones and muscles, improves cardiac health, maintain your range of motion and flexibility, increases circulation and energy

Protects against heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, depression

Improves mental health, elevates mood and cognitive function and protects against dementia and Alzheimers and encourages sleep

7. List some healthy nutrient dense foods that are good for you

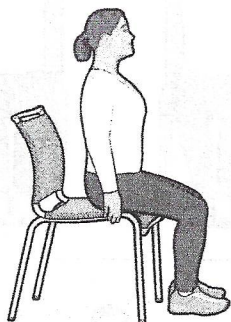
Fruits, Vegetables, whole Grains, Seafood, Eggs, Nuts and Seeds, fat-free or low fat Dairy, lean meats and poultry.

8. What is the most important element to aging well

A positive Attitude

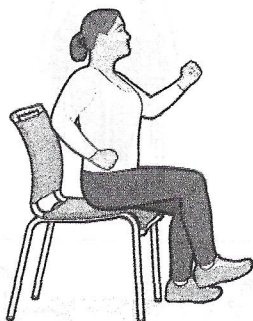
Illustrations by David Preiss

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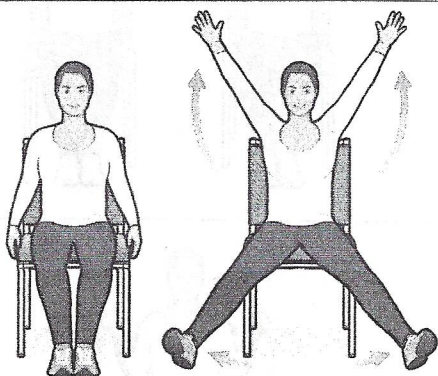
GET READY. Focus on posture: Sit on your sitz bones (if you sit on your hands, you can probably feel them) rather than your tailbone. Tighten your belly (think about bringing your belly button toward your spine), lift the rib cage, hold your neck long and straight, and tuck your chin down and back so you feel a long stretch on the back of your neck. “Feel like you have a string pulling up from the top of your head,” suggests Mary Ann Wilson, RN, an ACE-certified trainer and host of *Sit and Be Fit* on PBS for almost 27 years. Breathe from the belly (you want your stomach to expand, not just your chest). That alone can be a tough position to hold at first! But work to build it up, because you’ll need it for every other move you do.

2



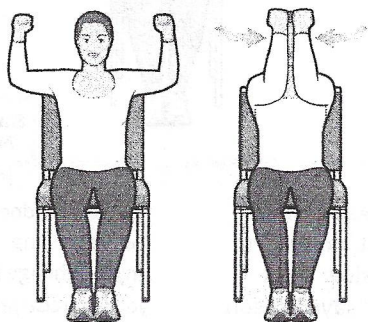
MARCH IN PLACE. While you’re holding an upright posture, march in place with your seat firmly planted. Swing the opposite arm as you march each foot forward. Anne Pringle Burnell, an ACE- and Aerobics and Fitness Association of America-certified trainer and founder of Stronger Seniors, suggests alternating marches with toe taps and heel taps. “An easy choice for [adding] aerobics is when you reach and tap one toe forward, reach hands forward at the same time,” Burnell says. Use either the same or opposite arm or both arms at once. “You can reach higher and higher, or do a little boxing maneuver with jabs, uppercuts, a cross punch, and a hook.” If you’re new to exercise, marching in place with arm movements for 20 minutes will get your heart rate pumping to aerobic levels.

3



SEATED JUMPING JACK. It’s no great leap to modify some traditional moves. Nicole Nichols, an ACE-certified personal trainer and fitness expert at sparkpeople.com, recommends the seated jumping jack. Start with knees bent and arms resting at your sides; then extend your legs, straight and wide, with heels on the floor, and raise your arms in a V. Then bring your limbs back to the center. Repeat for several minutes. “It does actually elevate the heart rate and give you an aerobic benefit, but the key is to do it long enough—at least 10 minutes or so,” Nichols says.

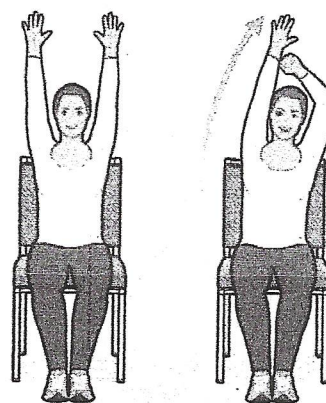
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DO THE “PEEKABOO.” This will work your entire upper body, says Langdon. Form a goalpost with your arms: Keep your upper arms (shoulders to elbows) parallel to the floor and your lower arms (elbows to hands) perpendicular to it. Bring your forearms together in front of your face. Return your arms to the starting point, squeezing your shoulder blades together, and repeat as long as you can hold proper form. Your back, chest, and arms will get a workout.

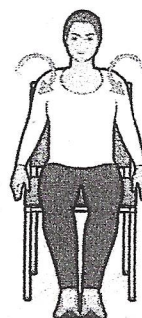
Illustrations by David Preiss

RELEASE SOME TENSION. "Take a little back break during the day!" Burnell says. This move works well even for office folks who have to sit at a desk, says Burnell. With the best posture you can muster, stretch and reach your arms overhead so that you're lengthening your spine. Alternate moving your hands as though you're climbing a rope, pulling yourself up. You'll notice that you're getting movement in your rib cage and spine. "This is a great exercise to get people to not squish their spines," Burnell says.



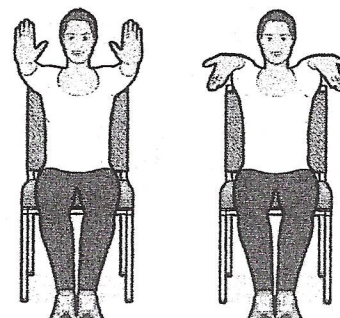
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MOVE YOUR JOINTS. "We need to lubricate the joints, which means moving those joints in a gentle way," says Wilson. She says to get synovial fluid (the liquid that protects joints) moving, picture a sponge between each joint: When you flex it, you wring it out, and when you relax it, liquid is let back in. Shoulder rolls are great for this because they make four major muscle groups meet. Bring your shoulders forward, up to your ears, back, and then relax. Repeat as long as it feels good. Before you switch to roll your shoulders backwards, Wilson suggests letting your arms hang and swing gently, like pendulums. "It's great for the rotator cuff," she says. "Lubricating that joint with that pendulum move is something just about everybody can do."



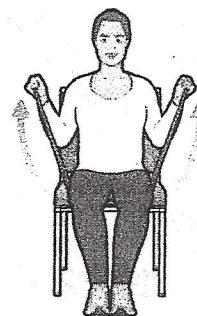
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FOCUS ON EXTREMITIES. Langdon suggests working the wrists first. Hold your arms straight in front of you and flex the wrist, as though you're saying "Halt!" Then rotate your palm so your fingertips point toward the floor. Repeat until you feel the stretch. When working the ankles, Langdon suggests drawing letters of the alphabet with each foot. "Spelling your name, writing love notes to [your] sweetie, whatever! If you add resistance bands or light [ankle] weights, you can get a genuine strengthening workout as well," she says.



7

GET HEAVY. Adding some light exercise weights (dumbbells, weighted balls, or even a soup can) or resistance bands is an important way to gain strength. Nichols suggests getting a resistance band (found at some discount stores for as little as \$3) and anchoring it by sitting on it. Now you can work your entire upper body—holding the ends of the band in your hands, try starting with bicep curls.

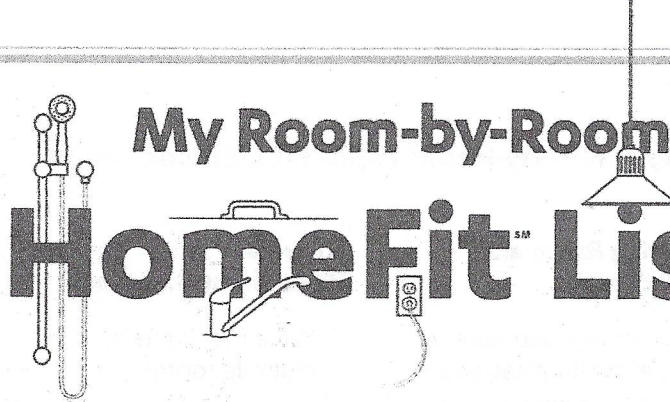


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Safety Note

If you put all these moves together, you can work up to your 30 minutes of exercise per day. But if you're not there yet or don't have time for one longer workout, don't fret. You can exercise in 10-minute chunks. And if you're just starting off, start slow and listen to your body. "You should not have any pain when you're exercising," says Wilson. "If you go to a point of mild discomfort, then back off."

Talk to your doctor before making any big change in your exercise plan.



My Room-by-Room HomeFit™ List

Check the box next to the improvements you need or want to make.

Entrances and Exits

- Create a zero-step entry into the home
- Install a no-step, no-trip threshold
- Add handrails to both sides of all steps
- Install lever-style door handles
- Install deadbolt locks and/or slide latches or chain locks on exterior doors
- Install a security peephole or viewing panel on the exterior door
- Install a camera or other electronic system for seeing who's at the door
- Put a bench near the exterior door for placing packages while locking or unlocking the door
- Install sensors on outdoor light fixtures to automatically turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn and/or when motion is detected
- Add easy-to-see address numbers that are visible from the street
- Repair holes, loose bricks or uneven pavement on exterior walkways
- Clear paths so they're free of leaves, moss, mold or other slipping hazards
- Remove scatter or throw rugs from the front stoop and inside the foyer
- Remove clutter from hallways
- Widen doorways to at least 36" wide by replacing traditional door hinges with swing-away or swing-clear hinges

Steps and Stairways

- Repair or renovate stairways that are weak, have open backs, raised nail heads, missing treads, loose steps, etc.
- Cover steps with a tightly placed, woven low-pile carpet with thin padding
- Apply nonslip adhesive strips to uncarpeted steps
- Install handrails on both sides of all staircases

- Install a light fixture to illuminate the entire staircase, and place a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs
- Plug automatic night-lights into outlets near steps and staircases
- Clear the stairs of clutter

Kitchen

- Install task lighting for the sink, stove and other work areas
- Replace knobs on cabinets and drawers with easy-to-grasp D-shaped handles
- Purchase a stove or cooktop with controls near the front of the device
- Place a lightweight, ABC-rated fire extinguisher in an easy-to-reach location
- Purchase a step stool that has nonslip steps and a grip handle
- Install adjustable, pull-down or similar shelving for safe access to upper cabinets

- Install pull-out cabinetry shelves beneath counters and place Lazy Susans in corner cabinets
- Install a lever-, touch- or sensor-style kitchen faucet (ideally one that's pressure-balanced, temperature-regulated and kept at or below 120°F)
- Establish a kitchen surface for working while seated

Bathroom

- Install easy-to-use lever-, touch- or sensor-faucets for the sink, bathtub and shower
- Install a nonskid mat or nonslip strips in the bathtub and/or shower
- Use rubber-backed rugs (or mats secured with double-sided rug tape or rubber carpet mesh) on the bathroom floor
- Install attractive grab bars in the bathtub, shower and adjacent to the toilet
- Install a comfort-height toilet (or a toilet seat riser)



My Room-by-Room HomeFit List (continued)

- Insulate exposed pipes beneath the sink to protect against touching a hot pipe
- Install a hand-held or adjustable showerhead
- Install or purchase a shower seat
- Set the water heater at or below 120°F to avoid scalding
- Install night-lights and/or illuminated light switches in the bathroom and the hallway leading to it

Living Room and Bedroom

- Arrange furniture to allow for clear, wide passageways
- Place the bed so it allows easy access to the bathroom
- Use natural light to the fullest by opening curtains, blinds and shades during daylight hours
- Remove scatter and throw rugs, and secure large area rugs to the floor with double-sided tape or nonslip mats
- Install interior lights and adjustable rods and shelves in closets

Elsewhere and Throughout the Home

- Place flashlights in multiple rooms
- Replace a top-loading washer with an easier-to-use front loader and place the washer and dryer on a raised platform if additional height is needed
- Check that the light bulbs used for fixtures are the proper rating, are of the highest allowed wattage and do not produce an excessive amount of glare
- Plug automatic night-lights into hallway and bathroom outlets, and near stairs too

- Replace traditional toggle light switches with easier-to-use rocker-style switches
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor, and ensure they can be heard in all bedrooms
- Be sure a telephone is available in or near multiple rooms (including the bedroom and bathroom)
- Get some touch control lamps and devices that automatically turn lights on and off at set times
- Place electrical and phone cords out of the way and along the wall to prevent tripping

Other Tasks: _____

A Note to Renters

Many of these suggestions are doable even if you don't own the house or apartment where you live. For changes that will require some remodeling or installation work, you may need to seek permission from the property owner. You can indicate those items with a question mark as a reminder.



AARP
Real Possibilities

50 TIPS FOR AGING GRACEFULLY

1. Do something you enjoy every day. When you immerse yourself in things you enjoy, you can't wait to do them again. And then you do them again, and again and again, and the enjoyment continues.
2. Work at friendships. Friendships are fuel, providing energy, love and feeding your emotions. You're never too old for new friendships.
3. Congratulate yourself. Everyone has accomplishments: celebrate them and use them as inspiration for new ones.
4. Embrace change. Life is change. Resisting it wastes precious time and energy. Living for it can create adventures you never thought possible.
5. Learn. Exercise your brain continually.
6. Know yourself. You know best what you like and don't like, and you have the power to emphasize the good.
7. Make your home your special place by personalizing it and making it comfortable. Everyone needs a refuge that's uniquely theirs.
8. Realize that opportunities often express themselves in ways we'd never imagine.
9. Get a massage frequently. Touch feels good and it's so relaxing.
10. Be gentle with yourself. Listen to your own inner voices and senses and do what makes you feel best.
11. Share happiness. Make a point to spread joy whenever possible. It feels good to make someone else feel good, and it's very inexpensive to do.
12. Eat with friends and family. Prepare food together. Eat the things you like.
13. Eat smartly, but every once in awhile line up a row of warm chocolate chip cookies (or your favorite cookie) and dip them in milk.
14. Get sufficient rest. Living takes work; we all need a break. Take one whenever you need to.
15. Laugh and cry. But laugh a lot more. It feels good by releasing endorphins – the body's natural feel-good chemicals.
16. Each morning before you get out of bed thank the Lord for 5 things for which you are grateful. It's a nice way to start the day, and you'll find yourself thinking about a lot more than 5.
17. Take control of how you react to things. Little things can really bring you down if you let them. But you don't have to let them.
18. Smile a lot.
19. Pray daily.
20. Spend time with other generations. You can learn something new from someone of any age.
21. Write. Write a letter. Write a blog. Write a poem. Write a journal. Writing helps you think, express who you are, and generate new ideas.
22. Embrace technology. The internet can take you places you'd never otherwise see or experience.
23. Dress in current styles. By adding a trendy piece to a classic outfit, you will look and feel good.
24. Travel. Whether it is a trip to the mall, theater, a sports event or even a different state or country, little and big adventures can produce wonderful results.
25. Exercise. It feels good to get those endorphins jumping.
26. Drink and eat in moderation.

27. Get a yearly medical checkup. While it's no guarantee you'll live longer, it can help you catch health issues early and fend off other potential health problems.
28. Get a pet. Animals can be great companions.
29. Simplify. Start with cleaning a closet. You'll quickly see there is a lot of stuff that's just clutter and serves no use. Next simplify other parts of your life.
30. Surround yourself with people who lift you up rather than bring you down.
31. Don't try to be everything to everyone. It's impossible.
32. Always have something to solve. Making progress feels good and often it helps someone else and brings them and you happiness.
33. Embrace the joys of old age. You're smarter; you're more experienced and you have more time to do the things you enjoy.
34. If you're depressed, seek professional help. There are solutions.
35. Practice acceptance. Know that there's a very good chance that your mobility will lessen as you age. Think about how you will deal with that so that when that time comes, you can still live fully.
36. Create milestones and work toward them. No matter how big or small, the journey is a growing experience.
37. Prepare for your death by having a living will and pre-planning your funeral. Dying is part of living. And having a plan is a gift to yourself and to your loved ones.
38. Realize that although your body deteriorates, your spirit grows stronger if you allow it.
39. Do not let yourself be diminished by anyone. You are you. No one else is, and that's darn important.
40. When you need supportive services, partner with a senior services provider that empowers you to enjoy life on your terms. Pre-plan so that you have peace of mind that you will have the help you need in an environment you desire.
41. Keep death daily before your eyes; it will help you appreciate every day and get the most out of it.
42. Value your body. If you do, you'll participate in less risky behavior that could harm your health.
43. Treat others with respect and dignity. You'll find respect and dignity come back to you.
44. Have someone you can tell anything.
45. Maintain muscle mass, which will protect you from falling.
46. Cut down or eliminate multi-tasking. Research shows people don't do it very well, and it often just causes undue stress.
47. Walk. Get a pedometer and take 5,000 to 10,000 steps every day. You don't have to be a marathon runner to walk. If you can't walk, work with an exercise professional, who can design a wellness strategy with you.
48. Keep your weight at a healthy level.
49. Don't fear aging.
50. Grow to the very last breath.

References / Resources

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