

STAYING HEALTHY AS WE AGE

Research shows that most people see themselves as 10 to 15 years younger than their chronological ages.

That outlook is great. But thinking young is one thing — being young is another. To stay healthy and vital as we get older, we need to change more than just our attitudes.

Recently, I helped someone who was trying to carry her purse plus a book while holding a package under her arm as she used a walker to maneuver down a hallway.

We all try to multitask, but this was a case where the person needed to recognize that the need to use a walker imposes limitations. This well-intentioned individual was an accident waiting to happen.

We encourage all residents of our communities to be active, but within the bounds of good sense. Not to negatively limit themselves — but to look at the possibilities and realities within where they are now in their journeys.

The emphasis on wellness in today's culture has produced positive results. Scientists say that the first people who will live to 150 years of age are

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already alive. To get to that very wonderful age, people will need to attend to their physical, mental and spiritual needs, while also maintaining a positive outlook on the future.



Joe Anderson
President, Seniority, Inc.

As supporters of our residents, the Seniority team is standing by to assist folks who have that 150-year goal in mind. As families and team members, we should encourage all residents as they work hard to age well.

Isn't there a saying, "aging isn't for sissies"? It does take work to age well. Let's

get out there and set a good example of wellness — in body, mind and spirit.

Joe Anderson



SENIORITY, INC.

Management, Sales, Consulting and Systems for Senior Living

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Spotlight

RESIDENTS STAY HEALTHY WITH COMMUNITY WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Just keep moving. Connie Driever encourages residents at Belfair of Shawnee to embrace this motto every day.

"We try to keep any kind of movement going here on a daily basis," says Driever, life enrichment director at the memory support community in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Regular wellness activities include laughter yoga and dancing, with Belfair team members serving as dance partners. The specialized form of yoga adds laughter to the typical movements, which enlarges the lungs and improves overall moods, says Driever.

Residents also stay active with a more traditional version of the exercise led by yoga coach Delinda Curtis. The 45-minute classes are low-impact and generally performed from a seated position.

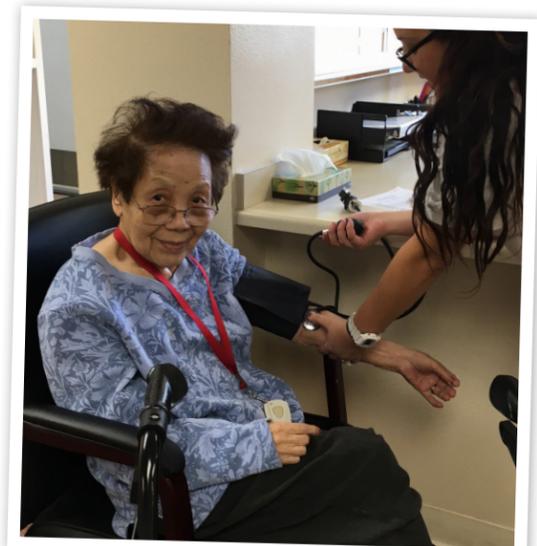
"It really releases the spine, headaches, tension and body pain," says Curtis. "It's a great way to relieve stress and keep oxygen going in your body."

At Nikkei Senior Gardens, an assisted living community in Arleta, California, monthly wellness checks serve as a way to monitor residents' health.

"We bring blood pressure cuffs, scales and get their vitals. Then we log it in our books and compare it later," says Jenna Elferink, a nurse at the community.

With exercise activities like tai chi, balance classes and morning group walks, Nikkei's team members emphasize the importance of staying healthy through fitness.

But physical fitness isn't the only important part of wellness among older adults. Research shows that involvement in mentally challenging activities may have both short and long-term benefits for brain health, according to the Alzheimer's Association.



Residents at Nikkei Senior Gardens monitor their health with monthly wellness checks.

That's why residents at Seniority-managed communities also enjoy activities that support mental fitness. Fresno's Paintbrush Assisted Living and Memory Care, which celebrated its grand opening Aug. 20, packs its activities calendar with trivia, brain teasers and art classes, says Yolanda Silva, life enrichment director.

"We do a lot of things like that just to keep the brain strong and active," she says.

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TEAM MEMBERS HELP RESIDENTS IMPROVE SLEEP

While your pillow may look like a great place to combat midday fatigue, giving in to a lengthy nap might not be the best choice in the long run.

Naps may affect how well you sleep at night, says Charisse Morales, resident care director at Paintbrush Assisted Living and Memory Care in Fresno. This is especially true for seniors. Among older adults, 44 percent experience one nighttime symptom of insomnia or more at least a few nights per week, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

In order to improve sleep, Morales encourages residents at Paintbrush to maintain a good diet, get regular exercise and reduce mental stress prior to bedtime.

"We try to promote clearing your mind before going to bed," she says.

"Speaking with someone if you have something going on can help."

When it comes to diet and exercise, Courtney McLaughlin, executive director of Oklahoma memory support communities Belfair of Shawnee in Shawnee and Belfair of McAlester in McAlester, agrees.

"We work on a lot of muscle stretching," he says. By staying active throughout the day, older adults may be more likely to sleep better simply due to an increase in tiredness.

"We're trying to push protein so residents feel full longer and hunger isn't keeping them up at night," McLaughlin says, as carb-loaded snacks tend to satisfy for only short periods of time.

Because memory loss is often associated with altered sleep patterns and circadian rhythms, taking steps to ensure that residents sleep well is imperative for communities that provide memory care. And it begins with the design of the community itself.

Common areas at Belfair of Shawnee are illuminated by natural light to help residents remain oriented with the time of day, says McLaughlin.

"It's imperative that our communities support every aspect of our residents' lives," says Nicolo Amari, Seniority's vice president of management services. "For something as important as sleep, we make every effort possible."



Preventative Measures Against Falling

Falls among older adults can be dangerous and even life-threatening.

In fact, one out of every five falls causes broken bones, a head injury or other serious injuries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But falls can be avoided with preventative measures.

When walking, be sure to wear non-skid shoes, use a prescribed assistive walking device and take each

step slowly and comfortably. These measures will prevent traction loss and promote stability, leaving little room for fall-related injuries.

In order to stop falls before they happen, it is important to stay active. By exercising, whether vigorously or gently, individuals create and maintain balance, flexibility and strength.

Gentle exercises include stretching, walking, swimming and yoga.



FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Older adults represented only 13 percent of the United States population, yet suffered 36 percent of all fire deaths reported to the U.S. Fire Administration in 2011.

House fires are commonly caused by cooking, smoking, the use of candles, flammable fuels in dangerous areas, and electrical malfunction.

Ensure the safety of you and your home through the use of a smoke alarm. Crucial for the early detection of fires, smoke alarms should be checked twice a month and batteries should be replaced regularly.

In order to prevent fires, keep a close watch on stovetops and ovens while cooking, place can-

dles in common areas where they can be monitored, and unplug devices when they are not in use.

In case of a fire, it is vital that the home is evacuated immediately. After evacuation, call 911 to report the fire and follow all instructions given by emergency personnel. Never enter a structure post-fire unless directed to by fire officials, as this can be a major safety risk due to structural damage. Always have a plan in case a fire is to start. An emergency plan promotes organization and prevents panic, creating a better outcome in a tragic situation. Refer to safety guidelines and community team members for more information regarding strategic plans in case of a fire.

Frequent oversights like leaving on a stove or oven may indicate larger health concerns for some older adults. Be sure to watch for these signs and seek professional help and evaluation if necessary.