



HEALTH, MIND AND BODY 2023

A Special Section of the Azle News | Springtown Epigraph • WEDNESDAY, January 25, 2023

Fun ways for seniors to stay active

Physical activity is an important component of overall health. Health experts advise that exercise can increase lean body mass, prevent conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease, improve balance, and positively affect mental health/cognition. Exercise also can foster socialization with others, helping people overcome boredom and isolation.

As individuals get older, they may not be able to participate in all of the activities they enjoyed as youths, but that doesn't mean older adults must resign themselves to sedentary lifestyles. There are plenty of entertaining ways to remain physically active that can accommodate any limitations a person may have. Explore these methods for staying active.

EXPLORE SENIOR CENTER OFFERINGS

Community senior centers often fill calendars with a vast array of activities, some of which can include physical activities. Hikes, walking tours, dances, and other activities all serve as entertaining ways to get out and about while meeting some fitness goals.

GARDEN OR DO YARD WORK

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotions says adults should get 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. Raking leaves, mowing the lawn, digging in flower beds, trimming bushes, and other outdoor tasks could help a person meet this quota in a

way that doesn't seem like exercise at all.

PLAY GAMES WITH GRANDCHILDREN

Little kids may inspire older adults to be more active, as it can be difficult to keep up with those youngsters. Take infants or toddlers for walks or push them in strollers. Attach a child seat or towing carriage to a bicycle and ride around the neighborhood. Play games that require movement, such as hide-and-seek or Marco Polo in the pool. If it's snowing, have a snowball fight or make a snowman in the yard.

TAKE UP A NEW HOBBY

Find hobbies that incorporate physical activity. Perhaps learning to salsa dance or taking Zumba^a will be fun? Pickleball has caught on across the nation. The sport is a mix of tennis, racquetball and badminton that caters to all ages. Joining a bowling team is another way to get active and meet new people.

Physical activity is important at any age. Seniors can explore fun ways to stay in shape and be active to reap all the benefits of exercise.



A bicyclist enjoys the outdoors along one of TRWD's many trails.

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How to protect nature when enjoying the great outdoors

Few getaways can reinvigorate the mind and body like a day spent in the great outdoors. The rewards of a day spent outside aren't just figments of the imagination. The online medical resource WebMD notes that exposure to the great outdoors can improve sleep cycles, boost self-esteem, reduce anxiety, help people focus, and bolster the immune system, among other benefits.



Eagle Mountain Park, situated along the northeastern shore of Eagle Mountain Lake.

PHOTOS COURTESY TRWD



FILE PHOTO

Kids helping clean the lake in the annual TRWD Trash Bash around Eagle Mountain Lake.

The relationship between people and nature is not a one-way street. Just as nature takes care of people, people must do their part to protect nature. Whether nature lovers are hiking, relaxing at the beach or engaging in another outdoor activity, the following tips can help people protect the serene settings and landscapes they love so much.

- Leave nothing behind. Anti-littering campaigns have been prevalent for decades. Despite that, litter remains a significant problem. A 2020 study from Keep America Beautiful, a non-profit dedicated to preventing litter, found that there are nearly 50 billion pieces of litter along roadways and waterways across the United States. Each piece of litter that finds its way into nature can be prevented. When spending time in nature, individuals can commit to bringing out whatever they

bring in. Leaving nothing behind reduces the issues associated with litter, including the negative effects it has on wildlife and marine life, and helps to maintain the idyllic look of natural settings like forests and beaches.

- Reduce reliance on plastics and recycle the plastics you do use. Plastics adversely affect the health of the planet in various ways. But a staggering percentage of the plastics humans use are never recycled. A 2108 study published in the journal Science Advances found that, of the 8.3 billion metric tons of plastics that have been produced since 1950, only around 9 percent has been recycled. Plastics take roughly 400 years to degrade, so much of the plastics that have not been recycled are ending up in the world's oceans. In fact, projections from environmentalists suggest that oceans will contain more plastics

than fish by the middle of this century. By reducing reliance on plastics and recycling the plastics they do use, nature lovers can do their part to combat this significant threat and protect the natural settings they enjoy so much.

- Plant trees. Planting trees could help combat the issue of rising carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere. According to Greenpop, an organization devoted to urban greening and forest restoration projects, trees absorb CO2, removing it from the air and storing it as they release oxygen. A day outdoors planting trees is a fun activity for people of all ages, and it's also a highly effective way to help the planet.

The great outdoors is a respite for millions of people across the globe. Taking steps to protect nature is a great way to ensure it's accessible and there to enjoy for generations to come.

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How to plan for post-retirement medical expenses

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When individuals retire, they not only walk away from work, but also relinquish their steady paychecks. For many, retirement can be a potentially risky financial endeavor. Saving for retirement is a great way to mitigate such risk, but unforeseen expenses, such as medical bills, can quickly derail a retirement plan.

Many people have a greater need for medical care as they get older. The Fidelity Investments Retiree Health Care Cost Estimate indicates health care can be one of the biggest expenses a person will take on in retirement. The average 65-year-old couple who retired in 2021 in the United States can expect to spend \$300,000 on health care and medical expenses during retirement. The financial resource The Street says other studies suggest it's wise for retirees to plan to spend between \$3,000 and \$7,700 per year on health care.

Financial advisors warn that relying exclusively on Medicare to cover health care costs isn't going to cut it. Benefits under the Medicare program often aren't enough to pay for all of a retiree's needs. There may be gaps for chronic treatment of illnesses and specialty treatment for certain conditions. Long-term care services also typically are not covered. It's important to note that Medicare will cover general doctor's visits, but it does not cover the cost of deductibles or copays.

Individuals need to be proactive and plan for medical expenses in retirement. After housing, healthcare is the most significant expense for retirees. Health spending ac-



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People need to be aware of the potential costs of medical care in retirement and plan ahead so they can meet those obligations if and when the need arises.

counts and long-term health insurance are two options for people looking for ways to cover their health care costs in retirement.

As of 2022, people can contribute up to \$3,650 for an individual or \$7,300 for a family per year into a health savings account. After age

55, an additional \$1,000 per year is allowed. Money in an HSA grows tax-free and it can be spent tax-free on qualified medical expenses. Once a person has Medicare, he or she no longer is eligible to contribute to the HSA, but can use money already in the account to pay for qualified

medical expenses that are not covered by Medicare.

Long-term care insurance is another option, and many people invest in such an account during their 50s or 60s. The earlier an individual enrolls in a program, the lower the premium. According to Personal Capital, most

policies will not start until a patient has needed assistance for 90 days and other qualifying guidelines are met. Generally speaking, long-term care insurance also is use-or-lose. If there's never a need to use the insurance, it will not be refunded. This is a risk that certain people are

willing to take. In addition to these options, people may consider gap insurance programs. When putting together a retirement plan, it can be wise to speak with financial advisors who can customize products based on their expected needs.

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The basics of diabetes and diet

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The number of people living with diabetes has risen dramatically over the last four decades. According to the World Health Organization, between 1980 and 2014, the number of people with diabetes rose from 108 million to 422 million.

The dramatic spike in diabetes cases in such a short period of time highlights just how big a threat the disease poses to the health of people across the globe. That makes now a perfect time to learn more about diabetes and what individuals can do to manage their disease.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a chronic disease related to how the body produces or utilizes insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce sufficient insulin or cannot effectively utilize the insulin it produces.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 DIABETES?

The WHO notes that more than 95 percent of the people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, type 2 diabetes occurs when the body does not use insulin properly, whereas type 1 occurs when the body does not produce insulin.

CAN DIABETES BE MANAGED?

It's important that individuals diagnosed with diabetes recognize that both types 1 and 2 can be managed. The ADA reports that diet and routine exercise are vital to managing type 2 diabetes. The ADA urges people who have recently been diagnosed with diabetes to speak with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN/RD) to find foods



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that are healthy and help them feel satisfied at the end of a meal. Lingering may compel people to make poor dietary choices that could make their condition worse. The ADA's 'Nutrition Consensus Report,' published in 2019, is a comprehensive review of 600 research articles over a five-year span conducted by a panel of scientists, doctors, endocrinologists, diabetes

educators, and dietitians. That review emphasized the significance of working with an RDN, noting that recommendations about diet for diabetes patients must take factors specific to each individual, including their life circumstances and preferences, into consideration. The review also noted that each person responds differently to different types of

foods and diets, so there is no single diet that will work for all patients.

Though there is no 'one-size-fits-all' diet for people with diabetes, the ADA created the Diabetes Plate Method as a simple way to help people with diabetes create healthy meals. The method urges individuals to fill half their plate with non-starchy vegetables, such as

asparagus, broccoli, green beans, and salad greens. One-quarter of the plate should be filled with lean proteins such as chicken, lean beef (cuts like chuck, round or sirloin), or fish (salmon, cod, tuna). Plant-based sources of protein also count, and these include beans, lentils, hummus, falafel, edamame, and tofu, among other foods. The final quarter of the plate should

be reserved for foods that are higher in carbohydrates, such as whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, whole grain pastas), beans and legumes, or even fruits and dried fruit.

More people than ever before are being diagnosed with diabetes. Diet plays a significant role in managing life with diabetes. More information can be found at diabetes.org.

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Simple ways to make meals healthier

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Cooking foods at home is one of the simplest ways to gain greater control over personal health. Cooking at home is the easiest way to know precisely what you're putting into your body each day. Cooking your own meals also enables you to customize recipes so they align with any dietary restrictions or personal preferences you may have.

According to a 2021 survey by the consumer market research firm Hunter, 71 percent of people in the United States plan to continue cooking more at home after the pandemic ends. Increased creativity and confidence in the kitchen, as well as the fact that cooking at home helps to save money and enables one to eat healthier, is driving the ongoing increase in dining in.

When cooking at home, cooks can consider various tips to make meals that much healthier.

- Increase fiber intake. Fiber improves bowel regularity and helps a person feel full between meals. High fiber foods also help stabilize blood sugar levels. Two servings of fibrous foods at each meal and an additional fiber-rich snack each day can ensure your body is getting the fiber it needs.
- Slow down eating. The pace at which a person eats a meal can affect his or her overall health. Healthline reports that fast eaters are more likely to eat more and have higher body mass indexes than slow eaters.
- Choose whole grains. Choosing whole grain breads or cereals over refined grains can make for a more nutritious diet. Whole grains are linked to a reduced risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.



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Increasing the amount of vegetables in one's diet is a simple and healthy modification.

- Swap Greek yogurt for other varieties. Greek yogurt contains up to twice as much protein as regular yogurt, providing roughly 10 grams per 3.5 ounces. Protein along with fiber helps a person feel fuller longer, which can manage appetite and reduce over-

eating. Greek yogurt also can replace mayonnaise or sour cream in certain recipes.

- Add a vegetable to every meal. Vegetables are loaded with essential vitamins and minerals. Plus, they tend to be high in antioxidants that strengthen the immune

system. Increase vegetable intake by eating vegetables with every meal.

- Choose healthy fats. While a person should minimize the amount of oils and other fats used during the cooking process, when it's necessary for a recipe, select

the best fat possible. Olive oil is a monounsaturated fat that is packed with antioxidant polyphenols. It is considered a heart-healthy oil, and it may promote a healthy brain and memory function.

- Cut out sweetened beverages. Sodas and other

sweetened drinks are leading sources of added sugar in diets. Opting for water or naturally sweetened fruit juices can improve overall health. Small dietary changes can add up to big health benefits.

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Warning signs of mental health issues

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A 2017 study from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimated that 792 million people across the globe lived with a mental health disorder. If that figure is startling, it's likely even greater as a result of the pandemic.

Data from the Kaiser Family Foundation indicated that about four in 10 adults in the United States reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder during the pandemic. That marked a significant uptick since the summer of 2019, when one in 10 adults reported such symptoms.

The pandemic undoubtedly posed significant challenges that affected the mental health of people across the globe. But those challenges won't necessarily go away if and when life returns to pre-pandemic normalcy. Nor is there any guarantee that new challenges that pose a threat to individuals' mental health won't arise in the years to come. That reality underscores the importance of learning to recognize signs of mental illness in both adults and children.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness notes that each mental illness has its own symptoms, so anyone concerned about their own mental health or the health of a loved one can speak with a mental health professional for more information. In the meantime, the NAMI notes that these are some common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents.

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Feelings of confusion or difficulty concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable



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Individuals who are experiencing any of these symptoms or those who recognize them in loved ones, including children, are urged to contact a health care professional

'highs' or feelings of euphoria

- Prolonged or significant feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulty understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feelings of fatigue and low energy
- Changes in eating habits, such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive

· Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)

- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality. Some individuals experience a lack of insight known as anosognosia, which NAMI describes as unawareness of one's own mental health condition.

- Overconsumption of substances such as alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes, such as headaches, stomach aches and vague and ongoing aches and pains
- Suicidal thoughts
- Difficulties handling daily life, including an inability to carry out activities or handle problems and stress that arises each day
- An intense fear of

weight gain or concern with appearance

Pre-adolescent children also can experience mental illness, which can manifest itself through these symptoms:

- Changes in academic performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety. Some children may fight with parents to avoid going to bed or school.
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or

aggression

- Frequent temper tantrums

Individuals who are experiencing any of these symptoms or those who recognize them in loved ones, including children, are urged to contact a health care professional, including their general physicians, who may be able to recommend a mental health specialist. More information is available at www.nami.org.

How to heal from mental health issues that arose during the pandemic

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Perhaps no event in recent history affected the mental health of more people across the globe than the COVID-19 pandemic. Research published in late 2021 in the medical journal *The Lancet* indicated that cases of major depressive disorder and anxiety disorders increased by more than 25 percent worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the world emerges

from the pandemic and governments across the globe gradually implement measures designed to make coexisting with COVID-19 less restrictive, mental health professionals recognize that individuals may need help recovering from the prolonged stress and trauma brought about by the pandemic. Mental Health America, an organization committed to promoting mental health as a critical component of overall wellness, recommend various strategies to help individuals

move forward in the aftermath of the pandemic.

- Recognize that recovery can't be rushed. MHA urges individuals to give themselves time to adjust, noting that it will take time before a sense of safety and security returns. That means it could be awhile before individuals feel like themselves again, and that's not only acceptable, but normal.

- Ask for help. The pandemic was proof that it's impossible to go it alone through difficult situations,

so individuals should not hesitate to rely on loved ones as they recover. MHA notes that social support is crucial when healing from trauma and touts the value of sharing one's story. Such sharing enables individuals to process their thoughts and feelings.

- Embrace healthy behaviors. During the pandemic, many individuals, even those devoted to healthy living prior to 2020, found it difficult to continue engaging in behaviors and activities that promoted their over-

all health. Embracing these behaviors, which can include eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and getting sufficient sleep, improves individuals' ability to cope with stress. Re-establishing old routines also can return a sense of structure to daily life that might have gone missing over the last two years.

- Seek professional health care help if necessary. MHA urges individuals who are putting in the work but still struggling to contact a health care professional. Hundreds

of millions of people across the globe have had to confront issues affecting their mental health since the start of the pandemic, and health care professionals are prepared and ready to help individuals overcome those issues as the world returns to normalcy.

More information about accessing mental health help can be found at mhanational.org.



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Signs you or a loved one could be dealing with depression

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Depression is among the most common mental disorders in the world. According to a 2019 report from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, roughly 3.8 percent of the world's population is affected by depression. That percentage is higher among adults (5 percent) and even more so among adults 60 and over (5.7 percent).

Despite its prevalence, depression still carries a stigma, leaving many people to confront it in silence. However, over the last several years, public attitudes toward mental health have shifted, compelling millions of people to recognize the severity of the threat posed by mental health disorders like depression. That recognition has led various prominent public figures, such as comedian Jim Carrey, athlete Kevin Love and singer/actress Lady Gaga, to publicly acknowledge their own battles with depression.

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of, and recognition of that reality may compel millions of people to seek the help they need. One of the first steps toward overcoming depression is to learn how it can manifest itself. Though feelings of sadness are common in people with depression, according to ADA Health, depression is much more than a feeling of sadness, and its symptoms may be masked by physical complaints or substance abuse. That can make it hard



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One of the first steps toward overcoming depression is to learn how it can manifest itself. Group therapy can be beneficial especially when sharing with others that are having the same experiences.

to identify signs of depression, which underscores the significance of learning to spot its symptoms. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that the following signs and symptoms could be indicative of depression if individuals have been experiencing them most of the day, nearly every day, for

at least two weeks.

- Persistent sad, anxious, or 'empty' mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of irritability, frustration or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities

- Decreased energy, fatigue or feeling 'slowed down'
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening or oversleeping
- Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or attempts at suicide

· Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause that do not ease with treatment

It's important that individuals experiencing these symptoms or those who witness them in loved ones avoid self-diagnosing their

conditions or the condition of friends or family members. If any of these symptoms are present for two weeks or more, contact a physician immediately or urge a loved one to do so.

More information about depression can be found at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression.

How to overcome mental fatigue

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Fatigue and exhaustion are often discussed in terms that characterize the physical effects that they have on the body. However, mental fatigue can be just as draining as physical exhaustion, even if its symptoms are not as evident as achy muscles or tired feet.

The online medical resource WebMD notes that mental fatigue typically arises when individuals focus on mentally challenging tasks for extended periods of time. Many individuals also experienced mental fatigue during the pandemic. Pandemic-related restrictions forced individuals across the globe to confront a number of unforeseen, unexpected challenges, including a sudden shift to remote work and school closures that forced working parents to juggle the rigors of their careers with the dif-

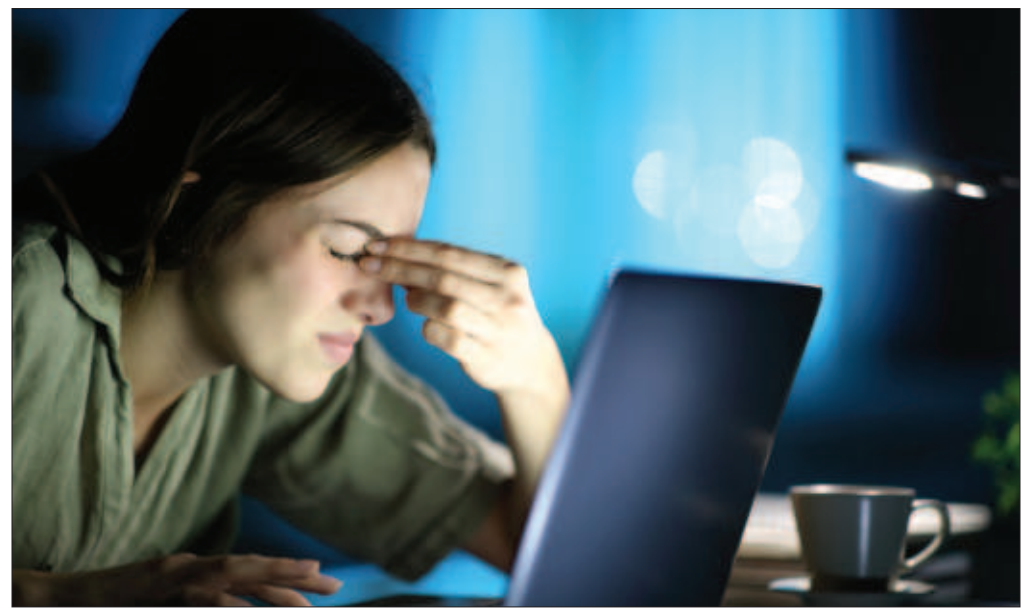
iculties of remote learning. That upheaval contributed to prolonged mental fatigue for many individuals.

Much like athletes need routine breaks from exercise to let their muscles recover, individuals need to look for ways to give their overworked minds a chance to recuperate from fatigue. Each person is different, but these strategies can help people overcome mental fatigue.

- Take breaks from the news. Overconsumption of news is one potential contributor to mental fatigue. That's especially so in the digital age, when the latest headlines are never further than a smartphone away. The Johns Hopkins Women's Mood Disorders Center notes that limiting news consumption during stressful times can be an effective way to reduce symptoms of stress, including mental fatigue.
- Schedule time to relax.

The pressure to feel as if you should always be doing something, whether it's working, taking care of your family or tackling a to-do list around the house, can contribute to mental fatigue. Schedule time to relax and make a concerted effort to keep that time open. Avoid using scheduled relaxation time to work on household chores or check work emails. Instead, use this time to do something you find genuinely relaxing, even if that activity feels like you're doing 'nothing.'

- Spot the signs of mental fatigue. Another way to overcome mental fatigue is to learn to recognize its symptoms. Recognition of these symptoms allows individuals to use them as alarm bells that alert them when it's time to take a step back and unwind. WebMD notes that mental fatigue symptoms include mood-related issues like increased irritability or



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Individuals need to look for ways to give their overworked minds a chance to recuperate from fatigue.

anger; difficulty concentrating that makes it hard to finish tasks; zoning out; difficulty sleeping; and engaging in unhealthy behaviors,

including overconsumption of alcohol. The signs of mental fatigue may not be as instantly recognizable as the symptoms

of physical exhaustion. But mental fatigue can be just as dangerous as physical tiredness if left unchecked.

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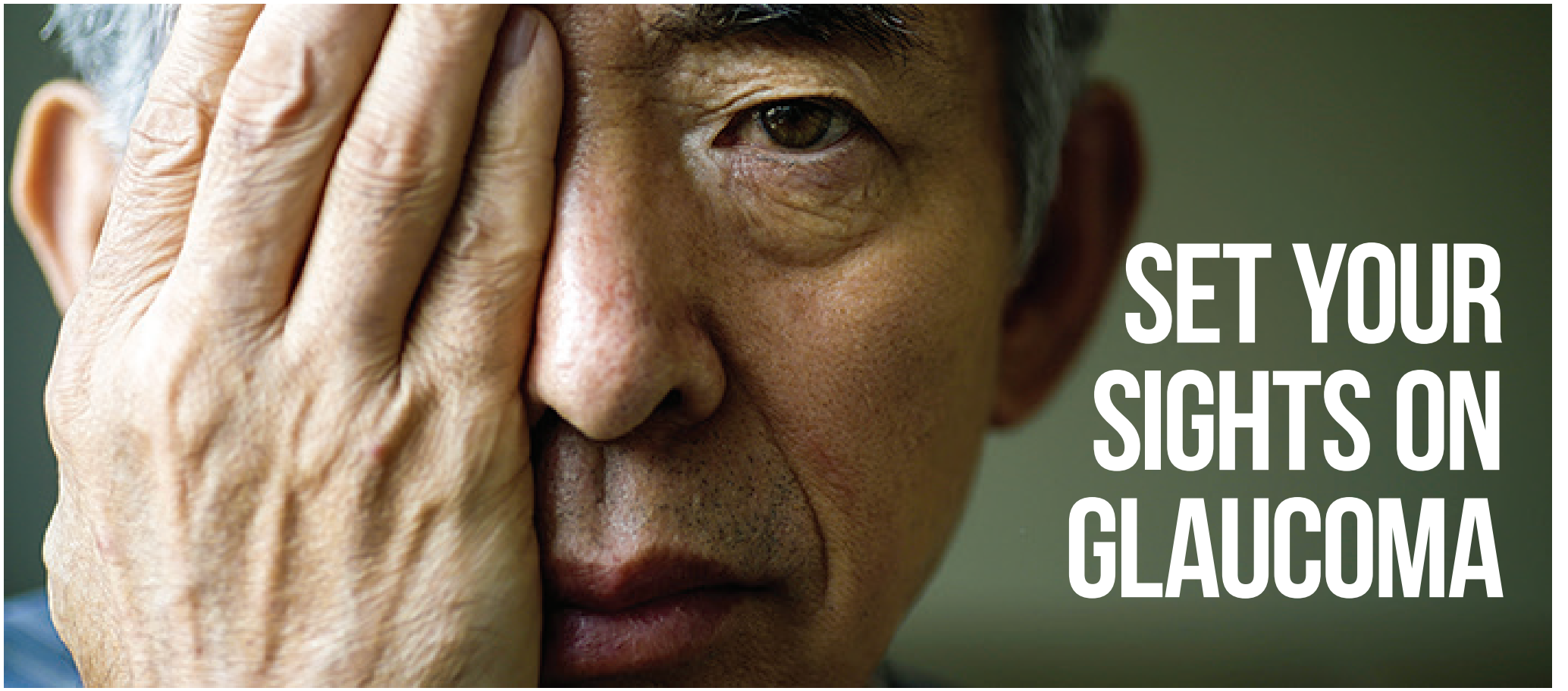
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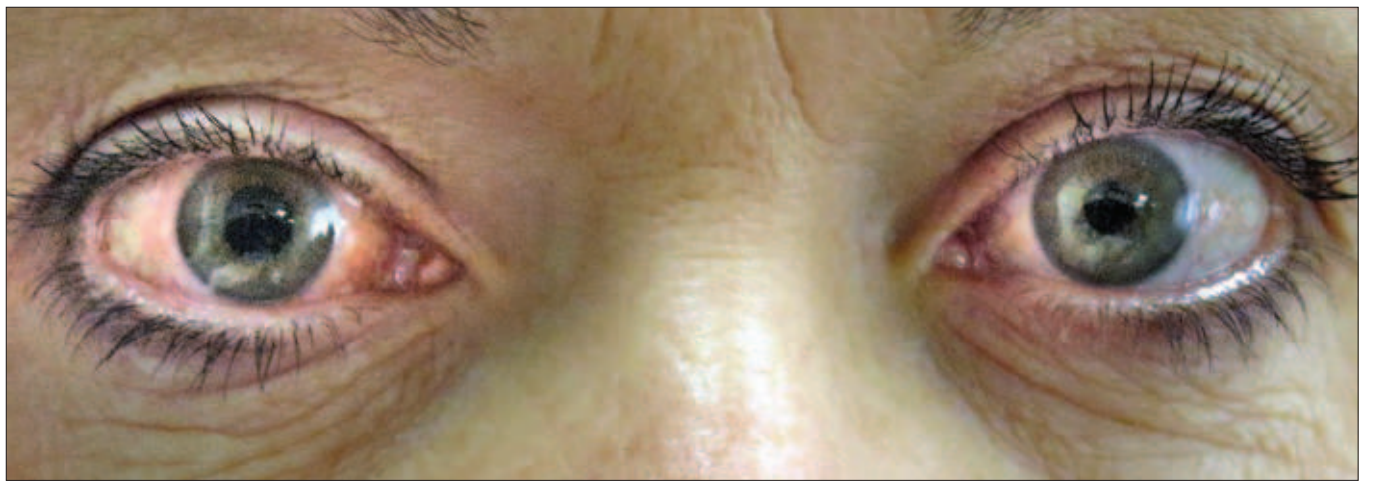


SET YOUR SIGHTS ON GLAUCOMA

Eyesight often isn't fully appreciated until it begins to diminish. Starting in one's thirties, if not earlier, a person's vision may start to be less sharp. Items at a distance or up close may be more difficult to discern, and if prescription glasses or contacts are worn, that prescription may need to be adjusted more regularly. However, there are some eye conditions that are not entirely a result of aging. Glaucoma is one of them.

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, glaucoma is a chronic, progressive eye disease that occurs when the optic nerve is damaged. Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness and usually occurs when an abnormality in the eye's drainage system causes the aqueous humor fluid in the eye to build up, sometimes leading to excessive pressure that impacts the optic nerve. The optic nerve connects the retina with the brain, sending vision signals. Damage to the nerve can cause loss of eyesight. While pressure is largely to blame for glaucoma, glaucoma can occur even if eye pressure is normal.

Glaucoma is often a silent condition. The Mayo Clinic advises that many forms of glaucoma have no warning signs. With effects so gradual, no changes in vision may be noticed until the condition is in its later stages. This underscores the importance of getting regular eye examinations that will include measurements of the pressure in both eyes, says the Glaucoma Research Foundation. Glaucoma caught early can be slowed down or even prevented before it becomes severe. Lifelong treatment and monitoring will be needed after diagnosis. There are different types



Acute angle closure glaucoma of the right eye. Note the mid sized pupil on the left that was not reactive to light and conjunctivitis.

JAMES HEILMAN, MD | CREATIVE COMMONS

of glaucoma. The most common is open-angle glaucoma, which occurs after the clogged fluid does not drain properly. Angle-closure glaucoma, also called closed-angle glaucoma, happens when the iris is very close to the drainage angle in the eye and the iris blocks the drainage

angle. This results in an acute glaucoma attack. Some people have normal tension glaucoma, in which eye pressure is in normal range but there are signs of glaucoma. These individuals' optic nerves may be more sensitive to pressure than others' and will have to be monitored.

Certain people are at a greater risk for developing glaucoma than others. Individuals over 40; those with a family history of glaucoma; people of African, Hispanic or Asian heritage; people with high eye pressure; those who have had an eye injury; and individuals

who use long-term steroid medications are at increased risk. Other factors also affect glaucoma risk. Glaucoma should be discussed at routine eye wellness visits to prevent lasting vision damage.

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

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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



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Men and women close to their retirement age should approach their diets in recognition of the various ways their nutritional needs change at this point in their lives.

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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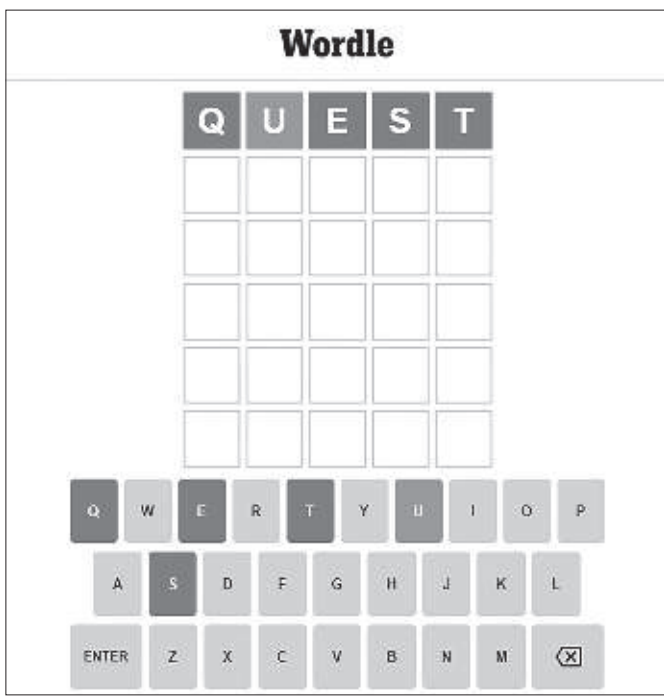
The brain-boosting benefits of word games

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Word games continue to be popular pastimes and provide a great opportunity to engage in lighthearted competition among family and friends.

Wordle is perhaps the most recent word game to become popular in recent years. Created by software engineer and former Reddit employee Josh Wardle and launched in October 2021, Wordle was devised as a way to pass the time during the pandemic lockdown. Today it is played by millions of people and was even purchased by The New York Times Company in 2022.

For those who are looking for something even newer,



Knotwords, a word game created by Zach Gage and Jack Schlesinger, is available on iOS, Android and Steam. It's a mix between a word scramble, crossword puzzle and sudoku.

There are scores of other word games for people to try. In addition to their entertainment value, these games may provide some benefits that surprise even the most devoted wordsmiths.

- **Build your vocabulary:** Word games enrich vocabulary and may introduce people to new words. They also may help reinforce spelling skills.

- **Improve focus:** Nowadays people are pulled in many directions and are expected to multitask more than ever. Word games in large part re-

quire focusing exclusively on the task at hand and employing strategy.

- **Stimulate the brain:** Word games require critical thinking skills that could stimulate the brain. Word games train the brain in a way that's similar to how physical activity trains the body.

- **Improve memory:**

According to WebMD, word games may help seniors avoid memory loss and possibly delay the onset of dementia. But seniors are not the only ones to benefit. Word games may improve short-term memory and the cognitive abilities of people

of all ages.

- **Boosts feel-good substances:** When a person is happy, the body releases endorphins, which are feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters. Healthline indicates an 'endorphin rush' often occurs after engaging in a fun activity. Endorphins are released by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. Playing word games may release endorphins, which can improve mood, boost self-esteem and reduce pain and discomfort.

These are just a handful of the many positive ways word games can affect the mind and body.

WORDLE IS FREE TO PLAY:

<https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html>

Games that can challenge the brain

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Games are as popular as ever. For evidence of that, one need look no further than his or her own smartphone. The number of hours people spend playing games on their smartphones might surprise even the most ardent players.

According to the mobile research firm Apptopia, between May and July of 2018, mobile users spent a whopping 3.38 billion hours playing the wildly popular strategy game 'Clash of Clans,' making it the most popular smartphone game in the world during that time period.

Games might be seen as a way to unwind, but some games can potentially do

more than merely provide a way to escape the daily grind. Brain teasers, riddles and crossword puzzles are just some of the types of games that can help people engage and challenge their brains while still providing a bit of escapism.

A Healthier Michigan, which is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan and aims to help locals adopt healthier lifestyles, notes that the following exercises, games and platforms can help men and women challenge their brains in unique ways.

- **BrainHQ:** According to Posit Science, which created the system, BrainHQ (<https://stayingsharp.aarp.org/>) is a system of training the brain that was developed by neuro-

scientists and other brain experts. The BrainHQ platform includes various brain training exercises with hundreds of levels that can help people improve their brain function, including memory and retention.

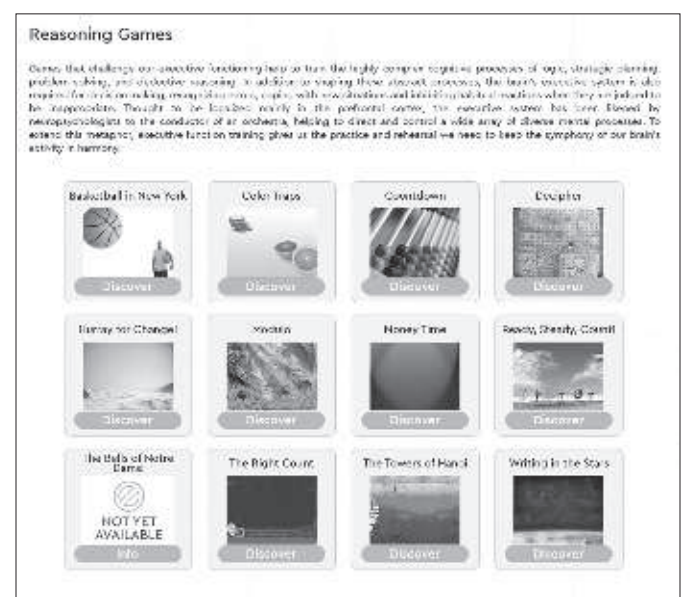
- **Writing in the Stars:** Similar to a crossword puzzle, this game provides a list of nine words to users, who must then find the six words that connect to form a six-point star before they can move on the next level. Available at www.happy-neuron.com, Writing in the Stars aims to help users improve their logical reasoning.

- **Private Eye:** With a goal of helping users improve their focused attention and concentration, Private Eye (www.happy-neuron.com) asks

players to peruse a grid full of intricate layers and symbols in an effort to find the item that does not belong.

- **Braingle:** With more than 200,000 members, Braingle (www.braingle.com) is a popular online community where users can go to access brain teasers, trivia quizzes, IQ tests, and more. Users even rank the games, allowing novices to find games that might help them hone certain skills or ease their way into challenging their brains with games.

Millions of people across the globe play games every day. Though players often play games to have fun, they might be helping their brains without even knowing it.




FREE TO PLAY:

<https://www.happy-neuron.com/brain-games>

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Attention Men and Women over 65 years old... Do You Want To Learn How To Stay Out Of Nursing Homes FOREVER?

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By Balance Expert Dr. Robert Moss



Do you feel guilty that your spouse is forced to be with you all the time because of your dizziness/loss of balance?
Do you feel that your dizziness/loss of balance is always there no matter what you do?
Do you feel that you are handicapped by your dizziness/loss of balance?
Does your spouse stay with you in the shower so that you do not fall?
If you answer yes to any of these questions, **please read further...**

CDC Reports: Household Falls Are The Leading Cause of Injuries In Seniors


If you have ever seen the Life Alert commercials, then you will immediately have a picture in your mind of an elderly lady laying on the floor desperately trying to get up only to discover she is not able to. Whether she is just weak, has broken a hip or caused some other serious injury this image of helplessness is constantly on the mind of our elderly patients.

Working with seniors over many years it has become apparent that the greatest common fear is the fear of falling and not being able to get back up. **This is not unreasonable as 1/3 of all adults over 65 will fall this year** and each fall is potentially **life changing**.

Falling should not be your lifestyle

Falls often lead to hospitalizations, serious injury or the need for assisted living of some sort. In the most severe cases a fall can lead to death. If the fall, injury, and hospitalization isn't bad enough, frequent falls lead to loss of independence, limits in your daily activities, and increase your reliance on friends and family members to complete basic everyday tasks.

With the right information and the right guidance many falls can be prevented, keeping you out of the hospital and Nursing Homes. Here is what one of my patients had to say:




When I came to Moss, I had trouble walking due to no balance. I was not able to get in and out of a car, I was not able to do my activities. After my therapy I am able to walk and continue with my shopping and light house work. I can do this all un-assisted thanks to my therapy. Evelyn Tinney

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The impact of reading on personal health

Not only does reading expand horizons and provide a sense of escapism, it helps improve physical and mental health.

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Books transport people to different times, provide a sense of escapism and introduce readers to different schools of thought. Individuals may read for pleasure and/or to expand their intellectual horizons.

It's important to note that reading also may help improve mental and physical health. With so much to gain from reading, now is a great time to embrace those book clubs, resolve to read more and explore how picking up a good book may be just what the doctor ordered.

REDUCES STRESS

Immersing yourself in a story requires focus and concentration. According to researchers at the University of Sussex, it took just six minutes of reading for study participants to experience slower heart rates and reduced muscle tension.

Stress is one of the biggest threats to overall health, as the stress hormone cortisol can lead to inflammation in the body that may impede the immune system, according to Piedmont Health. Finding ways to reduce stress, including through activities like reading, is a win for anyone who wants to improve his or her health.

IMPACTS LONGEVITY

According to the 2016 study, 'A chapter a day: Association of book reading



METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Reading may help improve mental and physical health.

with longevity,' by Bavishi A, Slade M.D., reading exerts its influence on longevity by strengthening the mind. Reading positively impacts the way the brain creates synapses, optimizing neurological function. It also expands vocabulary, and helps with memory.

CHANGES THE BRAIN

A 2014 study published in Neuroreport determined

reading involves a complex system of signaling and networking in the brain. As one's ability to read matures, these networks become stronger and more sophisticated. MRI scans found that brain connectivity increased throughout studied reading periods and for days afterward.

INCREASES EMPATHY

Through literary fiction, readers are exposed to the

situations, feelings and beliefs of others. This can help a person develop a greater ability to empathize with others, according to Healthline.

HELPS IMPROVE SLEEP

Reading is an effective way to wind down and relax before going to bed. It can be a positive nighttime ritual, provided one reads a paper book or utilizes an e-reader that is not backlit, as bright lights

from digital devices may hinder sleep quality. In fact, doctors at the Mayo Clinic often suggest reading as part of a regular sleep routine.

REDUCES DEPRESSIVE FEELINGS

Individuals diagnosed with depression may feel isolated and estranged from other people. Books may reduce those feelings by helping a person temporarily escape

his or her world into another. Also, books can serve as a common ground through which conversations over shared interests can begin with others.

Reading has many positive health benefits, which is why resolving to read more can be beneficial.

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