

GOLDEN YEARS

As Opry turns 100, Wayne resident recalls her time there

By Elizabeth King

Editor's note: As the year-long celebration of the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee is taking place and a number of special events are being held, Elizabeth King has taken time to write down some of the memories she has from her years of living there.

It's the longest running radio show in US history. Its humble roots began as the WSM Barn Dance in 1925, evolving into

Nashville, Tennessee. Those three years were filled with time spent enjoying backstage privileges at the Opry along with concerts throughout the city. All with a "behind the curtain" glimpse that I was blessed to have enjoyed to the fullest.

My first trip to the country music mecca was back in 1980 when I road-tripped along with three college friends. Our tour guides were three musician friends who lived in Nashville. They often enter-

and one nasty reputation. Empty, decaying buildings filled the once prosperous area.

Revered as the Mother Church of Country Music, the historic Ryman Auditorium served as home to the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974. Its move to Opryland left the historic building empty and decaying for years.

My favorite memory of that first trip was enjoying a live concert at the Ernest Tubbs Midnight Jamboree. The one-hour show was broadcast live on clear channel, WSM 650 AM, following the end of the Grand Ole Opry show.

We enjoyed a variety of performers from the stage of the Opryland location of the Ernest Tubbs record shop including Ernest Tubbs himself. The country music legend sang all his hit records and this 21-year-old girl from rural Cushing,

Nebraska, stood in awe.

After the show, I announced to our three musician friends that I would like to meet Ernest Tubbs. They all just laughed at me and said, "Ya, right, good luck with that girl!"

Always loving a challenge, I proclaimed to the doubting dudes, that, "Not only will I meet him, but I'm also going to kiss him!"

I walked up to the legend, shook his hand and introduced myself. It was then that I asked him if I might get a kiss, and the tall man in a cowboy hat with the deep southern drawl, replied to me, "Why sure little darling!"

I smiled all the way back in victory to where my college friends and the three musicians were standing, with their mouths wide open and jaws hitting the Nashville sidewalk.



Bill Anderson and Elizabeth Yax King are pictured in this 1988 photograph taken at The Nashville Now (TNN) studios near Opryland. Bill is currently the oldest member of the Grand Ole Opry at age. 87.

the world-famous Grand Ole Opry.

On March 19, NBC broadcast a live celebration of a century of the Grand Ole Opry entitled "Opry 100." An event one hundred years in the making featured iconic performances and star-studded collaborations with the superstars of country music honoring the home that made country music famous.

The three-hour show brought back priceless memories of my life living in

tained at the Wagon Wheel Steakhouse in Laurel, where we were working our way through college.

A sad time in the city's history, downtown Nashville "lower broad" had become an area of seedy activity after the move of the Opry away from the Ryman Auditorium.

Broadway's streets after dark of night had become filled with elements of crime including drugs dealings, prostitution



Center photo shows Kay Yax, Elizabeth's mom, backstage with Sawyer Brown following a taping at TNN studios.

Three tips to stretch your retirement savings

Cost-of-living has garnered significant attention in recent years and was one of the key issues surrounding the 2024 presidential election in the United States. That extra attention is warranted, as a recent Bankrate analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that consumer prices were 23% more expensive in February 2025 than they were in the same month in 2020.

Rising consumer prices have been a cause for concern among people from all walks of life, but retirees might be among the most vulnerable to such increases. Lacking a desire to return to the workforce or opportunities lucrative enough to make such a transition worthwhile, retirees may be looking for ways to stretch their retirement savings. The following three strategies may help seniors do just that.

Seek the help of a financial planner

Some seniors may see working with a financial planner as another expense at a time when they're trying to cut costs, but such professionals can provide a notable return on investment. Financial planners can help seniors currently navigating

complex financial waters without a compass direct their resources toward low-risk vehicles that can grow wealth with the goal of ensuring a rising cost-of-living does not drain existing savings and leave seniors destitute. Even incremental growth can help combat inflation, and financial planners can identify options that promote growth while limiting risk.

Take up gardening

People from all walks of life have lamented rising grocery bills in recent years, but seniors are not helpless against rising food prices. The Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates food prices will increase by 2.2% in 2025. Retirees are uniquely positioned to combat those increases, as many have the time and space to grow their own foods at a fraction of the cost of buying the same items at the store. Though gardening requires an investment of time (to learn the trade) and money (tools and a landscape adjustment, if necessary), it's possible to recoup such initial costs rather quickly. A 2021 report on the website Greenhouse Today estimated that a sin-

gle tomato plant, which in 2025 typically can be purchased for less than \$10, can yield 20 to 30 lbs. of tomatoes, producing

governmental policies. However, it's fair to note that many seniors spend thousands of dollars per year on medication.



somewhere between 20 and 90 tomatoes (size of the tomatoes will affect total yield). Grocery shoppers know that one pound of store-bought tomatoes is likely to cost around \$5, give or take a dollar or two. In this example, seniors can save a substantial amount of money by growing their own food at home. Seniors can even join gardening groups where each member grows a particular food and then yields are shared among the group, leading to even more savings over time.

Request generic medications

The cost of medication is not fixed and is often vulnerable to changes in

Seniors can request generic alternatives to brand-name medications. The health care experts at Humana estimate generic drugs cost 80 to 85% less on average than brand-name drugs. That's a considerable cost savings, and that advantage could prove even more significant if policy changes increase out-of-pocket medical costs for seniors in the coming years.

These three strategies can help seniors manage their money and protect their retirement savings in an era marked by a rising cost-of-living and an unpredictable economy.

Did you know - Pickleball

The benefits of exercise for seniors are innumerable. In order to get the physical activity they need, many older adults are turning to pickleball. Pickleball combines elements of tennis, wiffle ball and ping-pong into an activity that is drawing new enthusiasts every day. Fans often say that pickleball is the most fun racket sport they have played. With a smaller court than tennis and a lighter ball, pickleball is ideal for seniors who won't

have to worry about the sport being too high-intensity. The Medical University of South Carolina says pickleball is the fastest-growing sport today, particularly among seniors. The 2023 Sports & Fitness Industry Association Report on Pickleball says pickleball has attracted 8.9 million U.S. players of all ages and fitness levels. The SFIA report notes that the 65+ age group accounts for the second highest number of participants.



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How aging and dehydration are intertwined

The human body is ever-changing. Though it's not often so easy to detect the changes the body goes through, such alterations may become more noticeable with age.

One age-related change that's easy to overlook is related to thirst. The Cleveland Clinic notes seniors typically do not feel as thirsty as they once did.



That compels seniors to consume less fluids, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to dehydration.

Why is my risk for dehydration higher now than when I was younger?

Seniors may ask this question, and body composition changes that correspond to age are often to blame. According to the Cleveland Clinic, seniors' bodies do not demand water in the same way they did when they were younger. So people tend to drink less water as they age. Some also suffer from decreased kidney function that also compromises fluid levels in the body. These things mean many seniors have less water in their bodies than they used to, which increases their risk for dehydration.

How serious is this threat?

The threat posed by dehydration is serious. In fact, the Cleveland Clinic notes that dehydration is a common cause of hospitalization among adults age 65

and older. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality also notes that adults 65 and over have the highest hospital admission rates for dehydration of any group.

How do I know if I'm dehydrated?

As noted, aging adults do not typically feel as thirsty as they did when they were younger. That's important to

remember, as the Cleveland Clinic notes that thirst might actually be a sign of early dehydration. The following are some additional physical signs of dehydration:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Dizziness or a loss of coordination
- Dry mouth and/or a dry cough
- Headache
- Muscle cramps, which can be caused by a loss of electrolytes through sweating
- Chills or heat intolerance
- Flushed skin

These symptoms are notable in their own right, but some may make seniors vulnerable to additional issues. For instance, dizziness or a loss of coordination resulting from dehydration may make seniors more vulnerable to falls. Falls are a significant threat because they increase the likelihood of broken bones and other serious injuries, but

a fall also can adversely affect mental health. A fall that causes injury may lead seniors to withdraw from certain activities, including recreational sports or other physical activities often performed alongside fellow seniors. Withdrawing from such activities can lead to isolation and depression.

How can I avoid dehydration?

The good news is that hydrating is pretty easy, particularly when seniors are aware of their vulnerability to dehydration. The Cleveland Clinic urges seniors

to consume sufficient fluids each day, even spicing up water with a fruit slice if necessary. In addition, seniors are urged to avoid caffeine, which can force more trips to the bathroom to urinate and thus lose fluid. Cucumbers, celery and, of course, watermelon also can be incorporated into seniors' diets each day, as these foods are high in water content.

Dehydration poses a serious threat to seniors' health. But that threat can be easily overcome when seniors make a concerted effort to stay hydrated each day.

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Activities that promote cognitive health

Maintaining physical health as a body ages is an important consideration, and often one of the first things that comes to mind when people think about being healthy. Yet physical health is only one

for Biotechnology Information at the National Institutes of Health indicated that some decline in cognitive abilities is a natural part of the aging process. Attention, memory, executive cognitive

impairment occurs as the years march on doesn't mean that seniors are powerless against Father Time. Certain behaviors and activities can help improve cognition.

Physical activity

It is important to stay physically active, not only for the body, but also for the brain. Harvard Health says research shows when animals exercise regularly, the number of tiny blood vessels that bring oxygen-rich blood to the brain increase. More oxygen can reach an area of the brain that is responsible for thought and help improve brain function. Exercise also lowers blood pressure, cholesterol levels and blood sugar, all of which can be beneficial to the brain.

Engage in relaxing activities

People who are depressed, sleep-deprived or anxious tend to score poorly on cognitive function tests. While this may not be an indicator of cognitive decline, it is important to engage in behaviors that promote happiness and restfulness for mental health. Meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, and activities that help a person smile and laugh can be good for the brain.

Participate in stimulating activities

Stimulating activities, like word games, gardening, dancing, or playing a musical instrument, can help maintain cognitive function and enhance memory, says Healthline. Doing things that require mental effort can help stimulate and maintain cognitive function and also may improve emotional well-being.

Read more often

Various studies indicate that reading can promote strong mental health. In addition to keeping a person entertained or informed, reading exercises the brain. There are new words to learn, new scenarios to imagine and locations to envision. Sharing a summary of what was read with others also helps work the brain in different ways, all of which are good for cognitive health.

Make new recipes

Browsing through a recipe, shopping for the ingredients, putting the ingredients together, and producing the finished product all can work the brain. A person is reading, engaging in math, predicting the results, and utilizing the senses during the process of cooking.

Various activities can promote strong cognitive health and may help to reduce or delay cognitive decline through the years.



component of a healthy lifestyle; individuals also must pay attention to what they do to promote cognitive health.

function, language, and visuospatial abilities all exhibit measurable declines with age, according to the study.

Just because some measure of cognitive



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A senior's guide to exercising safely

Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle for people of any age, including the over-50 crowd. Seniors may have been told by their physicians that exercise promotes heart health and is essential to maintaining bone and muscle strength as well as balance and flexibility. Joining an exercise class or a gym also can be a social activity that promotes interaction with others of similar ages and with shared goals.

Exercise is undoubtedly beneficial for seniors, but it is important for older adults to exercise caution when starting a workout regimen. Prioritizing safety can circumvent injuries that could way-lay progress. Temple Health says that seniors can suffer overuse injuries, torn ligaments or cartilage, broken bones, and other physical problems if they do not embrace safe exercising strategies. Most injuries can be avoided when following these healthy habits and guidelines.

Find an activity you like

Engaging in regular exercise helps you maintain a higher level of fitness compared to those who are sedentary. Maintaining a consistent exercise regimen ensures you won't be starting over each time you stop exercising and have

to build up again to your previous fitness level.

Start slowly and then increase gradually

People hear "exercise" and they may

not each day. So exercising does not have to take as much time or be as intense as one might think. Combine aerobic exercise with activities that strengthen muscles.



think that translates to hours at the gym and high-intensity workouts. But general guidelines state older adults need about 2.5 hours of aerobic activity per week,

Warm up before activity

It's important to get the body acclimated to exercise before each workout. Walking in place, doing arm circles and

engaging in some gentle squats or lunges can prepare the body for what is to come. Stretch afterwards when ligaments and tendons are warmed up.

Remember to stay hydrated

Touro LCMC Health says that older adults are at greater risk for dehydration because they naturally have less water in their bodies or take medications that increase risk of dehydration. Drinking enough water during exercise is key.

Know your limits and adapt

A workout that is fine for a 30-year-old may not be the same for someone who is 60. You might need to embrace walking instead of running, or even swap lifting weights with using resistance bands or doing body weight exercises.

Focus on some balance activities

Balance issues can cause seniors to fall and risk serious injury. Working on your balance may help to lower your risk of these types of injuries, and can be as simple as standing on one foot or marching in place.

Exercise is important for seniors, and finding ways to incorporate safe physical activity can promote good health throughout one's golden years.

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Sports that can compel seniors to get up and move

Discussions about the benefits of sports participation are often rooted in how much young people can gain from playing a team sport. Older adults have much to gain from playing sports as well, and that's something retirees can keep in mind as they look for activities to fill their time.

A 2018 study published in the journal *Biochemistry Research International* found that physical activity can be a protective factor for noncommunicable diseases, including heart disease and diabetes, and can even help to delay the onset of dementia. The study also linked physical activity to improved quality of life and mental health. Sports require players to be physically active, so seniors who decide to dust off their athletic gear and play the following sports can reap all the rewards that getting up and moving has to offer.

Pickleball

The popularity of pickleball has skyrocketed in recent years, with the Sports & Fitness Industry Association estimating there are now roughly nine million pickleball players in the United States. The organization Pickleball Canada reports that nearly 1.4 million Canadians played pickleball at least once per month in 2023, proving that this popular sport

transcends borders and offers a great way to socialize with fellow seniors.

Walking

Accessibility is one of the major benefits of walking. Even seniors with limited mobility can look to walking as a less demanding physical activity that compels them to get out of the house. And the benefits of walking may be more profound than people realize. Preliminary research presented at an American Heart Association gathering in 2023 estimated that walking an additional 500 steps per day, which is equivalent to roughly a quarter of a mile, was associated with a 14 percent lower risk for heart disease, stroke or heart failure.

Softball

Baseball was the first love of many a sports fan over the years, and senior softball provides a way to maintain or even reignite that passion, all the while reaping the health benefits of sports play. Softball can help seniors maintain their hand-eye coordination and improve their flexibility. But perhaps the most notable benefit of playing senior softball involves socialization. Senior softball requires being on a team, and the benefits of socialization for seniors are numerous, particularly when they play in leagues featuring players from

outside their immediate social circle. A 2019 study published in *The Journals of Gerontology* found that older adults who socialize with people outside their typical social circle were more likely to have higher levels of physical activity

of using a cart to get around, can reap the rewards of walking, including improved cardiovascular health, and even the benefits of strength-training, as carrying a golf bag around nine or 18 holes can build strength that protects bones and



and a more positive mood. Such individuals also had fewer negative feelings.

Golf

Golf provides a range of health benefits that committed players are well aware of. Seniors who play golf, particularly those who walk the course instead

reduces the risk of fractures. Traversing a course also helps to burn calories, which can help seniors maintain a healthy weight.

The benefits of sports participation apply to people of all ages, including seniors.



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Retired and bored? How to make an active retirement a reality

Scores of people view retirement as a time in their lives when they aren't beholden to schedules and can finally indulge in hobbies and interests they'd been dreaming about while sitting in meetings or commuting to the office. Although retirement often is billed as a time to enjoy life, research suggests a different scenario plays out all too often. According to a recent study commissioned by The Oddfellows, one of the oldest friendly societies in the United Kingdom, 39 percent of retirees have experienced feelings such as loneliness, boredom and a reduced sense of identity

and purpose shortly after the retirement glow wears off.

Staying active and engaged during retirement may take some creative effort, especially for those who were used to the regimented schedule of work. But the following are some ways to maintain your active engagement with the world after calling it a career.

Take that trip. According to AARP, travel is one of the most popular things to do during retirement. Odds are there are places retirees have always wanted to visit, and the world is just waiting. Taking a tour or being part of a travel

group can simplify travel planning by leaving the organizing to someone else. Travelers just enjoy the ride.

Get moving physically. The National Council on Aging says regularly engag-



order to be happy, establish a consistent schedule that works. For example, people can wake up at the same time each morning and eat lunch during at the same time they did while working. Upon retiring, incorporate a daily plan for exercise if physical activity is not part of your traditional routine.

Try something new. It is never too late to try a new activity, class, sport, or hobby. Challenging yourself can stimulate the mind and provide a pathway to new relationships. Individuals can even consider going back to college. According to Kiplinger, New Jersey residents age 65 and older can take regularly scheduled courses tuition-free at the state's public colleges and universities, provided classroom space permits. There are similar programs in other states across the country.

Pick up a new language. Learning a new language is a beneficial tool for seniors who are looking to maintain cognitive abilities. The National Institutes of Health says bilingualism has been linked to higher cognitive reserve, delay in dementia onset and better performance in executive control.

There are many ways for seniors to keep their brains and bodies active in an effort to overcome boredom and improve overall well-being.

How arthritis affects daily life and mobility

Arthritis is a broad category of joint and connective tissue disorders that impacts around one in five people in both Canada and the United States, according to the Arthritis Society of Canada. In fact, arthritis is a leading cause of disability for many people around the world. Arthritis becomes a greater concern as people age. That's particularly so with osteoarthritis, which is degenerative condition caused by repeated use and stress on joints.

Common symptoms of arthritis include joint pain, swelling, reduced mobility, and physical weakness. Such signs underscore how much arthritis can affect daily life. Symptoms may come and go, but it's not always easy living with arthritis, particularly rheumatoid arthritis. Also, in some people, rheumatoid arthritis can damage body systems beyond the joints, including the skin, eyes, lungs, heart, and blood vessels, says the Mayo Clinic.

There is no cure for arthritis, so working on lifestyle changes can improve quality of life and help people manage day-to-day tasks more easily.

Lose weight

Carrying around extra weight can put greater stress on joints, causing more pain and stiffness. Losing a little weight can help alleviate stress on hips and knees and facilitate mobility.

Take medicine

Talk to your doctor about which medicines might be available to help manage daily symptoms. Certain prescriptions and over-the-counter options can help prevent flare-ups and may even reduce the risk of further problems.

Find balance

Johns Hopkins Medicine suggests toggling between activity and rest to protect joints and lessen symptoms. Take breaks when needed, and don't feel down on yourself if you can't exercise for as long or as intensely as you once did.

Get regular activity

Certain exercises can help reduce joint pain and stiffness. Consult with a doctor about what you can do to keep joints flexible. Swimming, walking and low-impact aerobic exercise can promote flexibility.

Talk to someone

Arthritis also can come with emotional symptoms that you may want to discuss with a mental health professional.

Arthritis affects millions of people's lives, but management of the condition can improve quality of life.

ing in physical activity a person enjoys can help prevent bone loss, boost immunity, improve mood, and even prevent chronic illnesses. Team sport participation is a top choice for seniors looking to stay active because sports provide physical exercise and also an opportunity to socialize with friends or teammates.

Maintain a consistent schedule. Some people thrive when they know what is coming next. If you need a routine in

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What you should know about a stroke

A healthy brain is vital to a healthy body. The brain is responsible for controlling both autonomic functions and somatic nervous responses. Stroke is a disease that can affect the brain and greatly diminish quality of life, which is why it's so essential to learn the basics of stroke.

What is a stroke?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says a stroke occurs when something blocks blood supply to a part of the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. Stroke is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention.

How serious is a stroke?

The Cleveland Clinic says strokes are the second-leading cause of death worldwide and the fifth most common cause of death in the United States. A stroke causes parts of the brain to become damaged or die, so it can cause lasting damage, long-term disability or even death.

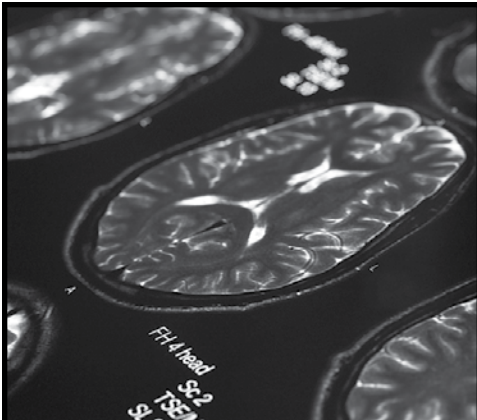
What are the symptoms of a stroke?

A stroke can cause any number of symptoms. Here are some of the most common:

- Trouble speaking and understanding what others are saying.
- Numbness, weakness or paralysis in the face, arm or leg, typically affecting

just one side of the body.

- Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes.
- A sudden, severe headache that may be accompanied by vomiting, dizziness and a change in consciousness.
- Challenges walking or finding bal-



ance.

The Mayo Clinic suggests using the acronym FAST to recognize if a stroke is occurring.

- Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? Or is one arm unable to rise?
- Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is speech slurred or dif-

ferent from usual?

- Time: Time is of the essence when a person is suffering a stroke.

If any of these signs are observed, call for emergency medical help immediately.

What causes a stroke?

Ischemic strokes occur because a blood clot blocks a blood vessel connected to the brain. They may be brought on by hardened arteries, atrial fibrillation, clotting disorders, heart defects, and microvascular ischemic disease.

Hemorrhagic strokes, which happen when a blood vessel in the brain ruptures, can result from brain aneurysms, brain tumors, high blood pressure, and any condition that weakens blood ves-

sels in the brain.

In some instances, treatment for these underlying conditions may help reduce the risk that a stroke will occur. It's important to note that a transient ischemic attack, sometimes called a "mini-stroke," is a temporary stroke. A mini-stroke often is a warning sign that a true stroke will occur soon and intervention is needed.

People who are older than 65, smoke or use other forms of tobacco or nicotine, use recreational or nonprescription drugs, have type 2 diabetes, and those with alcohol use disorder are at higher risk for stroke. All individuals are urged to speak with their doctors about stroke risk and prevention.

Benefits of socialization for seniors

One of the primary lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic was how challenging social isolation can be. Social isolation often goes overlooked, but it's a key contributor to poor mental health.

Experts state that it is increasingly important for adults to maintain an active social life as they age. There are many benefits that come from staying engaged and socializing with others. The following is a look at seven ways socialization benefits seniors.

1. Regular social interactions can help older adults avoid depression, anxiety and feelings of isolation, according to Integracare, a senior living company.
2. Social engagement can help reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia because socializing helps to keep the mind sharp through new experiences.
3. Socialization often revolves around an activity that gets seniors up and moving. While being sedentary is alright on occasion, consistently sitting or laying around can lead to high cholesterol, weight gain and high blood pressure. A 2019 study published in The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences determined that older adults who interacted with people beyond their usual social circle

of family and close friends were more likely to have higher levels of physical activity, greater positive moods and fewer negative feelings.

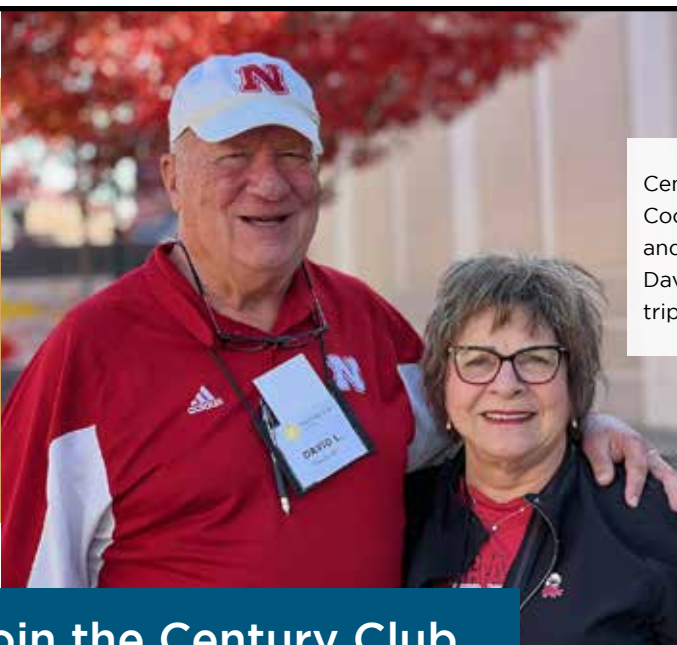
4. Regular social interaction may compel seniors to embrace healthier eating habits. Social events expose seniors to different types of food, which can help them get the nutrients they need to live healthy.

5. Regular socialization can help seniors feel they are needed and have a sense of purpose, which can boost self-esteem. Engaging with others often means contributing to a community, and that can be satisfying.

6. Getting out and interacting with others can serve as an informal wellness check, potentially alerting family and friends to issues that may need attention.

7. Getting outside and interacting with others can open seniors up to new hobbies. Whether that is participating in a new sport or joining a club, there are mental and physical advantages to engaging socially.

Socialization is an important factor in seniors' overall wellness, and one that should be discussed along with diet, exercise and illness management.



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How to navigate medication and exercise

Exercise is widely acknowledged as a pathway to improved physical and mental health. Reduced vulnerability to disease, lower risk for broken bones thanks to improved bone density and strength, and improved mood are just some of the many benefits attributed to regular exercise. Indeed, exercise is vital to people of all ages, including seniors.

Seniors can benefit from routine exercise, but they may need to navigate working out differently than their younger counterparts. That's because prescription drug use is much higher among older adults compared to younger demographics. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 89 percent of adults age 65 and older take prescription med-

ication. That's notable because prescription medication can produce side effects that must be taken into consideration when designing and performing an exercise regimen. Seniors taking prescription medication who want to exercise can consider these strategies to ensure their workouts are safe.

can discuss patients' intended workout schedules and may recommend taking medications at certain times of day so workout routines go as smoothly as possible.

Consider low-exertion exercises

The Mayo Clinic notes that opioids slow breathing and heart rate.

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Open a dialogue with your physician(s)

The first step seniors must take is to open a dialogue with any physician who is currently prescribing them medicine. Physicians will be familiar with the potential side effects of medications they prescribe and are great resources who can share information about what seniors can expect while taking a given medicine. Physicians

Breathing less means the body takes in less oxygen, and that in turn means less oxygen is available for muscles. This can adversely affect endurance, and seniors taking opioids may find they tire quickly or cannot exercise with the intensity they're accustomed to. In such instances, seniors can consider low-exertion exercises such as walking so they can still get the benefits of physical activity while taking the medications their doctors prescribe.

Work out with a friend

The buddy system has long been touted as a great way to maintain exercise motivation, but working out with a friend also is beneficial for seniors taking medication who don't necessarily need a companion to keep them on track. Exercising with a workout buddy can ensure someone is there to point out any side effects that individuals may not feel themselves or may feel but write off as harmless consequences of breaking a sweat. A workout buddy can report when a pal looks flushed or seems off in some other way. Of course, working out with a friend also ensures someone is there to call for help in the case of an emergency.

Seniors have much to gain from exercising regularly. However, older adults taking prescription medications must be mindful of the potential side effects of their medicines and keep an eye out for any warning signs that they could be in danger.



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How to plan a memorable, celebratory retirement party

Professionals spend years saving for retirement. Many enroll in an employer-sponsored retirement plan the moment they begin their careers in their early twenties, and continue to build their nest egg until the day they officially call it quits.

The effort people put into retirement planning makes the moment individuals call it a career worthy of an extraordinary

celebration. The following retirement planning party tips can ensure a celebration that suits an occasion as significant as the day professionals call it a career.

Pick a unique venue

Whether the party will be a sizable affair with a guest list that includes long-time colleagues and friends or a smaller gathering with a retiree's close knit inner

circle, a unique venue underscores how significant a moment and achievement retirement is. For larger affairs, shop around for venues in much the same way you might when celebrating other milestones, such as a child's graduation from college or a wedding. If the guest list includes just a handful of friends and family members, consider planning a trip to a resort locale or renting an impressive home through a site like Airbnb or Vrbo.

Take a stroll down Memory Lane

In the months leading up to the celebration, work with the retiree to identify key moments and people in his or her career. A photo montage of those notable moments and individuals can be a great way to commemorate a lengthy career and simultaneously thank and honor the people who helped along the way. Play the montage for guests at a key moment during the party.

Ask colleagues to share well wishes

Brief messages from colleagues, whether they're delivered via handwritten letters or videos each individual films, can be a great way to show the guest of honor how much he or she meant to others throughout their careers. Messages can be incorporated into a montage video or shared privately with the guest of honor.

Kick the curfew to the curb

It might have been a while since a newly minted retiree had a late night, but a retirement party can stretch into the wee hours. After all, the guest of honor won't need to wake up for work the next day (or any other day), so let invitees know that the party will keep going well into the night. If booking a venue for the party, plan an after party at your home for a handful of guests who are particularly close with the guest of honor.

Keep the focus on fun

While reaching retirement is a celebratory moment that merits a good party, many retirees also feel a degree of sorrow because they're leaving behind rewarding careers they worked so hard to build. Such sentiments may not be entirely avoidable, but party planners can emphasize fun and a festive atmosphere to ensure the night is celebratory and not sorrowful. Book a band and submit a play list of the retiree's favorite songs, and encourage guests to dance the night away.

The day professionals reach retirement merits a celebration that's worthy of the years of hard work and dedication individuals put in over the course of their careers.

How seniors can enjoy safe travels

Travel is often cited as something to look forward to when retirement rolls around. With work no longer demanding retirees' time, they have an opportunity to dust off their passports, take their suitcases out of the attic and book whirlwind trips.

It's important for senior travelers to keep their personal safety in mind when away from home. That's because seniors are considered a high risk group for travel-related dangers, including vulnerability to crimes like pickpocketing, says the National Institutes of Health. Seniors also may be more vulnerable to accidents or health-related incidents. Seniors can follow these guidelines for safe travel the next time they head off for parts unknown.

Check travel documents

Some countries will not allow travelers to enter if their passports expire within six months of their arrival. Ensure that your travel documents will be valid at least six months after you will return home, says the U.S. Department of State. You don't want to risk any hiccups that will put you in a precarious situation or prevent or delay your trip.

Research your destination

It's important to have an idea of the atmosphere of any locale you plan to visit. The U.S. Department of State issues travel advisories that can inform travelers about potential destinations.

In addition to travel advisories, use resources like Trip Advisor to read reviews of hotels, tours and other travel components to find out if your safety

may be in jeopardy.

Don't publicize your trip

It's natural to want to share news of an upcoming trip with others, but reconsider posting about it on social media, both before leaving and while you're away. There are cases of thieves using social media to target the homes of those who have advertised they're going on long trips.

Pack prescriptions correctly

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says nearly nine in 10 older adults take at least one medication. Always store medication in a carry-on bag where you can access it easily and it can't be lost. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will allow you to carry liquid medication, syringes, pumps, freezer packs, or IV bags on the plane. Just check the TSA's rules so you know how to pack them properly.

Streamline airport procedures

Americans can apply for TSA Precheck or Global Entry programs to cut down on time spent in security lines. These travel certifications can help you avoid removing your shoes or separating a laptop or liquids from your carry-on. Each program has a non-refundable application fee, but if approved, pre-check certification lasts for five years.

Consider a tour or group travel

There is safety in numbers. Booking a tour or group travel package may cut down on the risk of being taken advantage of while away from home.

These are just a few safety precautions seniors can take to travel safely.

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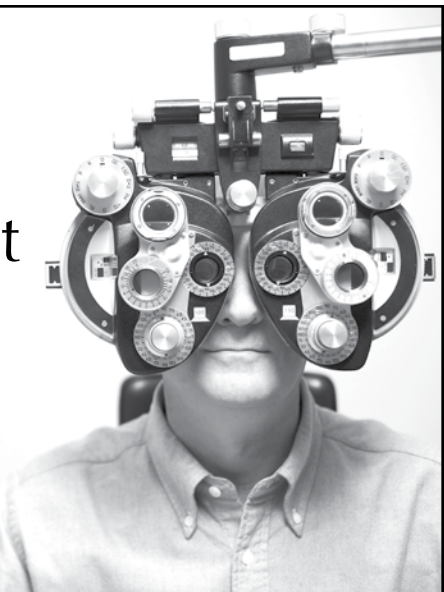


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Over 60? How to maintain a healthy weight as you age

Age often brings wisdom, experience, and for many people, some body weight changes that might affect their health over time.

Maintaining a healthy weight is important throughout life, but as a person gets older, it can be harder to keep extra pounds off. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says obesity prevalence was 44.3% among adults between the ages of 40 and 59 in May 2024. Obesity prevalence was 51.5% for people age 60 and older. According to a report from the Government of Canada, 40.1% of seniors are overweight, and 28.1% are obese. Yet some older adults also are underweight and struggle to keep weight on.

It's important to note that a healthy weight for one age group may not be the same for another. Verywell Health says a healthy weight and BMI range for adults over age 65 could translate into carrying extra pounds. The National Institutes of Health says a BMI of 25 to 27, which normally is considered overweight, may offer benefits to adults over the age of 65 by way of bone health side effects that protect against osteoporosis. Some studies also indicate that being underweight can increase risk of disability, dementia and even cancer or heart failure.

Before one binges at the all-you-can-eat buffet, it is important to discuss weight with a doctor and develop a customized plan that takes individual variables, including age, into consideration. In addition, these tips can help people maintain a healthy weight.

- **Spread out smaller meals.** Eat five to six small meals per day to help with digestion and circumvent slower metabolism. Eating smaller meals also may help seniors who find they don't have appetites and push away food.

- **Vary the foods you eat.** Eat more vegetables, whole grains, fish, beans, and low-fat or fat-free dairy. Try to keep meat and poultry lean, only splurging on fattier cuts once in a while.

- **Watch empty calories.** Empty calories come from sugars, sugary beverages and processed foods with little or no nutritional value, indicates WebMD. Instead, when choosing calories, look for whole, nutritional foods.

- **Eat more protein.** Older adults are at risk of losing muscle mass, so protein is essential. Protein also helps a person feel fuller longer, which can help with avoiding eating empty calories or overeating in general.

- **Consume extra fiber.** As a person gets older, fiber can help prevent con-

stipation, colorectal cancer and hemorrhoids. Whole-grain fiber also reduces the risk of heart disease. In addition, whole grain fiber is filling, which can help with weight control.

- **Exercise daily.** Weight loss involves a formula in which more calories are burned than consumed. For those who need to shed some pounds, increasing

physical activity through low-impact exercise can help. Bike riding, swimming, pickleball, yoga, and other activities can be beneficial.

A registered dietician can help people develop eating and exercise plans that will help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Considerations for your second act

Many people see their careers as one of their defining characteristics. Children are often asked what they want to be when they grow up, and as adults they will likely be asked "What do you do for a living?" more times than they can remember. Work is undoubtedly a major component of life for most people from the time they leave school to the day when they retire. And a growing number of adults value work so much that they pivot to second careers.

A phenomenon known as "unretirement" occurs when people who have previously retired return to the workforce. A 2010 paper published in the Journal of Human Resources found nearly 50% of retirees followed a non-traditional retirement path that involved partial retirement or unretirement. According to a recent Retirement Saving & Spending Study from T. Rowe Price, around 20% of retirees are working either full- or part-time, while 7 percent of study respondents are looking for employment. Some people return to work for financial reasons while others seek the social and emotional benefits employment can bring. But individuals mulling a return to work or those currently working but trying to determine a second act should not feel beholden to previous career paths. A second trip around the employment block can involve an entirely different line of work. The following are some things to look for in a second act.

Flexibility

Choose a career path that enables you

to set your own schedule or possibly work part-time if that is your preference. This way you can still reap some of the benefits of retirement, including the flexibility to travel.

Social interaction

Adults may lose daily opportunities to be social when they retire, which can compound feelings of isolation common among retirees. Consider a second career that lets you interact with a number of people and continue to build relationships and a good network.

Personal passions

Reflect on what you might do for work if money were no object. This may help you narrow down new opportunities that are in line with your interests and passions. Find a job that utilizes your skills and experience and meshes with your interests. A former graphic artist, for example, may decide to teach design to young people.

Nonprofit opportunities

Many retirees spent years in high-stress corporate environments where bottom lines may be more important than the bigger picture. Shifting to a career in the nonprofit sector can be a personally fulfilling job that utilizes skills learned in the corporate world.

Consulting or contract work

If you're a retiree who loved your job, you might want to have a second career as a consultant or contractor in the same field.

A number of retirees ultimately explore second careers. Finding a match may be easier than one could have imagined.

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