

Senior Living



Learn a Stimulating Skill

If your golden years have created a sense of boredom or a sedentary lifestyle, spice things up by mastering a new skill.

Lifelong learning is a critical strategy to keep your mind sharp, maintain or improve cognitive functions and allows the body to remain active. When choosing a new hobby, select one that stimulates the brain.

The National Institute on Aging suggests that stimulating the mind is shown to create something scientists call cognitive reserve. It is thought to help the brain become more adaptable while mental functions typically deter with age.

Skills or hobbies that benefit the mind include volunteering, reading or playing games. Here are few ideas to try, as suggested by the United Methodist Homes group.

GARDENING

Planting and harvesting a garden are great activities that help senior citizens get regular exercise, lubricate joints and promote better mobility. When planning your plot, choose an area in your yard that receives ample sunlight and is near a water source.

Visit a local nursery to discover which types of fruits and vegetables can thrive in your



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region. If you live in a city with little spare yard space, consider building a makeshift greenhouse indoors or building a small patio garden.

If you already suffer from limited mobility, take the extra time to stretch before gardening. By doing so, you will limit the risks of injury, increase blood flow, improve

balance while enhancing muscle control.

READING AND WRITING

According to a study from the American Academy of Neurology, seniors who partake in reading and writing show signs of slower cognitive decline. You can make both activities social events by

joining a book club or attending writing workshops.

Once you gain confidence in your ability to write, consider penning a biography that you can share with friends and family. They will enjoy the intimate look into your life, and you will benefit from revisiting happy memories from the past.

VOLUNTEERING

The Corporation for National and Community Service suggests that volunteering can improve seniors' health and well-being. Inform nonprofit organizations about your desire to donate time to causes like helping homebound seniors or mentoring at-risk youth.

Helpful Apps for Seniors

Technological advances of smartphones and tablets help us communicate easier, monitor our health and stay on top of our financial security.

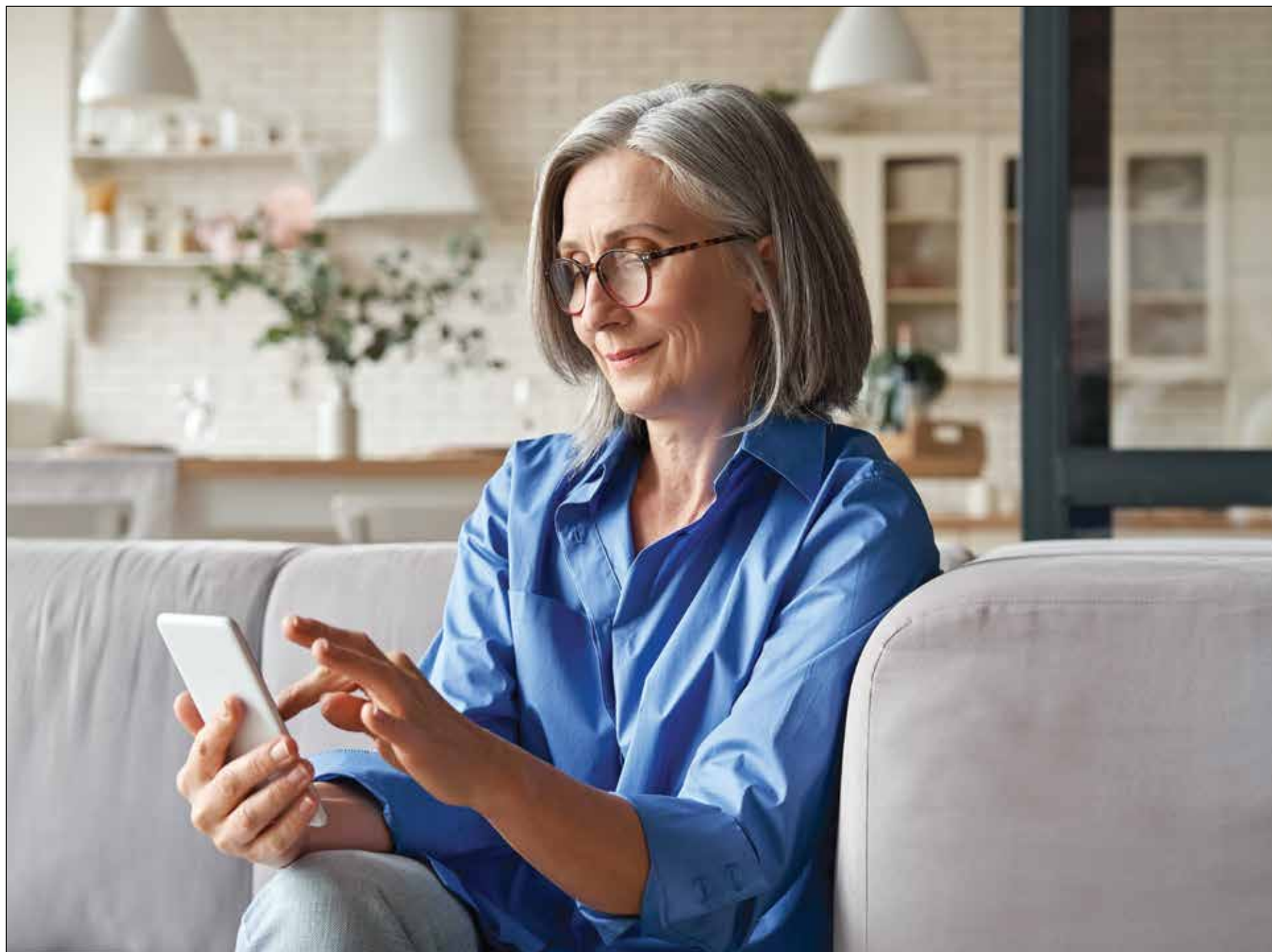
Senior citizens who may not be comfortable using the new technology can benefit from taking classes or asking younger family members to introduce them to smart machines.

If you need a device, choosing between the options on the market may seem daunting. Visit your local electronic store to speak with an expert. Make sure to be clear with your expectations and how you intend to use the gadget.

You will have to decide between one that requires a separate cellular network or tools that rely on a wireless internet signal. With your new smartphone in hand, check out how apps can make your life easier and more fulfilling.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Get back in touch with family members and friends with apps that support video calls, chatting and social media. Consider making your own profile and communicating with people that you have had little contact with. When creating your page, list things like where you went to school, occupations and your maiden name, if it has changed. This



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information will make it easy for those in the past to find your profile and initiate a conversation or send a friend request. In turn, you can use search keywords to find companions or loved ones from your past.

HEALTH

While an app is not a substi-

tute for regular wellness checks with your health provider, they can prove to be a supplemental monitor of how your body is operating. Some software uses your fingerprint to determine factors like your stress levels, blood sugar numbers and blood pressure. If you find yourself concerned with the results, it's critical to reach

out to your regular doctor. Another benefit that smartphone applications offer is making it easier to manage prescriptions. They can alert you when it's time to take medicine, order a refill and help analyze your intake.

FINANCE

Find an app that monitors

your spending behaviors, so you can adjust your habits and set saving's goals. Some can link to your bank accounts and alert you when a deposit or withdrawal has been approved. Financial apps are great for running numbers on how you're spending and can signal you when your accounts have been compromised or stolen.

Learn an Instrument

You already know the importance of staying physically active to promote a healthier lifestyle. While exercise does stimulate parts of the brain, the National Association of Music Merchants reports that listening to or making tunes counteracts some seniors' adverse health effects.

The benefits include a more significant memory and delaying hearing loss while enhancing social awareness for aging Americans.

You can take lessons to master an instrument to keep your mind sharp and improve agility. When choosing which tool you want to learn, consider one that you can play comfortably.

Gear like a ukulele or banjo may be challenging for those with compromised finger joints. The small fretboard can be challenging to navigate.

Visit your local music shop and play around with a few display models they have available. Sit down at a piano, hold a guitar or even bang the drums to see which instrument gives you satisfaction. After making your purchase, ask the experts if they offer lessons to help make the learning process more comfortable.



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GUITAR

Both acoustic and electric guitars offer unique abilities and sounds. The right type for you depends on the style of music you intend to learn.

Acoustic models are more inexpensive investments. They require little gear, where an electric unit relies on an amplifier and power cables to work to its full potential. If you find the strings are too

difficult to push down on the fretboard, ask the salesman if they can equip it with a lighter-gauge set before you make the purchase.

PIANO

A study performed by the *Frontiers in Psychology* journal on aging adults reveals that seniors who learn to play piano experience:

- Enhanced levels of cogni-

tive function.

- Slowed deterioration in the fight against the aging process.
- Improved mood.
- A boost in self-esteem.

Learning the keyboard can be daunting, but an expert can show you the ropes, teach you scales and introduce you to learning and composing your favorite songs.

DRUMS

The organization Next Avenue suggests that playing the drums reduces anxiety and significantly lower blood pressure. If you fear that your neighbors won't appreciate your new hobby, consider investing in an electric model. Most high-end systems work with headphones and produce accurate sounds comparable to a traditional setup.

New Year's Resolutions

Resolve to kick-off 2021 with a commitment to become a better version of yourself.

While the changes don't have to be drastic, minor adjustments to your lifestyle can create significant advantages for your health, financial situation and emotional well-being. Take a look at some of the best New Year's resolutions for senior citizens.

UPDATE YOUR VACCINES

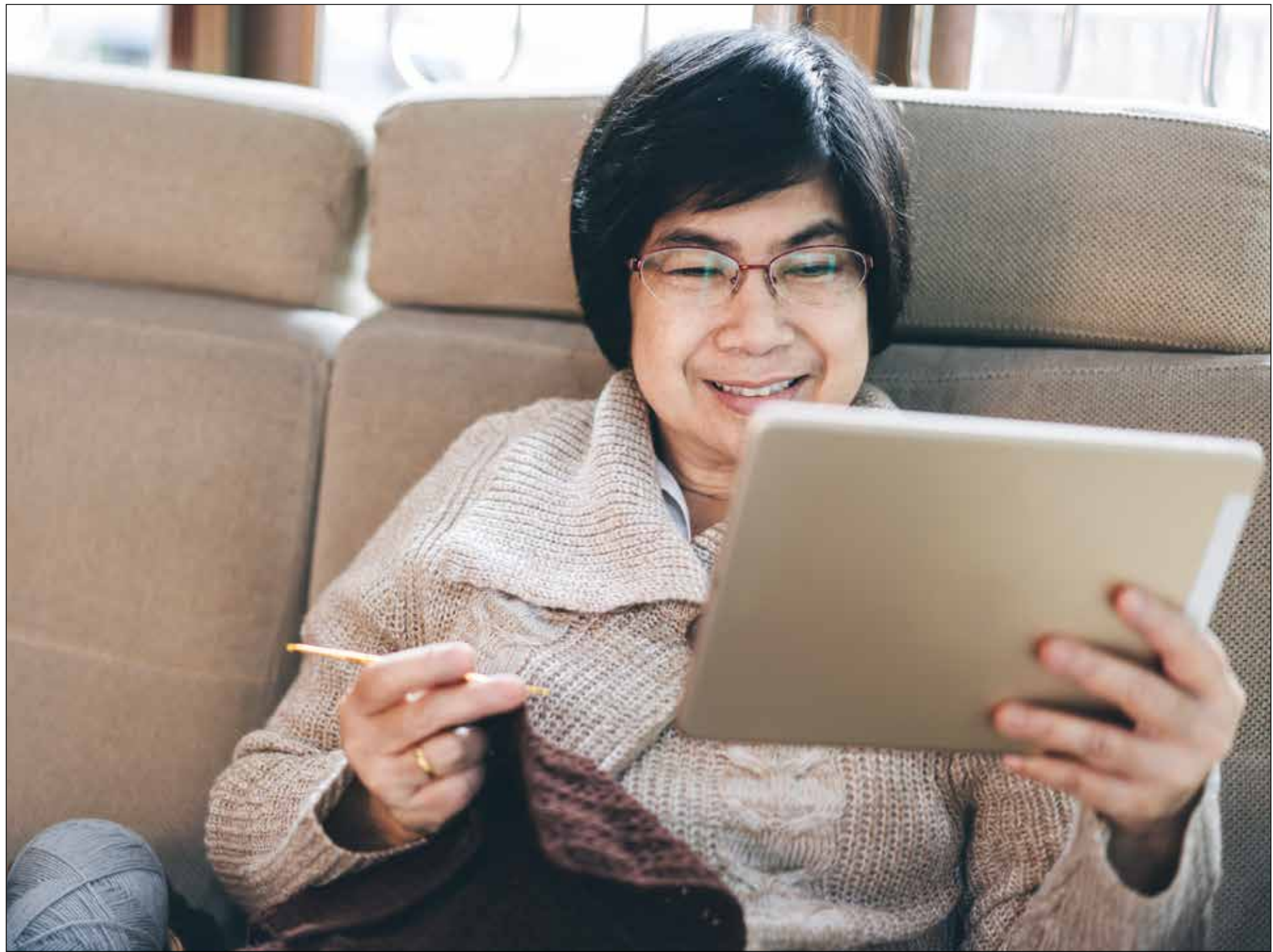
Ensuring your health is in peak condition is crucial as you age. Resolve to make an appointment with your doctor for a wellness check and become up to date on vaccines. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens should maintain updated immunizations to prevent these conditions:

- Shingles.
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine which prevents meningitis and bloodstream infections.
- A pneumococcal conjugate vaccine to protect against pneumonia.

Your health expert will discuss a plan for the frequency of the vaccines once you are on schedule.

VISIT A FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Talk with a financial adviser for a detailed review of your



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fiscal standing. They can steer you toward beneficial investments, create a spending strategy to keep your retirement on track and offer advice on how to pay down debts. If you find it uncomfortable to trust an unfamiliar expert with your financial history, talk to your daily bank or credit center. They can likely refer you to

a qualified professional or even offer in-house service.

SPEND MORE TIME WITH FAMILY

It's easy for personal time to get lost in the shuffle while balancing a family and career. Enjoy your senior years by taking measures to ensure relationships with your loved ones

can grow.

While it may be challenging to coordinate visits and trips with members who live far away, consider investing in a smartphone or tablet that supports video-chat software. Sometimes, a simple phone call can help reconnect people and encourage a positive bond.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Keep your mind and body sharp by challenging yourself with mastering a new hobby or skill.

Whether you commit to improving your physical fitness, take an art class or read more, resolve to spend the year improving your health and mental function.

Mental Health Makeover

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 20% of senior citizens experience mental health issues.

Analyze the state of your emotional well-being and take steps to correct problems. Physical activity, a healthier diet and social interactions have been shown to improve some mental conditions. However, when these strategies do not seem to help, it's crucial to talk to your medical provider for assistance.

To better understand the risks that aging has on mental health, check out these statistics from the CDC.

- Common conditions that senior citizens face include anxiety, cognitive impairment, depression and bipolar disorder.

- Men aged 85 years or older have a suicide rate of 45.23% per 100,000, compared to the overall rates of 11.01 per 100,000 for all ages.

- Critical contributors to senior depression is a lack of social and emotional support.

Commit to becoming a healthier, happier you by giving yourself a mental health makeover.

CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE

Harvard Health Publishing



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reports that mental health is closely connected with the quality and duration of sleep you get each night. Find a balance and create a slumber schedule that fits in with your daily routine and allows for sufficient rest.

A healthy physical routine and diet can also have significant effects on better mental health. The National Alliance on Mental Illness urges us to

remember these eight keys to motivate the beginning of an exercise regimen.

- Health your mind and body.
- Improve your self-esteem.
- Exercise as a family.
- Get motivated.
- Change your perception.
- Overcome obstacles.
- Get FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Type and Time).
- Set long-term goals.

NAMI suggests that with proper exercise, symptoms like bad moods, stress, pain and chronic illnesses can be managed.

FORGIVE

The American Psychological Association says forgiveness is directly linked to mental health outcomes such as reduced anxiety, depression and major

psychiatric disorders. Our physical health is also improved as there are lesser symptoms of chronic stress and lower mortality rates.

Letting go of a grudge will require patience, learning and practice. It's essential to dissuade the misconception that forgiveness is a sign of weakness and become more gracious for your overall health.

Join a Gym

You don't have to be a marathon runner or bodybuilder to engage in physical fitness at the gym.

Health leaders' exercise goals are manageable when you're aiming to promote a healthier lifestyle. Check out these guidelines from the World Health Organization for adults that are 65 years and above.

1. Senior citizens should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week.

2. Aerobic exercise should be performed in sets of at least 10 minute durations.

3. Older adults with low mobility should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on three or more days per week.

4. Muscle-strengthening activities involving major muscle groups should be done on two or more days per week.

5. If health conditions hinder an older adult's physical performance, they should be as active as their abilities and symptoms allow.

Some of the benefits you should expect once you begin an active lifestyle include:

- Lower rates of all-cause mortality, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type-two diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer.



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- Creates a biomarker profile that is more favorable for the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

- Exhibits higher levels of functional health, a lower risk of falling and better cognitive functions.

Suppose this is the first time you have considered joining a gym. In that case, it may prove challenging to find a facility that offers age-friendly exer-

cise programs. Here are some tips from the American Association of Retired Persons.

ONLINE TOOLS

A great way to get started is to use the Age-Friendly Facilities and Services Locator, offered online by the AARP and International Council on Active Aging. The resource is provided to help increase

awareness of the importance of physical activity and helpful institutions.

When using the tool, you must enter your ZIP code into the search box. It will provide information about the available facilities. You will only see companies that encourage older adults to check out their programs. The business owners must sign a code of conduct in which it agrees to fol-

low industry standards, provide age-specific screenings, and offer activity programs.

BRING A FRIEND

Once you settle on a gym, invite a friend to join you on your journey to better fitness. Committing to an exercise program can be difficult at first; having a partner will help you stay motivated to reach your goals.

Take a Vacation

Shake the cold-weather blues by visiting somewhere warm and exciting.

While your idea of fun may have changed in your golden years, there are unique places across the country that are senior-friendly. Grab your loved ones and plan a vacation to re-invigorate your curiosity and sense of adventure.

When planning a trip, talking to a travel agent can help score great deals and take care of traveling nuances. They can book your hotel, help find rental vehicles and discover discounted flight tickets if necessary. Many times, bundling different fees can lower costs, giving you more revenue to spend exploring gorgeous destinations.

Check out some of the most exciting locations that offer senior citizens a fantastic vacation experience.

U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

Protected parks in the country provide unreal views, a reconnection with nature and allow seniors to spend time navigating the outdoors. For active people, paddling a canoe or hiking up rugged terrains provide a challenging venture. However, if you have mobility issues or limited physical abilities, many parks offer guided tours. Consider visiting Yellowstone to take in the natural geysers or tour the Smoky Mountains to view



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amazing forests, wildlife and flowers.

If you're on a budget, check out the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass for discounted prices and to help provide revenue for the land.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS

Suppose your bucket list includes traveling to locations that are trapped in a

time capsule and reserve their historic presence. In that case, visit one of America's many old-fashioned downtown settings. Spend the afternoon viewing relics from the past while visiting exciting shopping centers and dining spots. Here is a list of hot areas for seniors, as suggested by the American Association of Retired Persons.

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

While the city has grown since its inception in the 1840s, the Main Street District holds on to its roots. Travel the incredible city with a walking tour or hop on the vintage railroad for a relaxing blast to the past.

After the tours, watch a movie at the Palace Theatre, which is set in a 1940s theme.

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

St. Augustine is the oldest continuously inhabited European-founded settlement in the United States. Established in 1565, the location now invites seniors for incredible downtown activities. Take a horse-drawn carriage tour or walk around the Colonial Quarter for a truly diverse experience.