

10 Hobbies for Your Health

By Julianne Hale

Stay Active, Stay Well

EXPERT ADVICE

On Staving Off Dementia

“I think particularly in regards to mental health, one of the most important things you can do regularly is walking. My exercise program is more for my brain than it is for my body. It has tremendous benefits. Mind challenges can be important too, like puzzles and games on your iPad that engage and stimulate different parts of your brain. To keep your mind sharp and stave off dementia, physical exercise and mind exercise are huge.”



Joy Boggett, M.D., On-Site Physician, Life Care Center of Ooltewah

Independence, health and well-being are important for people of all ages. For older adults, staying involved in activities that can build physical, mental, emotional and relational health can be key to overall well-being into your 70s, 80s and 90s. Cultivating a hobby is a great way to keep up your health while doing something you love or simply enjoy. Here are 10 ideas for healthy hobbies to try.

#1. Traveling.

Whether going to a foreign country, visiting family and grandchildren, or taking a tour in your own hometown, traveling is a great way to explore the world. There's no better motivation to get the body moving than the opportunity to play with grandchildren or see the Grand Canyon for the first time, and traveling offers the opportunity to meet a wide variety of people. Whether you are listening to your 5-year-old grandson tell you about his pet turtle or a tour guide talk about Ancient Rome, the learning never stops.

#2. Volunteering.

Nothing nourishes the spirit like helping those less fortunate than yourself. Whether it's reading to school-children, helping at a homeless shelter, coaching a soccer team, or mentoring a youngster who needs a good role model, volunteering can keep older adults active and provide them with emotionally uplifting connections while filling vital needs within non-profit organizations.

#3. Reading.

There has never been any doubt that reading is great for the mind, but enjoying a good book doesn't have to be a solo activity. Book clubs and reading groups offer the opportunity to discuss books with other readers, often leading to in-depth conversations over coffee and long-term friendships.

#4. Mind Challenges.

Crosswords, sudoku, chess, puzzles, games, trivia, or even learning a new language are all great hobbies for older adults. Games and mind challenges can have a direct impact on your psychological state, leading to excitement and the feeling of accomplishment. Plus, they're a great way to meet people and form friendships.

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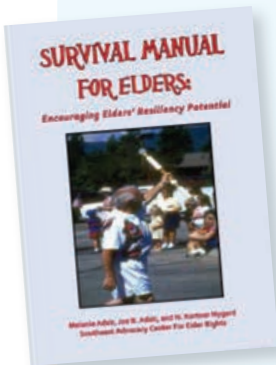
On Staying Emotionally Healthy

“Emotional health is directly related to the need for others. Relationships and positive interaction is the key to staying emotionally strong. Don't allow yourself to spend all your time alone. Volunteer with organizations that you love, find a church family that you can be devoted to, and take time to do something for someone else every day. It may be a phone call, card or just a visit. This will do more for you than it does for the other person.”



Teresa Bryant, Executive Director, Morning Pointe of Hixson

Facing a challenging or life-changing situation?
Tired of just surviving, rather than thriving?
Want to know how to protect your rights?



If so, this survival manual may be for you. Developed by the steering committee of the Southeast Advocacy Center for Elder Rights, the "Survival Manual for Elders" offers a non-paternalistic, holistic approach toward elder issues and elder care, with chapters on:

- Staying as Independent as Possible
- Cognitive Impairments and Memory Loss
- Hospital Care—What You Need to Know
- Palliative Care
- Advanced Directives
- Rehabilitation
- Medicare and Other Insurance
- Senior Living Settings

With input from physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, therapists, chaplains, business and legal experts, the manual is the perfect resource to help seniors and their caregivers navigate the challenges of aging and make informed decisions about care. Learn from the collective wisdom of professionals about the best ways to protect rights, maximize independence, and improve the quality of care while reducing costs. Rather than telling readers what to think, the manual offers hope and "how-tos," empowering elders to ask the tough questions and create true person-directed living.

If you're overwhelmed by the maze of choices facing older adults as they navigate the healthcare complex, pick up the manual today. This book is published by Signal Mountain-based Waldenhouse Publishers, Inc. For more information, visit online at www.waldenhouse.com.

Melanie Adair, M.A., Joe B. Adair, PhD., and N. Kortner Nygard, Ph.D., are actively involved in health care, education, and ministry. Together they have also authored *Why Has God Let Me Live This Long?: A Story of Finding the Meaning and Purpose of a Long Life*, and *The Sage Movement: Replacing Ageism with Sageism—A Call for Culture Change*. For more information, visit the Southeast Advocacy Center for Elder Rights online at www.sacfer.org.



#5. Group Fitness & Athletics.

These days, many gyms cater to the needs of older adults, offering senior leagues in indoor and outdoor sports, Silver Sneakers classes, lap swimming and a variety of yoga and water-based classes. Exercise of all kinds increases flexibility and helps improve overall mobility and cardiovascular health. It's also a great stress reliever, pumping endorphins to improve mood and help the irritations and pains of the day fade away.

#6. Creativity.

Ever wished you could play the guitar? Do you know how to sew? Want to rekindle your love for painting? Now is the time! Doing something creative to express yourself provides a sense of purpose and can rekindle

your passion for life. In fact, research suggests people who struggle with low self-esteem or a lost sense of identity can dramatically improve their overall well-being by setting aside time for a creative hobby.

#7. Food & Wine.

Many older adults have spent their lives cooking for others without really having time to enjoy the process. A love for cooking or a desire to learn about food or wine can lead to a fulfilling hobby right there in your kitchen and dining room. Cooking classes are available in most communities and encourage both social interaction and learning. Wine clubs and supper clubs are easy to start and can help form friendships—plus, you'll get to practice hospitality with friends and families.

Soddy Daisy Healthcare & Rehabilitation Center

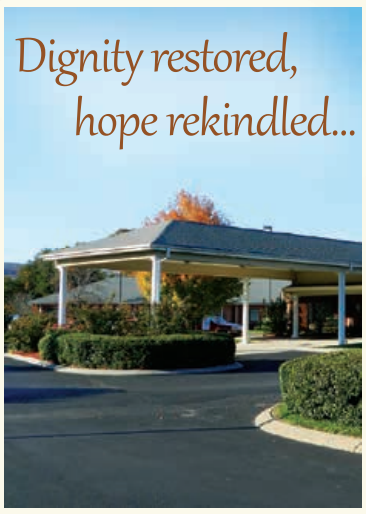
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#8. Writing/Recording.

There are many ways to leave a legacy, and recording stories from your past can be a meaningful experience for both you and your family. Blogs are a great way to share memories and impart wisdom to the world, but a simple notebook, journal, or scrapbook does the trick too. Or, if writing isn't your thing, consider creating a family tree for future generations—the internet offers several great resources to help with the task.

#9. Gardening.

The benefits of locally grown food are undeniable and it doesn't get more local than your own backyard. Gardening exercises the mind during the planning process, and requires you to do a wide range of physical activities that can increase flexibility and overall fitness. Plus, getting your fruits and vegetables from the garden to the table is enormously rewarding.

#10. Dancing.

If you enjoy exercising with others but are leery of group exercise classes, dancing may be just up your alley. Many dance classes are designed specifically for older adults and this simple activity improves cardiovascular fitness, builds muscles, improves social outlook, increases balance and flexibility, and improves bone mass. Concentrating on the steps and learning new ways to move the body helps the mind too. Whether you like square dancing, ballroom, clogging, contra or swing, choose your dance and get moving!

No matter your age or life situation, finding a hobby can give you a sense of purpose, help you branch out and meet others, get your body moving, and uplift your spirit. Break out that bucket list and pick something new to learn, do, or accomplish. Who knows where the journey will take you! 📖

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On Staying Physically Active

“We know from medical experts that regular exercise classes like chair yoga, tai chi, and ‘Stretch and Flex,’ are good for the mind and the soul. Physical activity keeps muscles, bones, and joints strong. As you get older, it's important to put more of an emphasis on living well and taking care of your body for longevity and good health.”



Holley Hasting,
Hickory Valley

Summer Health Tips

Protect your body from the heat.

By Carli Smith, Life Care Public Relations

Cookouts in the park, relaxing at the pool or beach, games of catch and mini golf – summer is full of fun outdoor activities. It's easy to get so excited about the warm weather that we forget to take care of ourselves during this hot, sunny season. Before you head outside, read over these tips to protect yourself from uncomfortable and dangerous summer health issues.

Don't get sun burnt.

- ◆ Wear an SPF 30 sunscreen on exposed skin daily, whether you'll be indoors or out.
- ◆ For the best protection, use a sunscreen with zinc oxide.
- ◆ Make sure your sunscreen isn't expired, and throw it out once it does expire.
- ◆ Stay out of the sun when it's most powerful, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ◆ Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- ◆ Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses for extra face and eye protection.
- ◆ To prevent sun damage even further, use specially designed UV clothing, hats, sunglasses, umbrellas, window shades and car window tints.

Stay hydrated.

- ◆ Drink at least six to eight cups of water daily, or 48 to 64 fluid ounces.
- ◆ Drink small amounts of water frequently throughout the day instead of waiting to feel thirsty.
- ◆ Drink more than normal if you are sweating, sick or taking diuretics.
- ◆ Avoid caffeine and alcohol, as they are dehydrating.
- ◆ Take a water bottle along with you when you go outside.
- ◆ Get even more water intake through foods such as soup, yogurt, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Watch out for other summer dangers.

- ◆ Avoid overheating by wearing lightweight, breathable clothing.
- ◆ Wear bug spray every time you go outside.
- ◆ Use your air conditioner and fans, especially when you go to sleep at night.
- ◆ Ask your doctor about being out in the sun when starting any new medication.
- ◆ If you don't drive a car, use a transportation service instead of waiting outside for the bus.

Know the signs of heat stroke.

- ◆ Let someone know immediately if you feel these symptoms coming on:
 - High body temperature
 - Flushed face
 - Headache
 - Nausea
 - Dizziness
 - Rapid pulse
 - Confusion

Follow these simple tips, and your body will thank you. You'll avoid sunburn and dehydration now and prevent things like skin cancer in the future. Here's to a safe, happy summer!

Life Care Centers of America 