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The Newsletter of **INDEPENDENT YOU** Senior Care

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12 Springtime Activities for Seniors

Taking some time to partake in fun springtime activities can help to not only improve cognitive function but happiness as well, according to the National Institute of Health. Even if mobility is a problem, you can choose adventures and venues that cater to the handicap and are wheelchair accessible.

Here are a few favorite springtime activities for seniors that are good for the soul:

1. Choose a local park or nature trail for walks.

Many landmarks, local parks and even nature trails are appropriate for seniors (and are wheelchair accessible)! Do a little research ahead of

time to find out what outdoor nature destination is a good choice for your loved one.

2. Visit a farmers market.

There's nothing like fresh fruits, vegetables and local arts and crafts to inspire elders. Getting out into the fresh air with other adults, children and often pets is also beneficial for seniors. It might be fun to choose a recipe before the outing to help inspire the palette with organic food as you peruse the market.

3. Partake in spring cleaning.

When there's light outside coming in through the windows, clutter and dust are suddenly visible. It's always healthy to do a little spring cleaning to

create a comfortable ambiance. You might even want to put up a spring wreath and other fresh decorations.

4. Go fishing.

If your elderly loved one is mobile, you can venture to many fishing spots, but even those who are wheelchair bound can cast from a pier or bridge over a creek or river. Peruse your area for the perfect fishing spot.

5. Enjoy tourist attractions.

Whether it's local landmarks, historical sites or sporting events, tourist attractions are good for the mind and for combating cabin fever. Let your senior choose their destination.

6. Eat outdoors at a fancy restaurant.

Good company, food and a fancy ambiance are all a recipe for success

for your elder. Satisfy their palate and take time for quality bonding.

7. Visit a nursery.

Nurseries are an excellent place for seniors to visit because they can partake in their indoor and outdoor plant preferences, which adds to the excitement factor. Beautifying both indoors and outdoors provides some color and enjoyable ambiance for your senior.

8. Go on a picnic.

Pack a delicious lunch with a comfortable blanket and enjoy the outdoors, picnic style. You can bring binoculars for bird watching, books to read, or cards for some outdoor game-fun.

9. Invest in a bird feeder for bird watching.



Spring Cleaning Safety Tips for Senior Citizens

Does your kitchen look like a display ad for gadgets and counter-top appliances? Does all of the excess furniture lying around your living space look like it should be in a yard sale? If you answered “yes” or even a reluctant “no”, then it’s time to freshen up your home. Spring is the

season of renewal, so get caught up in the fever and throw out the junk and re-organize your space! For seniors citizens and their caregivers, these five spring cleaning tips are for safety first.

Check the Medicine Cabinet

Are medications labeled and stored

Birds provide beautiful visuals and entertainment for seniors, and springtime bird chirping signals the opportune time to invest in a feeder. Whether blue jays or hummingbirds, bird feeders attract nature to your yard. You and your elder can even build your own for a little extra fun.

10. Watch the Food Network for savory spring recipes.

The Food Network offers great cooking shows and recipe ideas for springtime rejuvenation and healthy living. Watch a show with your loved one and compliment the meal with one of these delicious water-infused recipes.

11. Plant an herb garden.

To go along with healthy eating,

a modest herb garden provides not only gardening fun, but also healthy and tasty ingredients for your favorite dishes.

12. Go see a show.

Whether a local theatre production or a fancy opera; getting dressed up and having a fun evening watching a show adds not only a little fun to senior-life, but also some culture.

*Retrieved from www.aplaceformom.com/blog/4-05-16-springtime-activities-for-seniors/ By: Dana Larsen April 2016
Springtime Activities for Seniors*

in their proper containers? Do you have old prescription drugs mixed in with the new? These common practices in homes pose potentially dangerous health hazards. Whereas some medications still retain their potency after expiration dates, many do not and should be disposed of. Old liquid antibiotics, drugs comprised of organic ingredients and those requiring refrigeration should be safely discarded.

Be sure to store medications in a cool, dark, dry place; the bathroom does not fit that category. A better place is an airtight plastic container on a shelf in your closet.

Clean Up Clutter

Trips and falls are likely to happen when you accumulate too much "stuff". Reduce the risk by removing unnecessary and obstructive items (including furniture) from your regular walking path and place them in storage. Make maintaining a clear walkway in every room of the house or apartment a top priority. And either tape carpet edges or throw rugs to the floor or get rid of them entirely.

In the kitchen, remove infrequently

used appliances off the counter, organize cabinets, create front row spaces for frequently use items, and clear out the refrigerator and pantry of stale food.

Have an Emergency Plan in Place

In case of an emergency such as a fall, an attempted burglary, or a kitchen accident, do you have important numbers on speed dial? Know who to call in an emergency and have your phone programmed, accordingly.

If you reside in an assisted living community, be sure you understand how the emergency response system works. Just like when you were living in a neighborhood, look out for others and know who to go to for help.

Never Try to Move Heavy Objects or Furniture on Your Own

For seniors with reduced strength or mobility challenges, doing household chores may seem like a monumental task. Never try to move furniture or heavy objects on your own. Don't stand on a chair or ladder to clean hard to reach spots or change light bulbs. Use cordless cleaning tools

and lightweight equipment which are easier to use. Try the newer, more efficient technology tools on the market designed to make modern household cleaning a breeze.

Monitor Your Smoke Alarm System, Fire Extinguisher and Emergency Kit

Periodically check your smoke alarm system and carbon monoxide detectors; run a test to ensure batteries for detectors are functional.

Every home should have at least two handheld fire extinguishers (one in the kitchen for sure). Check the expiration date and remind yourself to monitor

the device every once in a while.

Emergency kits should be assessed often and restocked in the Spring and Winter. General contents may include: a flashlight and spare batteries, thermometer, Band-Aids, scissors, tape, triple antibiotic ointment, wound care dressings, allergy and digestive medications, protein bars, a current medication list and names and phone number of family or friends to contact list in an emergency.

Retrieved from www.umh.org/assisted-independent-living-blog/bid/289629/5-Spring-Cleaning-Safety-Tips-for-Senior-Citizens



Senior Wellness: The Best Tips for Health in Spring

Finally, if you are finding it difficult to catch what people are saying, especially in a crowd of people, it's probably time to get your hearing tested.

Put on Your Walking Shoes

If you're no fan of ice and snow, your whole world may expand once the spring sun settles in and thaws out the land. And

To keep your body running at peak performance, it needs regular maintenance: a spring tune-up, so to speak. Get your weight, blood pressure, and glucose and cholesterol levels checked out by your primary-care physician, who can also book you for other relevant tests.

In addition, if it's been a year since your eyes were tested, schedule an appointment with your optometrist, and see your dentist if you haven't been examined for at least six to nine months.

there's no better way to explore the season than by walking. Health-wise, it's one of the best physical activities for seniors – its considerable benefits include controlling blood sugar, supporting bone and heart health and improving sleep.

Not only that, walking in a park or forest is a great way to connect with nature, and, if you join a walking club or hiking group, it can be an easy way to meet new friends.

Remember to make sure that you

choose terrain that is suitable for your current level of activity and balance, and that you wear supportive and comfortable shoes, as these can help reduce the risk of falls.

Take an Exercise Class

In addition to walking, get your endorphins flowing by signing up for a low-impact aerobics or other type of exercise class. Consider Yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi, all of which can improve balance and flexibility and decrease your chances of falling. Aquafit is another fun and social way to increase physical fitness, one that can be especially suitable if you have arthritis or chronic pain.

Get Outside and Garden

In springtime, a highlight of many seniors' lives is gardening, which brings a multitude of health benefits. For starters, tending to a garden can boost your level of Vitamin D, which can, in turn, help reduce the risk of bone problems and fractures.

On an emotional level, getting outside and breathing fresh air, listening to birds chirp, and watching worms crawl through the dirt can be as calming and relaxing as an hour of meditation. On a physical level, digging, planting and weeding can improve strength, flexibility and agility.

Lighten Up Your Diet

Many healthy fruits and veggies, like asparagus, peas, lettuce, and strawberries come into season in the spring, making it the perfect time to replace heavier winter meals with salads, light soups or other lightly cooked fare. In fact, cut down your chances of developing conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis, by making a complete dietary overhaul.

Consider cutting down on red meat and processed foods, replacing white flour with whole grain flour, and increasing your intake of produce as well as healthy fats such as olive oil and avocados.

Remember that you should never undertake a new diet or exercise plan without consulting your doctor about what will be safe for your current level of health.

Drink Lots of Water

As you age, your ability to notice thirst may decrease, so it's important to keep an eye on water intake, especially when you've been exercising outdoors in the sun. Dehydration can adversely affect memory and concentration and increase fatigue; it can also lead to serious complications such as increased risk of falls.

As a rule of thumb, aim for at least eight cups of water per day, and be conscious about the type of fluid that you ingest, choosing water, herbal tea and fresh vegetable juices over coffee, fruit juices or sugary sweet soft drinks.

Dress for the Weather

Spring is one of those in-between seasons -- some days are weather-perfect, while others are a little too hot or a little too brisk. When the sun is shining brightly, always wear sunglasses or a wide-brimmed hat to protect yourself from ultraviolet rays that can adversely affect your skin and eyes, while on cooler or windier days, insulate yourself from the cold by topping off your outfit with a sweater or jacket and a scarf.

Watch for Allergies

Springtime can mean the beginning of allergies for people who react badly to grass and pollen. Keep an eye on the weather. Many weather reporters and websites now offer allergy predictions as well. Untreated allergies aren't just uncomfortable--they can lead to breathing problems, sinus infections, and colds.

A doctor can recommend or prescribe a good allergy treatment. Taking it regularly can help prevent more serious respiratory problems.

Retrieved from <https://blog.arborcompany.com/senior-wellness-the-best-tips-for-health-in-spring>

Seniors with Alzheimer's need Engagement and Fun



Even if your senior has Alzheimer's or dementia, they still need to feel engaged in life and have fun. But many people can't enjoy the same activities they used to. With a little creativity, you can make simple DIY (do-it-yourself) activities.

Activities that have no right or wrong way to do them are ideal because they're fun, satisfying, and boost self-esteem. Engaging activities can also be a good alternative to using medications that reduce agitation, challenging behavior, and depression.

10 fun activity ideas for seniors with Alzheimer's you can make yourself

With a little creativity, you can turn simple household objects into fun and safe activities.

1. Clip colorful clothespins

Get brightly colored full size or mini clothespins and let your senior attach them to something like a wire basket or rack.

2. Arrange flowers

Flower arranging is a perfect activity for older adults who enjoy flowers or gardening. Get some inexpensive artificial flowers, a plastic vase, and florist foam (optional). Your senior can have fun creating pretty arrangements.

3. Attach pipes and fittings

Many older adults used to enjoy being handy around the house. Remind them of those pleasant memories with an activity where they can put together and take apart pipes.

Get varying lengths of inexpensive PVC pipe and fittings like these elbows or these T-joints – the hardware store will usually be able to cut them for you.

4. Sort inexpensive hardware parts or coins

Another way to enjoy handy activities is to have your seniors sort inexpensive hardware parts like these nuts, washers, or bolts.

Some older adults might also enjoy

Your Rheumatoid Arthritis When the Season Changes

You can't change the weather, but if your rheumatoid arthritis acts up when it's cold and rainy, there's a lot you can do ease stiffness and pain.

Pittsburgh resident Ashley Boynes-Shuck knows the issue firsthand. The 32-year-old author has RA, and when the weather shifts gears, it tends to flare up.

"The seasons changing often presents a problem for me," says Boynes-Shuck, who has written two memoirs about living with long-term illness.

It's especially hard when autumn turns into winter and when winter makes way for spring.

Experts aren't quite sure why weather has an impact. Research suggests autumn may be the sweet spot for RA, while winter and spring are the most challenging.

Retrieved from www.webmd.com/rheumatoid-arthritis/features/ra-pain-changing-seasons; By Kara Mayer Robinson

sorting a big pile of coins as a reminder of when they used to manage household finances.

5. Play with homemade play dough

Making shapes and kneading Play-Doh or modeling clay is a fun and relaxing activity for all ages. Get some fun cookie cutters and play dough and watch your senior have a ball.

Instead of buying commercial Play-Doh, try this non-toxic DIY play dough recipe – don't store it in the fridge. To make it even more relaxing, add a few drops of calming lavender essential oil.

6. Keep the beat with a homemaker shaker

Take a clean plastic container or bottle with a tight fitting top and put some dry beans or pasta inside. This makes a fun music shaker for no cost! Play their favorite music and encourage them to shake along with the beat.

7. Match and sort picture cards

Print two copies of various photos or images that your older adult likes. It could be photos of favorite animals, beautiful flowers, or family members.

Cut them into equal sized cards and laminate using some clear packing tape or contact paper. The cards can be used for a simple sorting game, a matching game, or just nice images to flip through and admire.

8. Make a scrapbook

Get an inexpensive notebook, some old magazines or catalogs, glue stick, and safety scissors. Your senior can flip through the magazines, tear or cut out things they like and stick them into their scrapbook.

9. Stack up party cups

Get some inexpensive plastic party cups in bright colors. Ask your older adult to help you clean up by sorting or stacking the cups.

10. Create a spelling tray

Sticking colorful magnetic letters on a metal tray is a fun way to spell familiar words or just play with the shapes and colors. Use a simple baking sheet (with raised sides) as the tray.

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