Living well and safely

A guide to confident aging

Introduction

Getting older is a normal part of life. It can bring new challenges but also new ways to stay strong, happy and safe.

This guide gives you easy tips to help with everyday health. You'll learn how to:

- Feel better if you have pain
- Stay safe from falls
- Keep your body and mind active
- Take care of your bladder health

Fall prevention and safety tips

Falls are the leading cause of injury in older adults, but you can help prevent them![1]

Tips for getting in and out of cars:

- Park on flat ground and avoid wet or icy spots.
- Hold onto the door or handle for support.
- To get in, sit down first, then swing your legs inside.
- To get out, swing your legs out first, then stand up slowly using support.

Safety tips to prevent falls:

- Wear shoes that do not slip.
- Keep floors and walkways clean and clear.
- Put grab bars in bathrooms and near stairs.
- Use night lights so you can see better in the dark.

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Managing pain: Finding relief and feeling better

More than half of older adults have long-lasting pain. Pain is often caused by arthritis, nerve problems or old injuries.[2] Pain can make it hard to sleep, move around, feel happy or do things on your own.

Ways to feel better:

- Physical therapy helps you move better and feel stronger.
- Gentle exercise like walking, swimming or tai chi can help your body and mood.
- Relaxing activities like deep breathing, meditation or yoga can calm your body and mind.
- Healthy foods like berries, leafy greens and fish can help reduce pain.
- Over-the-counter medicine like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help with small aches.
- Prescription medicine may be needed for stronger pain but should be used carefully.
- Creams or patches like lidocaine or capsaicin can help with pain in one spot.

Mental health is important, too:

- Long-term pain can make people feel sad, worried or alone.
- Talking to a counselor or joining a support group can help you feel better.

Work with your doctor to make a plan that helps you manage pain.

Physical activity and mental health

Being active helps your body and your mind!

How exercise helps your mental health:

- Makes you feel happier
- Helps you sleep better
- Lowers stress and worry
- Keeps your brain sharp
- Helps you meet people through group activities

Fun ways to get moving:

- Walking • Dancing • Chair yoga
- Tai chi • Water aerobics

Try to get about 2.5 hours of exercise each

Bladder health

Bladder problems are common, and you are not alone!

- Over 50% of older adults have trouble with bladder control, but it can be managed.[3]
- Talking to your doctor can help! There are easy ways to feel better, such as exercises or specific medications.

Tips to help:

- Drink water but try to avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Do Kegel exercises every day to make your muscles stronger.
- Use absorbent products if needed; they can be used quietly and easily.

Resources and support

- You are not alone. Call the number on the back of your member ID card to learn what options and benefits are available to you!
- For additional information and support, visit the National Council on Aging at **NCOA.org/Aging-Well**

Statistic sources:

[1] **CDC.gov** - Older Adult Falls Data: Older Adult Fall Prevention

[2] **CDC.gov** - Chronic Pain and High-Impact Chronic Pain in U.S. Adults, 2023

[3] **CDC.gov** - Prevalence of Incontinence Among Older Americans

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