

# WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

## *Physical & Mental Activities Offer Seniors Many Benefits*

Retirement does not mean "doing nothing." When someone asks *what are you doing today?*, a retired senior should have a number of things to tell them...with enthusiasm.

It is important to have daily activities that continue to work the muscles and the brain. By doing so, a person often increases their odds of living longer, and of improving the quality of the life they lead.

These activities provide benefits on many levels. Of course, there are the health advantages that come from physical and aerobic movement. The press is filled with them every day. Plus, we continue to hear that challenging the mind will help to keep it sharper.

In addition, involvement in activities can build self-esteem, strengthen confidence, provide social stimulation and make life more interesting.



*Raising a garden can allow a senior with physical limitations to continue a hobby they really enjoy, as well as be more active and feel more useful.*

## WORKOUTS IN DISGUISE

There are physical and mental workouts hidden among the common activities of seniors. With a little imagination, even a chore can be turned into a beneficial exercise. Here are some examples of workouts in disguise.

- ◆ Dusting and other housecleaning tasks.
  - Vacuuming and washing floors can easily work up a sweat.
- ◆ Singing and dancing.
- ◆ Shopping - especially if there is walking involved and/or you carry bags afterward.
- ◆ Gardening, raking leaves and mowing the lawn (with a push mover).
- ◆ Playing cards and other "strategy" games.
- ◆ Crossword, sudoku, word find, jigsaw and other puzzles.
- ◆ Enjoying a sport - golf, bowling, swimming, tennis, racquetball, biking/tricycling.

## FOR THOSE WHO ARE FRAIL

For those who may be dealing with the frailty of body and/or mind, it is important to stay as safely active as possible. Here are a few suggestions, some of which are adaptations of activities listed in the column to the left.

- ◆ Exercise while sitting to avoid falls.
- ◆ Elevated (enabled) gardens bring the activity to table level for those in wheelchairs or those who cannot safely transition easily to and from ground level.
- ◆ Enjoying a sport through motion-driven video systems - golf, bowling, tennis, etc.
  - There is even a National Senior League ([www.nslgames.com](http://www.nslgames.com)) for Wii bowlers with a national championship event.
- ◆ Singing, and dancing with a sturdy partner.
- ◆ Putting together a personal history album in a scrapbook or on an internet website.

(Sources: MedicalNewsToday.com, aafp.com )

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