



5 Ways Seniors Can Stay Active During COVID-19 Social Distancing

The coronavirus pandemic has turned life upside down for just about everyone, preventing people throughout the world from working, socializing, and performing everyday activities. Older adults — at a higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19 — are more likely to restrict their activities significantly to reduce their chances of contracting coronavirus.

Although it's important for older adults to protect their health during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's also vital they stay physically and mentally active. However, it can be challenging to find appropriate social distancing activities for seniors.

Here are five ways seniors can stay active while following social distancing guidelines:

- 1. Walking**

Many communities with “shelter-in-place” orders have made exceptions allowing outdoor exercise. If the weather is pleasant and it's possible to avoid crowds, a walk around the neighborhood can provide sufficient exercise to reduce restlessness and deliver mood- and immune-boosting benefits. If your loved one must stay indoors, walking around the house or marching in place can increase daily step counts.

- 2. Exercise and strength training**

Yoga, Pilates, tai chi, and stretching can help seniors stay fit at home during “shelter-in-place” orders and can improve balance, flexibility, core strength, and overall mobility. Many instructional videos can be found online, and some are even tailored specifically for older adults. Another option is joining a virtual class hosted by an area exercise studio or senior center.

Strength training is also important for seniors — and it doesn't necessarily involve lifting heavy weights at the gym. Many strength-training exercises for the elderly can be

done at home while sitting or lying down. Seniors only need their body weight and a few simple exercises to get started. If desired, they can use everyday household items such as soup cans to add weight for exercises.

3. Dancing

Known for its cardiovascular benefits, dancing is a fun, low-impact way to exercise and boost endurance during long days of social distancing. As an added benefit, listening to some favorite music may even encourage your loved one to exercise their mind by taking a pleasant “walk” down memory lane.

4. Gardening

For older adults who enjoy being outdoors, gardening can enhance outdoor spaces while burning calories and providing a healthy dose of fresh air. Although some older adults may not be mobile enough to dig in the dirt, there are other alternatives to reap the benefits of gardening. Potting small plants or herbs to be maintained indoors or decorating an enclosed porch or patio can provide an afternoon’s diversion and keep your loved one moving and active.

5. Arts and crafts

Older adults who have limited mobility can stay active at home by participating in arts and crafts. Whether knitting, crocheting, painting, coloring, or working with clay, arts and crafts can help older adults maintain their dexterity and cognitive skills.

In addition to finding creative ways for the elderly to communicate during social distancing, it’s just as important they stay active to maintain their well-being. With a little imagination and motivation, seniors can stay healthy and safe during the coronavirus pandemic while getting the exercise and activities they need. If you’re interested in more information about how in-home care can help your elderly loved one, call 301-583-8820.