

## **A Good Way to Help Aging Parents Avoid Mental Decline**

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Are you worried that your aging parent's memory may be getting worse?

John Hopkins reports some interesting data on how mental decline in older adults can be delayed. The report tells us that regular physical activity can reduce the risk of vascular-related dementia by more than 50 percent and cognitive impairment without dementia by 60 percent. The study followed 638 people, average age of 74, for three years. The exercisers' activities involved walking, biking and taking gym classes for 30 minutes a day three days a week.

Whether we're hoping our aging loved ones can avoid vascular dementia, or whether we just want them to have a good quality of life, regular activity is good for a lot of other reasons too. It helps them maintain better balance and avoid falls. When they participate in activity with others, it can help create a sense of community, which is a cornerstone of maintaining mental wellness.



Agingparents.com reports that in the county of Marin, in California, where men and women both enjoy impressive longevity compared with other places, the community center is packed with seniors day and night. One 90 year old is on the exercise machines with weights, supervised by a trainer. Other white haired folks are on the treadmills, bikes and using weights. There is a class for those who want to exercise sitting down and they fill the room, working out in their chairs.

These seniors are not without their impairments either. Some need help getting on and off the machines and some have a person attending them. Often times caregivers help these seniors in and out of the pool, for their workout. One gentleman walks with a cane and uses a wheelchair sometimes. That doesn't stop him from exercising. He has dementia, in a moderate stage. He still does quite well in a lot of ways. I'm sure he doesn't always feel like going, but he knows he has to if he wants to hold onto the abilities he has left.

Even if your own aging loved one has never been an exerciser or active person, it's never too late to begin. You can help by doing a little research. Many communities across the country in local gyms, YMCA's, county parks departments and senior community centers offer exercise classes and programs geared to older adults. Here are some ways to help:

- 1. Find a class and suggest your parent go.**
- 2. Offer to accompany your aging parent the first time.**
- 3. Be sure regular transportation is available to get to and from class.**
- 4. Encourage social connection in and after the class. New friends can make exercising more fun.**

You may be giving your parent a wonderful gift. And the longer your aging parent can prevent physical and mental decline and vascular dementia, the easier it is on you.

Talk to us at Visiting Angels about working with your aging loved ones on basic exercise activities to help keep them as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

Thanks to Johns Hopkins and agingparents.com



*Visiting Angels at Fairhill Partners is an award winning, full-service senior homecare agency providing a comprehensive range of non-medical services. Our experienced caregivers are bonded and insured. We are in our tenth year of operation and are honored to have served hundreds of seniors in the Greater Cleveland area and surrounding suburban communities.*



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