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THE NEWS SUN

Reduce Stress, Enhance Well-Being

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

As we age, maintaining mental and emotional well-being becomes increasingly important.

For seniors, mindfulness and meditation offer powerful tools to reduce stress, enhance overall health and improve quality of life.

These practices, which focus on present-moment awareness and relaxation, can be easily integrated into daily routines. Here's how seniors can benefit from mindfulness and meditation, along with tips on getting started.

Benefits of Mindfulness and Meditation

Mindfulness and meditation help manage stress by encouraging a focus on the present moment rather than past regrets or future worries. This shift in focus can lower cortisol levels, the body's primary stress hormone, leading to a calmer state of mind.

Regular meditation has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and



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depression. It promotes emotional health by fostering a positive outlook, increasing self-awareness and improving emotional regulation.

Meditation can lead to lower blood pressure, improved sleep and a strengthened immune

system. By promoting relaxation, it helps reduce the physical symptoms associated with chronic stress, such as muscle tension and headaches.

Mindfulness practices can enhance cognitive abilities, including memory, attention and problem-

solving skills. This is particularly beneficial for seniors, as it helps maintain mental sharpness and reduces the risk of cognitive decline.

Getting Started

Begin with simple breathing exercises. Find a quiet place to sit comfortably, close your eyes, and focus on your breath. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a moment and then exhale slowly through your mouth. Concentrate on the sensation of breathing, letting go of other thoughts. Practicing this for just five minutes a day can significantly reduce stress.

For those new to meditation, guided sessions can be very helpful. Many apps and online resources offer free guided meditations tailored for beginners. These sessions provide step-by-step instructions, making it easier to focus and relax.

This practice involves mentally scanning your body from head to toe, bringing awareness to each part. Start by focusing on your feet, noticing any sensations or tension, and then gradually move upward. This method helps release physical tension and enhances mind-body connection.

Incorporate mindfulness into daily activities. Whether it's eating, walking or gardening, focus entirely

on the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, smells and textures around you. This practice can transform routine tasks into opportunities for mindfulness.

Many communities offer meditation classes or mindfulness groups, often at local senior centers or health clubs. Joining a group provides social interaction and the support of others who share similar goals.

Tips for Maintaining a Practice

Begin with short sessions of 5-10 minutes and gradually increase the duration as you become more comfortable with the practice.

Set aside a specific time each day for mindfulness or meditation. Consistency helps establish a habit and makes the practice more effective.

It's normal for your mind to wander during meditation. Gently bring your focus back to your breath or the present moment without judgment.

Books, online courses, and apps can provide additional guidance and motivation. Consider resources like "The Mindfulness Solution" by Ronald D. Siegel or apps like Headspace and Calm.



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Great Books for Seniors

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

While old favorites will always provide a comforting and cozy read, there is a never-ending supply of new stories.

Many of them particularly captivate seniors, offering a perfect blend of entertainment, inspiration and intellectual engagement.

Whether you're looking to delve into historical sagas, explore thought-provoking non-fiction, or lose yourself in a thrilling mystery, this year's literary offerings have something for every taste.

Reading not only provides a delightful escape but also stimulates the mind, enhances memory, and promotes mental well-being — benefits that are especially valuable for seniors. From heartwarming tales of love and friendship to gripping narratives that keep you on the edge of your seat, the books of 2024 promise to enrich your reading experience and spark meaningful conversations.

Age Space recommends the following.

"Redhead by the Side of the Road" by Anne Taylor. A middle-aged man is addicted to his routines, all of which get upended when a young man shows up at his doorstep claiming to be his son.

"The Fire and the Darkness: The Bombing of Dresden 1945" by Sinclair McKay. This historic non-fiction account reconstructs one of the most devastating bombings of World War II from both sides — the people living there and the Allied bombers.

"Eight Perfect Murders" by Peter Swanson. This crime thriller has Malcolm, an honest bookseller, being asked about a series of unsolved mysteries that are strikingly similar to a list he

made in one of his novels.

"Milkman" by Anna Burns. This Booker-prize winning novel is a piece of historic fiction that explores the life of a young woman during the Irish Troubles.

Freedom Plaza recommends the following.

"The Garden of Lost Secrets" by Kelly Bowen. Two sisters discover the fairy tales their great-grandmother wrote during World War II.

"The Librarianist" by Patrick DeWitt. A retired librarian rescues a confused elderly woman and starts to volunteer at the center where she lives. His life and character are revealed.

"The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig. Nora is given the opportunity to trade her life for a different one to undo old regrets.

"Tom Lake" by Ann Patchett. A middle-aged married Michigan cherry farmer tells her three adult daughters about the summer she dated a man who went on to become a famous actor.

"When Women Were Dragons" by Kelly Barnhill. This fantasy novel is set in the 1950s U.S. where thousands of women have been transformed into dragons. It explores what happens when women rise up together and take the space they deserve.

The Heritage at Lowman recommends the following.

"Solo Wise: A Roadmap for Fearless Solo Aging" by Beverly Bernstein Joie. About 26 million people are aging alone. This book tackles the issues related how to navigate the future alone.

"The Joy of Aging" by Rebekah Luna Chavez. This book suggests ways one can dance joyfully into the older generation.

Helping you prepare for the future



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Staying Hydrated as You Age

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Staying hydrated unlocks good health at all ages, but it grows in importance as we age. Proper hydration helps

maintain bodily functions, supports cognitive health and prevents various health issues.

Water keeps the body running as it should,

especially in such areas as digestion, temperature regulation and the maintenance of healthy skin. Adequate hydration ensures that these processes work

efficiently, reducing the risk of digestive issues and maintaining skin elasticity.

Dehydration can affect cognitive function, leading to confusion, difficulty concentrating and memory problems. For seniors, staying hydrated can help maintain mental clarity and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Dehydration can lead to serious health problems. The National Council on Aging lists complications from dehydration such as urinary tract infections (UTIs), heat stroke, heart problems, blood clot complications, kidney failure and kidney stones. Proper hydration helps to flush toxins from the body and keep the urinary system functioning smoothly.

Water helps to lubricate joints and maintain muscle function. Staying hydrated can alleviate joint pain and reduce the risk of cramps and strains, which is particularly important for seniors who may already experience joint issues.

to the bathroom, further increasing the risk of dehydration.

Tips for Staying Hydrated

Encourage regular fluid intake by setting a schedule. Drinking a glass of water with each meal and snack can help establish a routine. Keeping a water bottle nearby as a reminder can also be helpful.

Incorporate foods with high water content into the diet, such as fruits (watermelon, oranges, strawberries) and vegetables (cucumbers, lettuce, celery). These can contribute significantly to daily fluid intake.

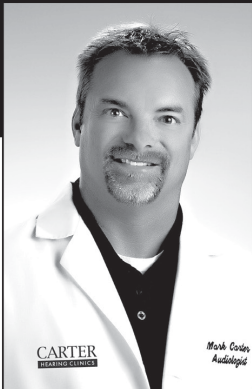
If plain water isn't appealing, try adding natural flavors like slices of lemon, lime, cucumber or a splash of juice. Herbal teas and broths are also good alternatives.

Keep track of daily water consumption to ensure that the recommended amount is being met. Most experts recommend about eight glasses of water per day, but this can vary based on individual needs and health conditions.

Limit the intake of caffeine and alcohol, as these can increase fluid loss. Instead, focus on beverages that contribute to hydration.

Pay attention to signs of dehydration, such as dark urine, dry mouth, dizziness, muscle cramps in legs and arms and fatigue. If any of these symptoms occur, increase fluid intake immediately.

Staying proactive about hydration can lead to improved health outcomes and a better quality of life. So, make a habit of drinking water regularly and enjoy the benefits of staying well-hydrated.



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Challenges Seniors Face

As people age, the sensation of thirst can diminish, making it harder to recognize when the body needs water. This can lead to unintentional dehydration. A study out of the University of California, Los Angeles found that 40% of seniors are chronically dehydrated.

Many medications that seniors take can increase the risk of dehydration. Diuretics, for example, cause the body to lose more water, necessitating increased fluid intake.

Mobility issues can make it challenging for seniors to access water easily. Additionally, some may limit their fluid intake to avoid frequent trips



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Find a New Passion

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Retirement marks a significant transition, offering the freedom to explore new interests and hobbies that may have been sidelined during one's working years.

Engaging in healthy hobbies during retirement provides a sense of purpose and promotes physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Benefits of Hobbies

Many hobbies — such as gardening, swimming or yoga — encourage physical activity, which is crucial for maintaining mobility,

strength and overall health. Regular physical activity can help prevent chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular health and boost energy levels.

Engaging in mentally stimulating activities like reading, puzzles or learning a new language helps keep the mind sharp and can reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Hobbies that challenge the brain enhance memory, problem-solving skills and intellectual agility.

Hobbies provide a sense of accomplishment and joy, reducing stress and promoting relaxation. Activities like painting,

playing music or crafting offer creative outlets that can be deeply satisfying and therapeutic.

Many hobbies foster social interaction, which is essential for emotional health. Joining clubs, groups or classes related to your interests can help you meet new people, build friendships, and combat loneliness.

Exploring New Interests

Gardening is an excellent hobby for seniors. It combines physical activity with the therapeutic benefits of being outdoors and connecting with nature.

Whether it's tending to a small flower bed or cultivating a vegetable garden, the rewards are both tangible and fulfilling.

Exploring creativity through arts and crafts can be incredibly rewarding. Activities like painting, knitting, pottery or woodworking allow you to express yourself and create beautiful, useful items. Many communities offer classes and workshops, providing opportunities to learn new skills and meet like-minded individuals.

Retirement provides the perfect opportunity to explore new places. Whether it's traveling to different countries or exploring local attractions, travel broadens horizons and creates lasting memories. Consider joining travel groups specifically designed for seniors to enjoy safe and organized adventures.

Giving back to the community can be a deeply enriching experience. Volunteering allows you to use your skills and knowledge to help others, providing a sense of purpose and fulfillment. There are countless opportunities to volunteer, from tutoring

children to working at local food banks.

It's never too late to learn something new. Many retirees enjoy taking up new educational pursuits, whether it's through formal classes, online courses or self-study. Learning a new language, taking up cooking classes or studying history or literature can keep the mind engaged and curious.

Getting Started

Reflect on activities you've enjoyed in the past or have always wanted to try. Make a list of potential hobbies and explore each one to see which resonates most with you. Start small and gradually build your skills and knowledge. Setting achievable goals helps maintain motivation and provides a sense of progress.

Look for local clubs, classes or online communities related to your interests. Being part of a group offers support, inspiration and social connections. Don't be afraid to try new things and step out of your comfort zone. You may discover passions you never knew you had.



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