

Staying Independent for Life

This booklet was put together for seniors and their family members that can help you to stay independent and on your own.

It was put together with the help and advice of others who are mature adults.

Some of the things you will learn about in this booklet will help you to:

- Stay healthy
- Feel good
- Feel confident
- Reduce stress



To find out where to take exercise or Tai-chi classes:

- Ask at your senior center, library, or other place in your area
- If they do not offer this, ask them to add this to what they offer.
- Your local library may have VCR tapes and DVDs that you can borrow. If they don't have them ask the librarian to order them for you.



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Suffolk County
Department
of
Health Services



On Your Own:
A Quality of Life Series

Staying
Independent
for Life



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Here are some things that will help you stay independent.

Stay active. This helps you stay in shape, makes your health much better, and feels good. It also helps prevent falls. Here are some tips that are helpful to other mature adults.

Walking: this is very important, and a great way to stay in shape.

- It is recommended that you walk at least 5 days each week. If you already walk that much, that is great news!
- If you walk less than 5 days a week, build up to this.
- If you do not walk much, start slowly. Even 5 or 10 minutes a day is a good way to start. Then add time to this every few days.
- Many people find it helpful to walk with a friend. It is a good way to catch up and do something for your health at the same time.
- Some malls open early for walkers.

Swimming: most areas have a YMCA or public swimming pool you can go to. Check it out!

Some other exercises that will help you feel good and stay healthy.

Believe it or not, one of the best activities is called 'Tai-chi'. Tai-Chi also has been shown to prevent falling.

Tai-chi involves slow rhythmic moving of your body. Mature adults who have taken Tai-chi classes say:

- "I feel much more relaxed and less stressed."
- "My muscles are stronger."
- "I have better balance."
- "I feel more confident."
- "I love it! Try it, you will like it!"



Have your medications checked by your doctor or nurse or pharmacist.

Certain types of drugs have side effects that may cause you to get dizzy or lose your balance. This can include prescription and non-prescription drugs. These health providers can help you figure out which medicines these are, and help make a plan to have you take medicines that have the fewest side effects.

Some tips to keep you safe in and around the house.

Staying independent relies on two things: a healthy body, and a safe home. Here are some things you can do in your home to keep you from getting hurt:

- ✓ Ask for help with household chores.
- ✓ Use a night light in the bedroom and bathroom.
- ✓ Keep pets from getting under foot.
- ✓ Avoid walking in socks, which can cause you to slip.
- ✓ Use proper footwear.
- ✓ Install railings in the tub and shower to grab if you slip.
- ✓ Remove any electrical cords or telephone wires that are in a spot where you can trip.
- ✓ Remove clutter from the floor.
- ✓ Get out of bed slowly so you don't get dizzy.
- ✓ Get your vision checked.
- ✓ Remove any slippery scatter rugs.
- ✓ Climb a ladder or step stool only if someone is with you.

Remember:

Staying independent depends on you!