

# *11 Ways to* Age Successfully at Home

**KENDAL**<sup>®</sup> *at Home*  
Together, transforming the experience of aging.<sup>®</sup>

*While we cannot predict the future, we can do our best to live a long, healthy, happy life.*

Follow these 11 tips for aging successfully in your home and you may experience a more independent and robust lifestyle.



## number 1

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### Stay active

***It's no surprise that your lifestyle affects both your overall health and the longevity of your life.*** Staying active on a regular basis is your pathway to less body fat, better sleep, more energy, and genuine happiness. By staying active, your body will better be able to handle stress, fight off illness, reduce arthritis, build muscles, and lower the risk of disease. It's never too late to start an active lifestyle, just remember to ease into it. Choose movements, games or sports you actually enjoy doing.

## number 2

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### Develop a fitness plan

***Your fitness routine should be a deliberate plan that concentrates on endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance.*** Most experts recommend 150 minutes a week (or 30 minutes 5 days a week) of moderate exercise. Getting more exercise has been proven to reduce the risk of dementia and help maintain cognition and memory. But even a small amount can help keep your brain healthy. "As little as 15 minutes of regular exercise three times per week helped maintain the brain," said Eric B. Larson, M.D., executive director of Group Health Research Institute in Seattle.

If you are not sure what you will enjoy, try hiking, swimming, dancing, cycling, or brisk walks. If you are feeling up for it, try taking aerobic or martial arts classes. Build up to strength training, which can include light weight training, Pilates, or resistance bands. Work with a doctor or professional trainer to decide what routine is best for you.

## number 3

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### See your doctor at least once a year

***Remaining in good health allows you to remain independent for as long as possible.*** Talk to your doctor about recommendations for catching conditions, like high blood pressure or cholesterol, early. It's also important to have recommended screenings for common cancers such as breast, cervix, prostate, colon, and skin cancer. And don't forget about the dentist! It's important to keep your mouth clean and cancer free. You should also ask your physician what vaccinations are right for you. Other exams may include eye, hearing, and osteoporosis tests. Don't worry; you won't need every test every year. That's why it is important to speak with your doctor about what is best for you and your body.



# Have a positive attitude

*Depression can be a significant issue for older adults as adult children move away, certain skills are lost, and others pass away.* But it's mostly up to you how you feel on a daily basis. To avoid depression, simply foster happiness in your own life: Help others and hope the best for them. Let go of both negative thoughts and feelings of guilt. Don't allow them the pleasure of your time or attention. Keep busy. Be sure that you can make yourself happy, rather than depending on others to make you happy. And while it can be difficult, try not to dwell on the negative things in life; simply be thankful for all that you have. However, if you experience unbearable sadness for an extended amount of time, speak with a trained mental health professional.

## number 5

# Participate in lifelong learning programs or activities that help keep you mentally active

*When you continue to learn, you continue to expand your mind.* “When you challenge the brain, you increase the number of brain cells and the number of connections between those cells,” says Keith L. Black, M.D., chair of neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. “But it's not enough to do the things you routinely do like the daily crossword. You have to learn new things, like Sudoku or a new form of bridge.” Try a cooking class or surf the Internet for 30 minutes a day to get your brain growing.

## number 6

# Eat a balanced diet

*Maintaining a healthy diet is essential for remaining happy, healthy, and independent.* Load your plate half-full with fruits and vegetables, especially the green leafy ones. Data from many studies have suggested that older adults who eat them can experience a slower rate of cognitive decline and a lower risk for dementia. The other half of your plate should include lean proteins like fish or chicken, as well as nutritious beans and nuts.



## Get a good night's sleep

**No more excuses!** According to a study in the journal *Sleep*, healthy older people reported fewer sleep disturbances and less daytime fatigue than younger people - and those in their 80s sometimes had the fewest complaints of all. So get the 7 to 8 recommended hours of shut eye and you can experience sharpened attention, a healthy weight, lower stress levels, and less sadness. However, if your quality of sleep is continuously poor, talk to your doctor about potential sleep disorders.

## number 8

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## Evaluate your home for safety

**A fall can happen at any time.**

In fact, nearly one-third of people age 65+ experience a fall every year. Ask a professional to help evaluate your house for places you can install handrails. You should also secure rugs with carpet mesh and install night lights in the areas you may travel in the dark. Consider placing a bench near the entrance to your home so you can set down purchases or rest if necessary. Decide what options are right for you, and don't hesitate to schedule an evaluation with a professional to keep your home safe.



## number 9

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## Have an emergency response plan & keep a list of emergency numbers on the refrigerator

**What would you do in an emergency situation?** Do you know? Follow these tips so you are never at a loss for action when you need to take it the most. First, store your vital documents or copies of them in a waterproof container in a safe place. These include your personal ID, social security card, health insurance card, retirement account information, wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, and marriage and birth certificates. Second, prepare an emergency kit with water, canned food, first aid kit, flashlight, batteries, and prescription medicine. Keep a list of emergency numbers by your telephone, and finally develop an evacuation plan.

number 10

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## Have daily contact with someone

*Don't discount the importance of having friends;* it's important to your health! According to a 15-year study of older people from Sweden's Karolinska Institute, having multiple social networks helps lower dementia risk. Conversing and enjoying the company of others not only helps with dementia, but helps provide emotional and mental stimulation. So start saying "yes" to events you might normally say "no" to. Take time to reach out to old friends and try new activities where you can form new relationships.

number 11

## Review meds with a pharmacist at least once a year

*It's important that you understand what your medications are intended for, when to take them and what the possible side effects are.* Ask your pharmacist when the best time to take each medication is (before or after meals, for example) and also what foods or drinks, including alcohol, should be avoided while on the prescription. Most importantly, discuss potential medication interactions. List all of the medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicine and dietary supplements, and have your pharmacist review them.



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