

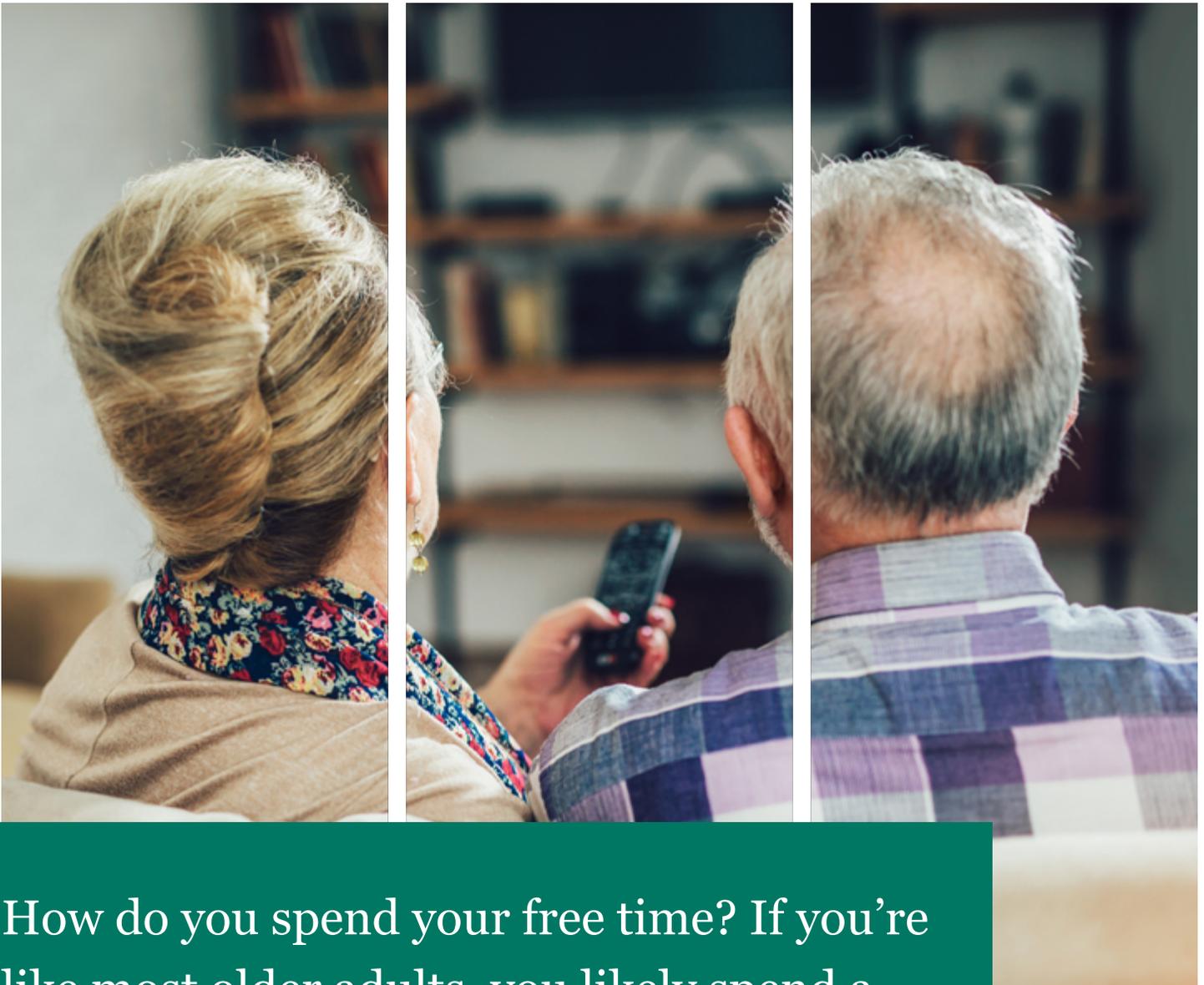


Fun Hobbies for Older Adults

KENDAL[®] *at Home*

Together, transforming the experience of aging.[®]





How do you spend your free time? If you're like most older adults, you likely spend a significant amount of it watching TV.

The average retired American has [8 hours of leisure time every day](#). According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), we spend more than half of that time watching TV. Those same researchers also found older adults age 75 and up spend more than eight hours a day engaging in leisure activities—that's more time than any other age group.

If you're thinking you don't have the time to take up a hobby or volunteer, consider this: Your hobbies can make your retirement more enjoyable. There is also evidence that shows making time for hobbies has positive effects beyond the joy they bring. So, let's look at some hobbies for older adults and what they can add to your retirement years.

Hobbies for Older Adults Provide Health Benefits

If your hobbies are making your retirement more enjoyable, you'll be happier and, most likely, healthier. That's because hobbies for older adults can do things like:



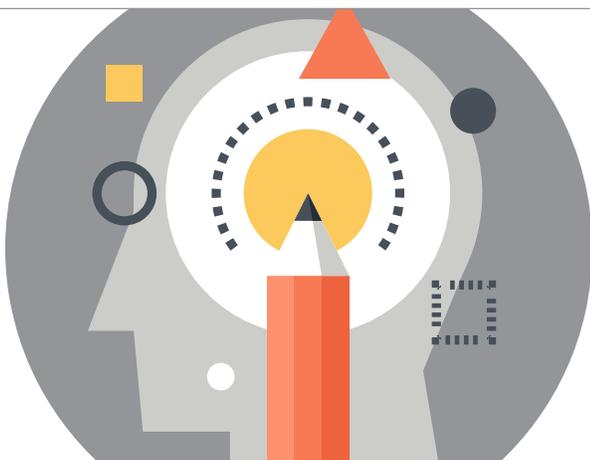
Improve Your Thinking Ability

Researchers with the [National Institutes of Health](#) say learning new activities can also help you to learn and remember.



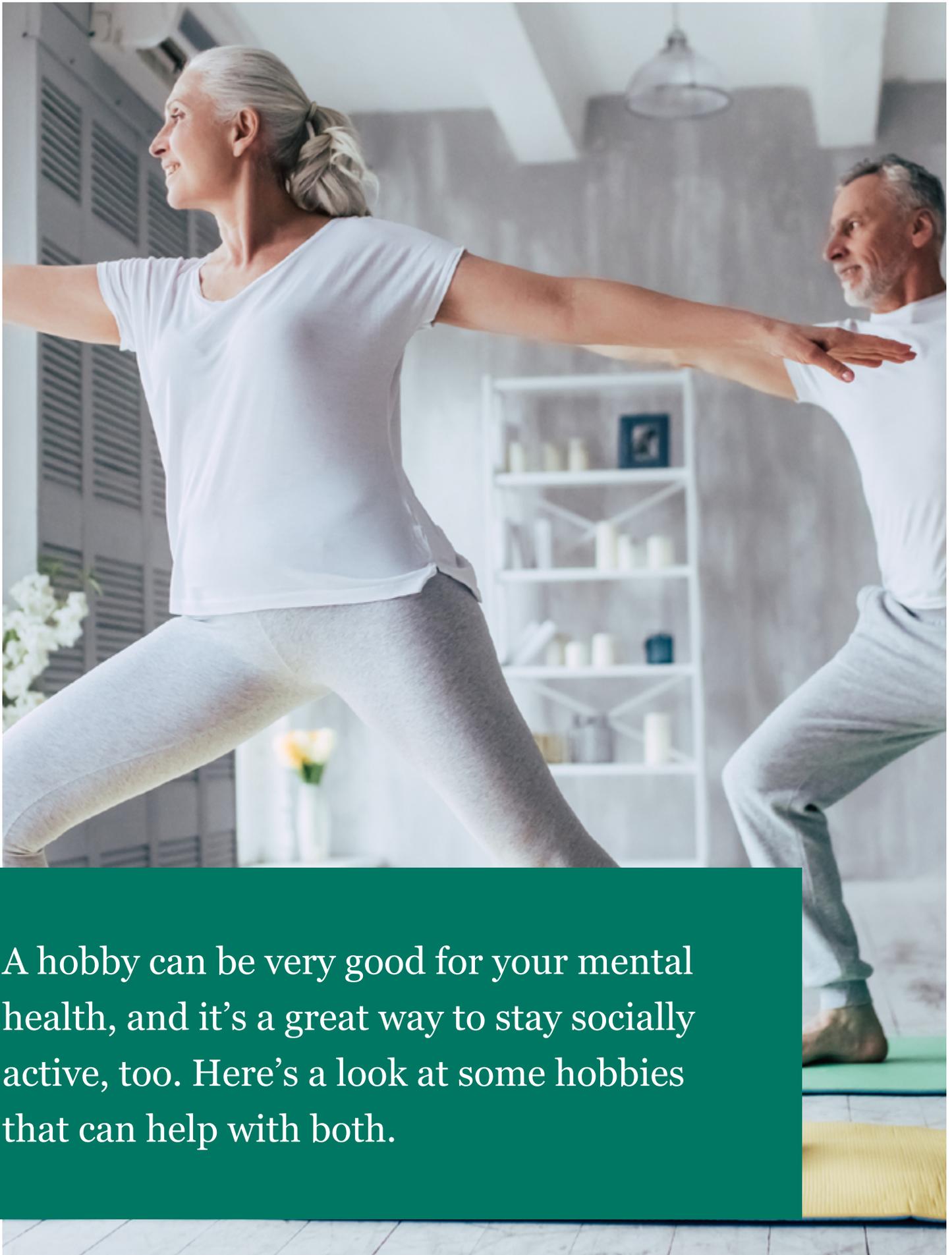
Protect Your Brain

Scientists think hobbies protect our brains by [establishing cognitive reserve](#).



Cope With Stress

A [hobby can relieve stress](#) by establishing new social connections and [developing a creative outlet](#).



A hobby can be very good for your mental health, and it's a great way to stay socially active, too. Here's a look at some hobbies that can help with both.

Exercise as a Hobby for Older Adults

We're not talking about pumping iron at the gym (unless that's what you enjoy), but doing things that will help build strength and balance. The [National Council on Aging](#) recommends things like:



Tai Chi

You'll practice slow, low-impact, controlled body movements for increased balance, strength and flexibility. It's a great activity for seniors.

[Tai Chi Classes in Northern Ohio »](#)

[Tai Chi Classes in Central Ohio »](#)

[Tai Chi Classes in Southern Ohio »](#)



Stepping On

[This program](#) not only will teach you strength exercises, but will show you how to spot potential hazards in your home and how medications can contribute to falls.

[Stepping On »](#)



A Matter of Balance

[An eight-session class](#) where you'll practice many of the exercises sitting down.

[Matter of Balance »](#)



Otago Exercise Program

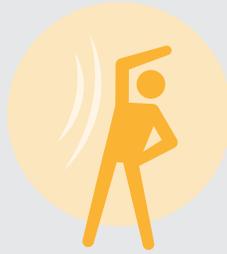
Classes are taught [one-on-one with a physical therapist](#).

[Otago »](#)

Exercising as a hobby will not only decrease your risk for heart disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases, you'll also be able to do things like:



Gain Strength

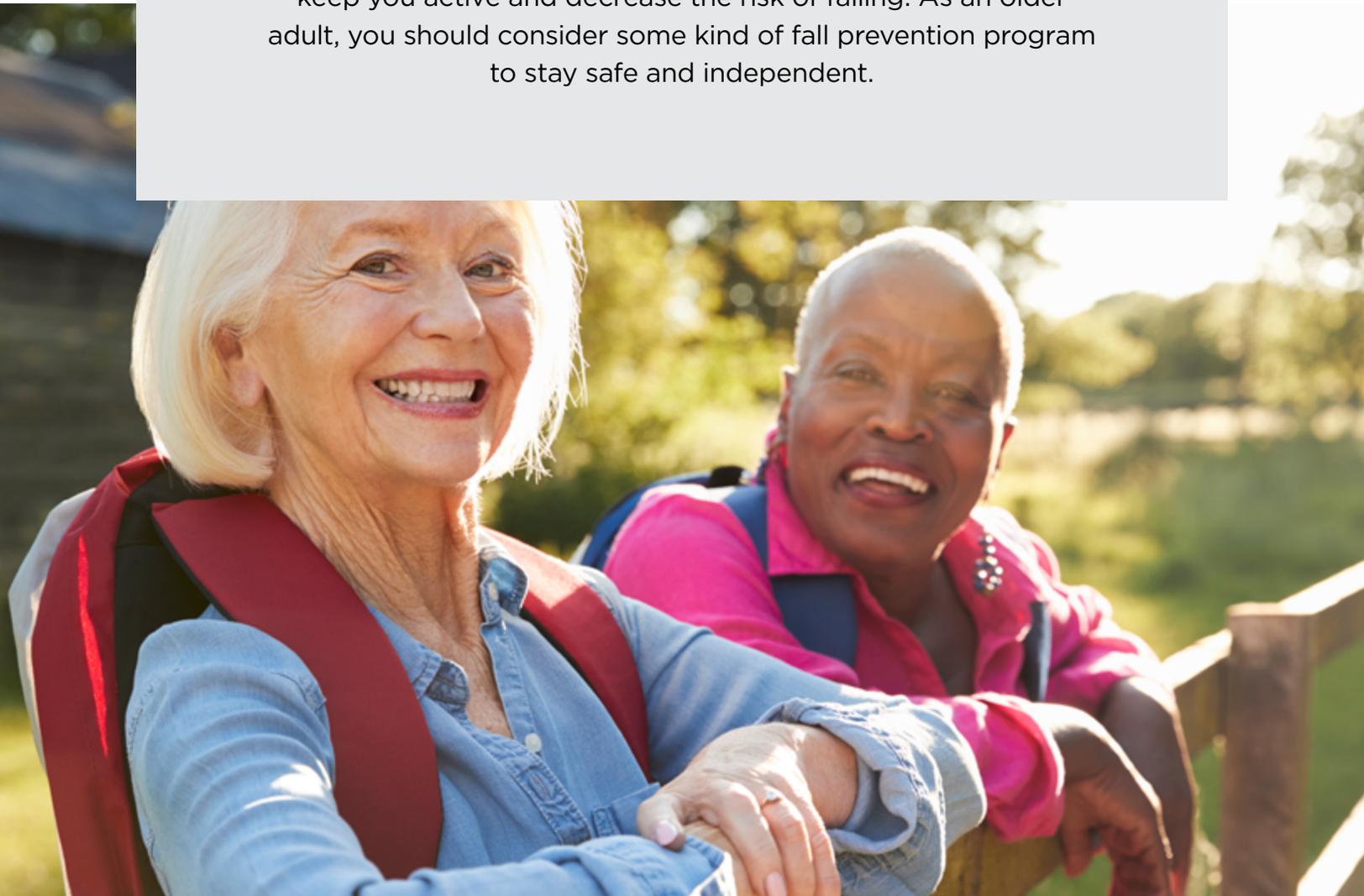


Increase Your Energy



Increase Your Balance

Participating in a [fall prevention program like STEADI](#) can also keep you active and decrease the risk of falling. As an older adult, you should consider some kind of fall prevention program to stay safe and independent.





19 Other Hobbies for Older Adults

1

Plant a garden.

You can also practice flower arranging and maybe help a neighbor or two with their gardens.

2

Learn to refinish wood.

These skills can be used to fix up old pieces of furniture.

3

Take up acting or another kind of performance art.

Acting or performing can help improve attention span, memory, problem solving and serve as an emotional release.

4

Join a photography club with a group of friends.

With digital photography you can do amazing things without a big investment.

5

Try knitting.

While it might not seem like it, this serene hobby can have several relaxing benefits, including lowering stress levels, heart rate and blood pressure. Join a crafting group for added intellectual stimulation and social interaction.



6

Learn to decorate cakes.

Become the cupcake queen, or take culinary classes at a nearby community college and become the cooking king!

7

Join a writer's group.

Try your hand at poetry or romance novels.

8

Build model cars or tri-masted ships.

Try your hand at rigging or motorized helicopters.

9

Delve into your family history.

Today, most libraries have extensive genealogy departments. Or spend time looking up your history online.

10

Try Scapbooking.

Have fun turning those boxes of pictures you've been storing into [handsome scrapbooks for your children and grandchildren](#).



University of Texas researchers found [older adults who learn quilting or digital photography](#) **have more memory improvement than those who only socialize, or do less cognitively demanding activities.**





A study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found evidence that older **adults who practiced mindfulness meditation experienced improved longevity.**



12

Write your memories.

Add some photos and turn it into a keepsake book for your children. Other forms of writing, like journaling, can help reduce stress and boost your mood.

13

Paint.

An excellent creative outlet, painting has been shown to help with goal setting, self expression and positivity.

14

Learn to play a musical instrument.

The benefits of music have no bounds. While simply listening to music can reduce stress and pain, playing an instrument can engage multiple senses and help preserve brain function.

15

Meditate.

It might not seem like a hobby, but taking time to meditate every day can help lower blood pressure, reduce stress and boost your immune system.

16

Mentor a child.

Make a connection through the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program.



17

Do yoga.

A [yoga practice](#) can help you maintain or improve your level of physical activity and reduce pain, balance issues and joint discomfort.

18

Go dancing.

According to researchers, dancing can [improve your gait and balance](#).

19

Be a road scholar.

One of the best ways to exercise your brain and your body is to [become a road scholar](#). Road scholars are typically people over 50 who want to learn about anything and everything. They seek learning adventures.

Dancing can also improve your brain health. The added exercise of a dance session has been shown **to improve the areas of the brain that control memory and motor skills.**



Hobbies for Older Adults Include Volunteer Work

A [growing body of research](#) shows an association between volunteering and mental and physical health benefits. If you need some inspiration, [check out VolunteerMatch](#) to get matched with a cause in your area. A study by [researchers at Senior Corps](#) found older adults who volunteer report:



Lower rates of depression



Fewer physical limitations



Higher levels of well-being

The effects of volunteering can also [go beyond personal benefits](#). Older adults who volunteer can also do things like:

- Help bridge the generation gap
- Change the way people think about older adults
- Prevent senior isolation and depression

You don't have to look for a specific senior-friendly program to make a volunteer experience meaningful. Look for the causes you care most about, and identify where your help is needed. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Botanical Garden
- Museums
(Art, Historical, Natural History, etc.)
- State Theaters
- Metroparks
- Animal Shelters
- Hospitals
- Orchestra
- Library



You can even combine your service with an educational learning adventure on Road Scholar's Service Learning programs.

For a minimal fee you can spend a week providing water to people in Nicaragua or work with National Park Rangers to maintain and restore one of four national historic parks in Maryland. It's up to you.



If you're looking for ways to improve your quality of life, a hobby might be just the thing you need.

The important thing is finding something you love and making a long-term commitment to it. Because the more invested you are, the more you will get from the experience.

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