

PORT ALBERNI

# SENIOR VIBE

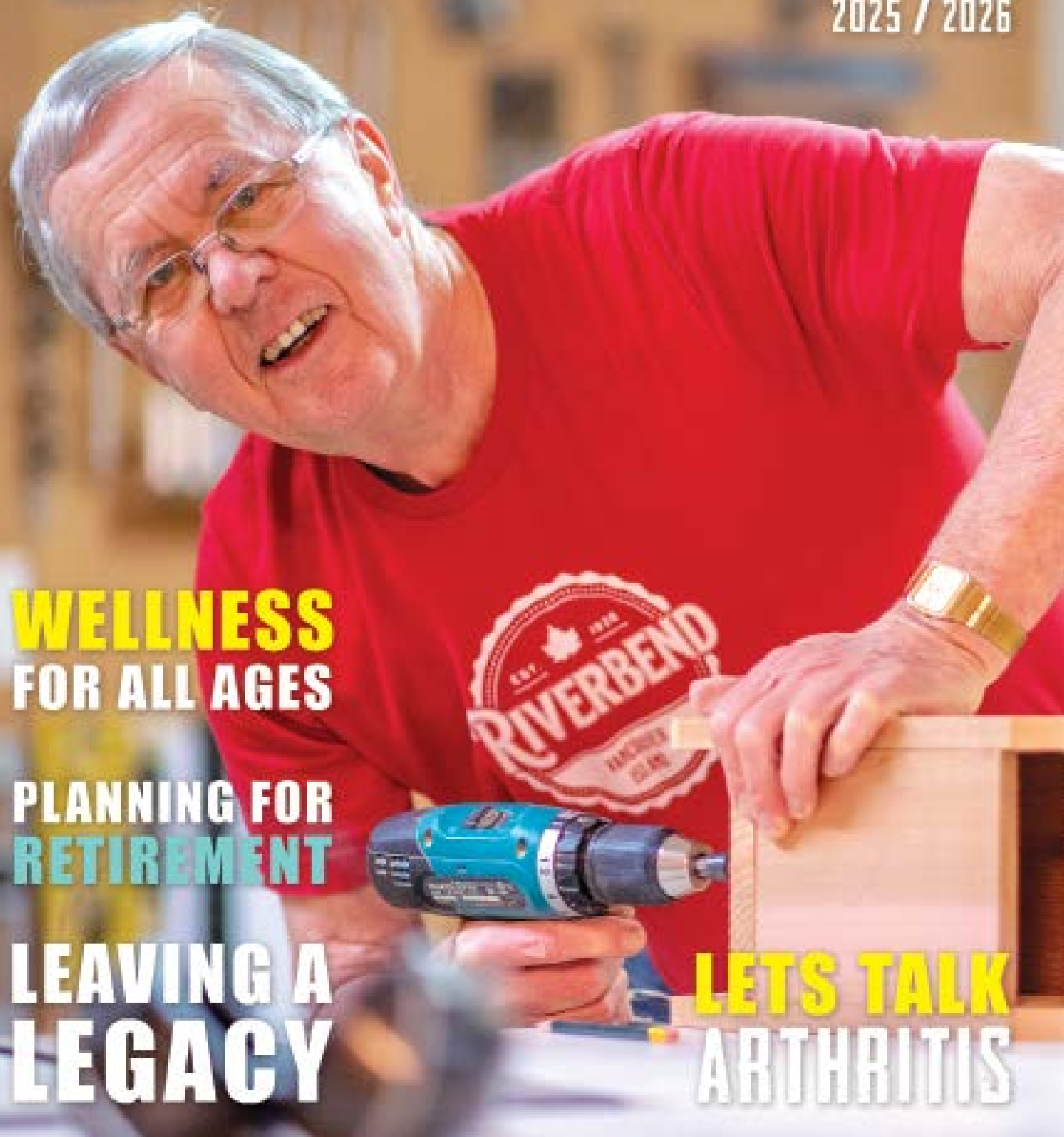
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# Alberni-Clayoquot Continuing Care Society

## Fir Park/ Echo Village

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**ECHO VILLAGE**

67-Bed Residential Multi-level Care Home

### Adult Day Services Overview

Meals: Hot lunch and snacks are provided daily.

Transportation: HandyDART available for rides to and from the centre and appointments (call 724-1311).

Medication: Supervision available if needed.

Cost: \$10/day – includes meals and refreshments (subsidized by B.C. Ministry of Health).

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- Social connection through organized activities
- Support for emotional well-being
- Improved quality of life
- Help for those struggling at home

Bonus: Participants who later become residents often transition more smoothly.

**These Homes offer the means to grow old in the community they've known as the 'hidden gem' of the Island.**



FIR PARK/ECHO VILLAGE 4411 WALLACE STREET PORT ALBERNI, BC V9Y 7Y5

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At the Alberni-Clayoquot Continuing Care Society (ACCCS), we believe that everyone deserves compassionate, respectful support in a setting that feels like home. That's why we offer daily adult day services at Fir Park Village and Echo Village, tailored to meet the care needs of older adults and individuals requiring extra support—whether you're a caregiver needing respite or a participant looking for connection and care in a warm, welcoming environment.



**FIR PARK VILLAGE**

66-Bed Residential Multi-level Care Home

### Fir Park Echo Village Adult Day Services

Tara McGifford,

Director of Programming & Adult Day Services

724-6541 Extension 253

Karen Osberg,

Adult Day Services Coordinator

724-6541 Extension 717

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# VALLEY VIBE

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# HELPING SENIORS NAVIGATE HOME TRANSITIONS WITH CARE AND CLARITY

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Rosanne Doiron, SRES®



Downsizing is more than just moving to a smaller space—it's an emotional and life-changing process, especially for seniors transitioning into a new chapter. Whether the move is due to retirement, health changes, or the desire to be closer to family, it can bring up feelings of loss, nostalgia, and uncertainty. But with the right approach, it can also be a meaningful opportunity to simplify, reflect, and create a comfortable living environment for the future.

Many seniors face overwhelming challenges when preparing to sell a longtime family home or relocate to a smaller residence or assisted living community. The process is filled with decisions—not just about what to keep or discard, but about how to preserve memories, maintain independence, and plan for a new lifestyle. Understanding this complexity is the first step to making the transition easier.

## Steps to Make Downsizing More Manageable

### 1. Start Early

Downsizing takes time. Give yourself plenty of it. Starting months (or even a year) in advance allows for thoughtful decision-making, reduces pressure, and creates space to process emotions.

### 2. Tackle One Room at a Time

It's easy to feel overwhelmed when looking at the entire home. Begin with less emotionally charged spaces—like storage closets or bathrooms—before moving on to rooms filled with sentimental items.

### 3. Use the “Four-Box” Method

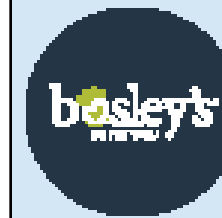
This simple method helps you sort items more efficiently. Label four boxes as:

Keep  
Donate  
Sell  
Trash

Making clear choices can bring a sense of accomplishment and clarity.

### 4. Know the New Space

Measure the rooms and storage areas of your future home. Understanding what will realistically fit helps prevent frustration and disappointment during the



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move.

## 5. Digitize Important Items

Paperwork, photographs, and personal files can be scanned and stored digitally. This reduces physical clutter while preserving important information and memories.

## 6. Choose Multi-Use Furniture

Look for pieces that serve more than one purpose. Ottomans with storage, fold-out beds, and compact dining tables with built-in drawers help make the most of smaller spaces.

## 7. Pass Down Heirlooms

Sharing cherished items with children, grandchildren, or close friends ensures those pieces remain loved and remembered, even if they don't move with you.

## 8. Sell or Donate What You Don't Need

Hosting a garage sale, listing items online, or donating to local charities helps clear out your home while giving your items a second life.

## 9. Reconsider "Someday" Items

Many of us hold onto things with the idea that we might use them "someday." If it hasn't been used in the last year (and isn't seasonal), it's likely time to let it go.

## 10. Ask for Help When You Need It

You don't have to do everything alone. Professional organizers, downsizing specialists, or even trusted friends and family members can be invaluable during this process.

### □ Home Downsizing Checklist

#### □ Planning & Preparation

Set a move date and create a realistic timeline  
Measure your new home's rooms and storage spaces  
Make a floor plan to determine what will fit  
Notify utility providers, update your address, and revise billing information

#### □ Decluttering & Sorting

Begin early, focusing on one room at a time  
Use the Four-Box Method: Keep / Donate / Sell / Trash  
Be honest about what you truly use and value  
Set limits for sentimental items (such as one memory box per person)

### □ Furniture & Large Items

Only keep pieces that fit and serve a purpose  
Choose compact or multi-functional furniture  
Donate or sell the rest

### □ Documents & Digital Files

Shred or discard outdated documents  
Scan and store important records and photos  
Back everything up to a cloud or external hard drive

### □ Final Touches

Host a garage sale or sell items online  
Arrange for donation pickups  
Pack essentials separately for easy access on moving day  
Leave your home clean and ready for its new occupants

Transitioning to a new home can be a challenging time, especially when saying goodbye to a space filled with years—or even decades—of memories. But it can also be an opportunity to create a simpler, more comfortable living environment that supports your current and future needs.

With patience, a clear plan, and the right support, downsizing can be a manageable—and even empowering—experience.

As a long-time resident of Port Alberni, I've always believed in the power of community and connection.



Over the years, I've watched friends, neighbors, and acquaintances face overwhelming challenges when trying to buy or sell their homes—especially those in their later years or going through major life transitions. Seeing their struggles sparked something in me. I realized there was a real need for someone who not only understood the complexities of real estate but who could also offer empathy, clarity, and personalized guidance.

If you're in the Port Alberni area and looking for someone who truly understands your needs and will take the time to walk with you every step of the way, I'd be honored to help. I provide free consultations at your desired location and time.

Being a Senior Real Estate Specialist isn't just a job for me—it's a calling. It's about making sure no one has to go through this process alone or feel overwhelmed by the details. I'm here to be a trusted advisor, a strong advocate, and, above all, a compassionate partner in your real estate journey.

Rosanne Doiron, Realtor®  
Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®)  
REMAX Mid-Island Realty





## Compassionate Care Since 1982 With Alberni Hospice Society

This October will mark 42 years that our society has provided our community with end-of-life care programs, services and education. Dedicated hospice staff and volunteers lend valuable support to clients in our office, their homes, care facilities, and hospital.

Our services include support for palliative care clients, caregivers, as well as the bereaved in the form of respite, vigil, counseling supports and are available to anyone experiencing a life-limiting illness.

Individual grief counselling and grief support groups are available to anyone in the community who is experiencing grief through loss.

Some of our other services are available to anyone within the community, including our Lending Library and Advance Care Planning assistance.

Our Complementary Integrative Holistic Health Services (Healing Touch and Reiki,) are available to palliative care clients, caregivers, bereavement clients, and anyone in the community receiving cancer treatment.

Finally, we also offer respite and last days care for those who require 24 hour support at our residential Hospice, Ty Watson House. Ty Watson House was opened in 2008 and serves up to 4 residents and their families at any given time.

For historical reference, Ty Watson was a well known and loved pharmacist in the Alberni Valley

who did much for the Alberni Valley during his lifetime. The house itself was built at its present location of 2nd Ave and Stirling Street overlooking the Alberni Inlet just around the turn of the 19th century, offering views of the Inlet. Today's residents in the house enjoy the views of the Alberni Inlet and the surrounding mountain ranges. Century old fir flooring, and historical features of the house contribute to the feeling of being home, which is what the staff at Ty Watson House and the Alberni Valley Hospice Society fosters.

The need for hospice services increases daily. The government has recognized that quality end-of-life care is an integral part of our provincial health care system, but our Hospice services still do not currently receive any core operational funding.

Except for a small per diem for stays in Ty Watson House, our services are free of charge and available for anyone needing end-of-life, grief and bereavement care.

We rely on grants, fundraising events, and the generous donations from our community to maintain our various programs and services.

Our staff and volunteers feel honoured to be able to companion our clients and their families. The overwhelming support of our community allows us to continue to care for those who are facing difficult days in their lives.

Thank you for 42 years of supporting Hospice in the Alberni Valley!

"We can't always change the outcome, but the possibility always exists to change the journey."

Article submitted by Alberni Valley Hospice Society

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# MUSCLE IS THE CURRENCY of LONGEVITY

It is safe to say we all want to remain capable humans in our time on this Earth. By reducing the decline in muscle mass and maintaining bone density, we can expect to live a life with better resilience, ease of movement, balance, and independence.

Healthy muscles from strength training come with a host of benefits that go far beyond staying strong. Think—enhanced blood sugar regulation & better hunger regulation, sturdier bones, and increased mobility. Research has proven that you can build muscle at any age. In fact, maintaining muscle mass and strength as we age is vital.

One major reason for maintaining strength is osteoporotic breaks (or fractures) caused by weakened bones from osteoporosis. These are a significant health concern, particularly in individuals over 50. A bone break from a simple trip and fall could be a turning point in a person’s life—the beginning of an older, frail life. Oftentimes an irreversible decline occurs after a break: infection, lack of mobility or independence can follow. Worse, the life of dependency you always

swore would “never be yours” often becomes the unavoidable outcome.

A fracture-proof frame becomes a bigger priority in the decades after age 50, when weakened bones lead to breaks for one in two women, and one in five men. “I’ll be ok, I am active”, some will say.

Many of us claim to be “active”. What we often mean is we are busy, over-scheduled, and rushing around to keep up on work and chores, but this is NOT the kind of activity that will give us greater bone density to save our bones... or lower our blood pressure, strengthen our immune system, prevent coronary heart disease, reduce cancer risk, lessen chance of stroke, or lessen depression. For this, we need a calcium, protein, and vitamin D-rich diet, ALONG with strength training.

Strength training can include activities like lifting weights, using resistance bands, or body weight exercises. We want people to build up strength, starting with lower-weight options rather than heavier ones.

If you believe it’s too late, that you’re past your prime, it’s really easy to start acting like it. It’s easy to avoid challenges, play it safe, and write off possibilities that are still within your reach. If you choose to believe there’s still more in you, you’ll start to see just how far you can go. Please don’t let a number define your limits. Prove that it’s never too late to get stronger, to try something new, and to surprise yourself.

Things may not feel as good as they have in the past, but, as they say, “rest is rust” and “motion is lotion”.

Check in with your doctor and discuss getting started. Once you get a medical green light, if possible invest in sessions with a credentialed personal trainer. We can design a personalized program and, most important, teach you proper form and technique, which can help avoid injuries. You’re not done. You’re just getting started. So take the first step today—however small it might be—to a stronger, more capable you.

Article Submitted by Lisa Duncan.  
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# Protect What Matters: The Importance of Planning Your Legal Affairs



It is very common for people to put off creating essential legal documents such as wills, powers of attorney, and representation agreements. For many people it can feel too complicated, be too expensive, or simply be something to add to our never-ending 'to-do' lists.

If you've been meaning to get your affairs in order, now is the time. We at Clarkstone and Dearin Notary Corporation are here to help guide you through the process. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at 250-723-9747 or email us at [info@dclarkstone.cato](mailto:info@dclarkstone.cato) to schedule a consultation. Let us help you gain the peace of mind that comes with knowing you've taken care of your loved ones.

Another reason for delaying is the mindset: "why should I care? I'll be dead anyway." While it is true that a will takes effect after a person dies, I doubt many people would want to make life more difficult for their loved ones while they are grieving a death. This is what a well-drafted will aims to prevent - to provide guidance to your loved ones while they navigate the legal and financial complexities of the estate, as well as grieve your death.

At its core, a will is your voice after you're gone. It clearly outlines how you wish your assets to be distributed. Without a will, there is not an executor named to put someone in charge of administering your estate. Also, without a will, the provincial government has a specific formula for distributing your assets and the outcome may not align with your wishes. This can lead to unnecessary stress, delays, and even disputes among family members during an already difficult time.

For those with minor children, failing to prepare a will means that you do not get to make the difficult choice of who would be the guardians of your children.

While a will deals with your assets after your passing, powers of attorney and representation agreements enable you to appoint people you trust to make decisions on your behalf while you are alive. A power of attorney enables someone to manage your financial and legal affairs. A representation agreement, on the other hand, appoints someone to make healthcare and personal care decisions for you.

Typically, people prepare these documents to prepare for the risk of mental incapacity later in life, but the power of attorney is often used simply when someone is sick or has a physical disability.

Having these documents in place simplifies the process of managing your affairs and ensures your wishes are respected if you're no longer able to communicate them yourself. In the event of mental incapacity, not having these documents in place, can lead to your loved ones needing to go through a potentially lengthy and emotionally draining court process to be appointed as your legal decision-maker, which is called a committee.


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Article Submitted By  
Port Alberni Physiotherapy



**KEEP  
MOVING**

Photo submitted by Activate Athletics Studio

Staying active as you get older is one of the most important things you can do for your health, mobility, and overall quality of life. After the age of 65, many people experience a natural decline in strength, balance, and flexibility, which can lead to a greater risk of falls, chronic conditions, and a loss of independence. But the good news is that regular physical activity can help slow, or even improve some of these age-related changes.

Exercise doesn't have to be intense or complicated to make a difference. Simply moving more in your day—whether that's walking, stretching, light strength training, or joining a group fitness class—can have huge benefits for your body and your

mind. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults over 65 aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. That could mean a brisk walk with a friend, a swim at the local pool, or a bike ride. On top of that, it's recommended to include strength training twice a week, along with exercises that challenge your balance.

As we age, balance becomes increasingly important. It helps prevent falls and injuries and supports the kind of movement confidence you need for everyday activities like getting out of a chair, reaching for items on a shelf, or navigating uneven ground. Even small exercises, like standing



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on one foot while brushing your teeth or doing a series of gentle leg lifts while seated, can be a great starting point.

If you’re looking to begin a simple home routine that targets strength, balance, and mobility, try incorporating the following exercises into your week. These movements are safe, effective, and suitable for most older adults. Aim for 2 sessions per week, and begin each session with a short walk or gentle marching on the spot to warm up.

Some beginner-friendly exercises include:

- **Sit-to-Stands** (2–3 sets of 8–10 reps): S trengthen your thighs and glutes by rising from a sturdy chair with control. To progress, hold light weights or increase your repetitions.
- **Wall Push-Ups** (2–3 sets of 10–12 reps): Build upper body strength by pushing against a wall. Keep your body straight and avoid letting your hips sag.
- **Supported Lunges** (2–3 sets of 30–60 seconds): Using a chair or countertop for support, take a step back and gently lower your knee toward the ground to build leg strength and stability.
- **Heel Raises** (2–3 sets of 10–12 reps): Strengthen your calves by rising up onto your toes. Try single-leg raises if you’re ready for more of a challenge.
- **Single-Leg Balance** (2–3 sets per side, hold for 30–60 seconds): Practice standing on one leg while holding a chair for support. This improves stability and ankle strength.
- **Banded Rows** (2–3 sets of 10–12 reps): Use a resistance band looped around a door knob or banister to strengthen your back and improve posture. Focus on squeezing your shoulder blades together.
- **Banded Bicep Curls** (2–3 sets of 10–12 reps): Anchor a resistance band under your foot and curl upward as you would with a dumbbell, keeping your elbows tucked in.

After completing your routine, take a few minutes to stretch. Gentle neck rolls, chest openers, seated hamstring stretches, and calf stretches can all help

improve flexibility and reduce stiffness. Hold each stretch for 15–30 seconds and breathe deeply throughout.

If you’re unsure where to begin or how to do these exercises safely, that’s where Port Alberni Physiotherapy & Wellness can help. We offer one-on-one physiotherapy sessions where your therapist can assess your strength, balance, flexibility, and mobility. From there, we work with you to create a customized exercise plan that matches your current ability, lifestyle, and goals.

Our team can teach you proper form, guide you through new movements, and adjust your program over time as you get stronger and more confident. We also offer group classes like Fit For Life, designed specifically for people in this age group who want to stay active in a fun, social, and supportive environment. These classes focus on building

strength, improving balance, and increasing mobility—key components of healthy aging. For those who prefer to stay active at home, we also offer guidance on safe home exercise programs that can be done with little to no equipment.

No matter where you’re starting from, it’s neve r too late to begin moving more. With the right support and a focus on exercises that make sense for your body, staying active after 65 can help you maintain your independence, manage or prevent health conditions, and feel your best. At Port Alberni Physiotherapy & Wellness, we’re here to help you move well, stay strong, and keep doing the things you love.





# THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF WELLNESS Services for Seniors

Article Submitted by  
**Jennifer Klassen, Santosha Spa**

As we age, the conversation around health and wellness is shifting from merely treating illness to promoting long-term vitality and quality of life. While medical care remains critical, a growing number of seniors and their families are turning to spa and wellness services as a proactive, complementary approach to aging. These services—ranging from massage therapy and hydrotherapy to meditation, aromatherapy, yoga, and personalized skin treatments—are proving especially valuable as they offer therapeutic benefits that address not only the body but also the mind and spirit, helping us age with dignity, independence, and joy.

### Physical Wellness and Pain Management

Aging brings with it a series of physiological changes that can limit mobility and cause chronic discomfort. Conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, muscle stiffness, and circulatory issues are common among seniors and can significantly impact daily functioning and quality of life. While traditional treatments are often necessary, holistic spa therapies offer powerful complementary benefits. Massage therapy, for example, is widely known to reduce muscle tension, enhance flexibility, and improve circulation—all without medication. It also stimulates the lymphatic system, helping

the body naturally detoxify and boost its immune response. Seniors who receive regular massages often report less joint pain, improved range of motion, and better sleep patterns.

Hydrotherapy—using warm water to soothe and rehabilitate the body—is another key treatment. Simply soaking in a therapeutic bath can ease joint stress, promote relaxation, and improve cardiovascular function. For seniors with mobility limitations, water provides a safe, low-impact environment to move and stretch.

### Mental and Emotional Well-Being

One of the most pressing, yet often overlooked, challenges faced by seniors is emotional health. Many older adults experience feelings of isolation, grief, or anxiety due to loss of independence, bereavement, or the simple fact of reduced social interaction. Over time, these emotions can negatively affect both physical health and cognitive function. Holistic wellness services can offer significant emotional relief and mental rejuvenation. Aromatherapy—using plant-derived essential

oils to enhance mood—can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and restlessness. Scents like lavender, rosemary, and eucalyptus have been shown to stimulate the senses and support emotional balance.

Taking time for mindfulness and meditation sessions can help seniors center their thoughts, reduce stress, and feel more in control of their mental landscape. These practices are also known to improve memory, attention span, and emotional regulation, making them valuable tools in managing age-related cognitive decline.

Moreover, spa environments themselves—calm, quiet, and aesthetically pleasing—encourage a sense of serenity and self-worth. Simply entering a soothing, welcoming space can uplift the spirit, reaffirming a sense of identity and value.

### Personalized Skin and Body Care

Skin health becomes more important as the body ages. Seniors often face challenges such as dryness, thinning skin, bruising, and age spots. Holistic spas offer customized skincare services that address these concerns using natural, gentle products. Facials, massages, and moisturizing



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treatments help nourish and protect the skin, enhancing comfort as well as appearance. These treatments can be especially important to those on skin drying medications or with illnesses such as diabetes which directly contributes to intensely dry skin.

Personal grooming and care also reinforce a sense of dignity and self-respect—qualities that can boost our wellbeing as we age. The act of receiving care in a nurturing environment can have deep emotional significance for seniors, reminding you that you are deserving of attention and compassion.

### A Holistic Philosophy for Aging Gracefully

What sets holistic spa and wellness services apart is their integrative approach to well-being. Rather than targeting symptoms in isolation, holistic therapies view the individual as a whole—mind, body, and spirit interconnected. For seniors, this perspective can be incredibly empowering.

In many traditional care models, seniors are treated primarily for illness or injury. While necessary, this reactive approach often overlooks the benefits of preventive, lifestyle-based care. Holistic wellness services fill this gap by offering proactive solutions that help seniors maintain strength, reduce stress, and improve daily functioning. For instance, incorporating regular massage and stretching routines can reduce the risk of falls. Practicing mindfulness can decrease blood pressure and improve immune response. These are small, manageable interventions that, when applied consistently, can lead to lasting improvements in a senior's overall health trajectory.

### Accessibility and Adaptability

A key advantage of holistic spa and wellness services is their adaptability. These services can be tailored to suit individual needs, limitations, and preferences. Many wellness centers are now trained to work specifically with seniors, offering services that accommodate limited mobility, medical conditions, and sensory sensitivities.

Incorporating holistic spa and wellness services into senior care isn't just beneficial—it's essential. These therapies provide more than relaxation; they promote physical health, emotional resilience, cognitive sharpness, and social engagement. They also restore a sense of autonomy and dignity, helping us not just live longer, but to live better by embracing the richness of life itself.



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# Planning for Retirement:

## A Thoughtful Approach to Your Later Years



When discussing retirement with individuals, it's clear that people approach it in very different ways. Some have well-developed plans and a clear vision for their retirement years, while others admit they haven't thought much about it at all. Whether you're years away from retirement or quickly approaching it, taking the time to prepare can make a significant difference in your quality of life during those years.

A helpful way to think about retirement is to break it down into two main phases: the first 15 years and the years that follow. In the early phase of retirement, people are often more active. This is typically the time when individuals want to travel, explore hobbies, and engage in activities that may not have been possible during their working years. Because spending tends to be higher during this period, it's wise to establish a yearly budget for travel and leisure activities. Doing so can reduce financial stress and also prevent conflicts that may arise from unexpected expenses.

One common issue is that many people are so focused on their careers and day-to-day responsibilities that they never have serious conversations about what

they want retirement to look like. As a result, when retirement arrives, they may find themselves underprepared—financially, emotionally, and logistically.

For those who are part of a group benefits plan through their employer, it is important to know that coverage can sometimes be carried into retirement. However, there is usually a limited window—typically around 30 days—to make this decision. Failing to act within that timeframe could result in losing coverage altogether.

Similarly, employees with a workplace pension plan will be presented with several options upon retirement. One of the most critical decisions involves how the pension will be paid out. Some may choose a plan that provides the highest monthly payment by covering only their own life. However, this option does not provide any continuing benefits for a spouse after the pension holder passes away. While it may seem appealing in the short term, this choice can leave a surviving spouse financially vulnerable.

Other options may include joint life coverage or plans that guarantee payments for a set number of years. Choosing the right payout structure is a decision that depends heavily on personal circumstances, including the financial needs and health status of both partners. Over time, these decisions can have a significant impact on financial stability and peace of mind.

Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) are another key component of retirement planning. Under current rules, these accounts can remain tax-sheltered until the age of 71, at which point they must be converted to a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF). This conversion requires the account holder to begin withdrawing a minimum amount each year, which becomes taxable income. Because of this, it's often wise to gradually shift RRSP investments into lower-risk options as one ages.

Segregated funds are one low-risk investment option to consider. These are insurance-based investment products that provide certain protections under the Insurance Act, such as creditor protection and potential guarantees on capital.

Permanent life insurance can also play a role in retirement planning, especially for those in good health. Because life insurance benefits are tax-free and typically paid out quickly, they can ease financial pressures during emotionally difficult times. For instance, if one spouse passes away, the surviving spouse may need access to funds right away without having to make rushed decisions that could trigger significant tax implications.

As we age, health uncertainties and potential government policy changes introduce unpredictability into retirement. While we can't control everything, creating a thoughtful retirement plan can provide stability and preparedness. A plan doesn't have to be perfect, but having one in place means that unexpected events are less likely to derail long-term goals or cause undue stress.

Ultimately, retirement planning is about making informed choices today that will support a fulfilling and secure future. Taking the time now to consider your options and make intentional decisions can lead to greater peace of mind in the years ahead.

Article Submitted by  
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# LET'S TALK - ARTHRITIS

Article Submitted By  
Port Alberni Physiotherapy

If your joints feel a little stiffer than they used to, you're not alone. Arthritis is incredibly common—especially after the age of 65—and it affects millions of Canadians every year. You've probably heard of it as “wear and tear,” but did you know there are actually over 100 different types? The good news? While arthritis can be a bit of a pain (literally), there's a lot you can do to keep moving and feeling your best.

The most common type is osteoarthritis (OA), which tends to show up in hardworking joints like your knees, hips, and spine. But there are other forms too, like rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune condition, and believe it or not – gout, which causes sudden joint pain, often in the big toe.

In this article, we're going to focus mainly on osteoarthritis, since it's the one most people experience as they get older. We'll explore the many ways to manage it so you can keep doing the things you love.

## Ways to Manage Osteoarthritis

Managing arthritis isn't just about one approach — it's about looking at the whole picture. A combination of physical, lifestyle, and mental health strategies often leads to the best outcomes.

### Here are some ways to help manage osteoarthritis:

1. Stay Active — But Choose the Right Activities  
Exercise is one of the best things you can do for arthritis. Regular movement helps strengthen the

muscles around your joints, maintain flexibility, and boost circulation. Low-impact exercises are best for people with osteoarthritis, such as: walking, swimming, cycling, gentle yoga or stretching, and Tai Chi.

Adding a bit of strength training a couple of times a week can also help support your joints. Not sure where to start? A physiotherapist or kinesiologist can help you build a plan that's safe, personalized, and fun.

## 2. Be Kind to Your Joints

Taking care of your joints during everyday activities can go a long way in protecting your joints. Small changes can make a big difference — like using a cane or walking poles for longer distances, wearing a brace to support a knee with osteoarthritis, pacing yourself throughout the day to avoid overdoing it, and being mindful to avoid repetitive movements that put extra strain on sore joints.

## 3. Lighten the Load

Carrying extra weight puts more pressure on joints like your knees, hips, and back. Even losing a few pounds can make a big difference — in fact, each pound lost can take 4–7 pounds of pressure off your knees. That's great motivation for healthy eating and gentle movement!

## 4. Pain Relief Options

In addition to any medications your doctor recommends, there are some simple, feel-good ways to help manage arthritis pain and stiffness naturally. A little heat can go a long way. Try a warm bath, use a heating pad or hot water bottle, or relax in a sauna. Heat helps loosen up stiff joints and soothe tight muscles. On days when your joints are swollen or achy, cold therapy can help. An ice pack after activity can calm inflammation and numb sore spots. Just remember to wrap it in a towel — no one likes a freezer burn! A gentle massage from a Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) can boost circulation, ease muscle tension, and help you feel more relaxed and mobile. Some folks with arthritis find that acupuncture helps reduce pain and improve how their joints move.



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As always, be sure to check with your doctor before starting anything new — especially if you have other health conditions.

## 5. Don't Forget Your Mental Health

Living with daily pain or stiffness can be tough on your mood — and stress or anxiety can make symptoms feel worse. So take care of your emotional well-being too. Mindfulness, deep breathing, and even chatting with a counsellor or support group can make a big difference.

## 6. Education and Building Your Support Team

Understanding your arthritis and knowing your treatment options can make a big difference in how you manage symptoms. Learning more about your condition gives you a greater sense of control and confidence when it comes to making decisions about your health. Resources like GLA:D® Canada offer education and exercise programs for people with hip and knee osteoarthritis, which are a great place to start.

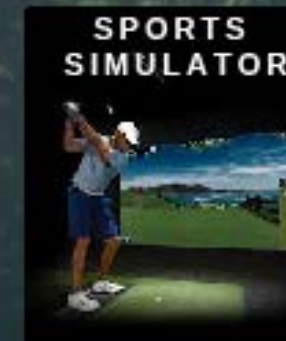
It's also important to work with a team of healthcare professionals who can guide you along the way. At Port Alberni Physiotherapy & Wellness, our team of healthcare professionals can help you develop a personalized exercise plan, teach you joint protection strategies, provide treatments to help manage pain and show you how to stay active safely. We also collaborate with massage therapists, physicians, and other care providers to support you from every angle.

Living with arthritis doesn't mean giving up the activities you love. With the right strategies and support you can manage your symptoms, protect your joints, and stay strong and active. If you're ready to start feeling better and moving more, reach out to our team — we're here to help you build a stronger tomorrow.



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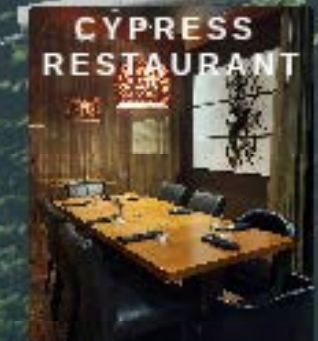
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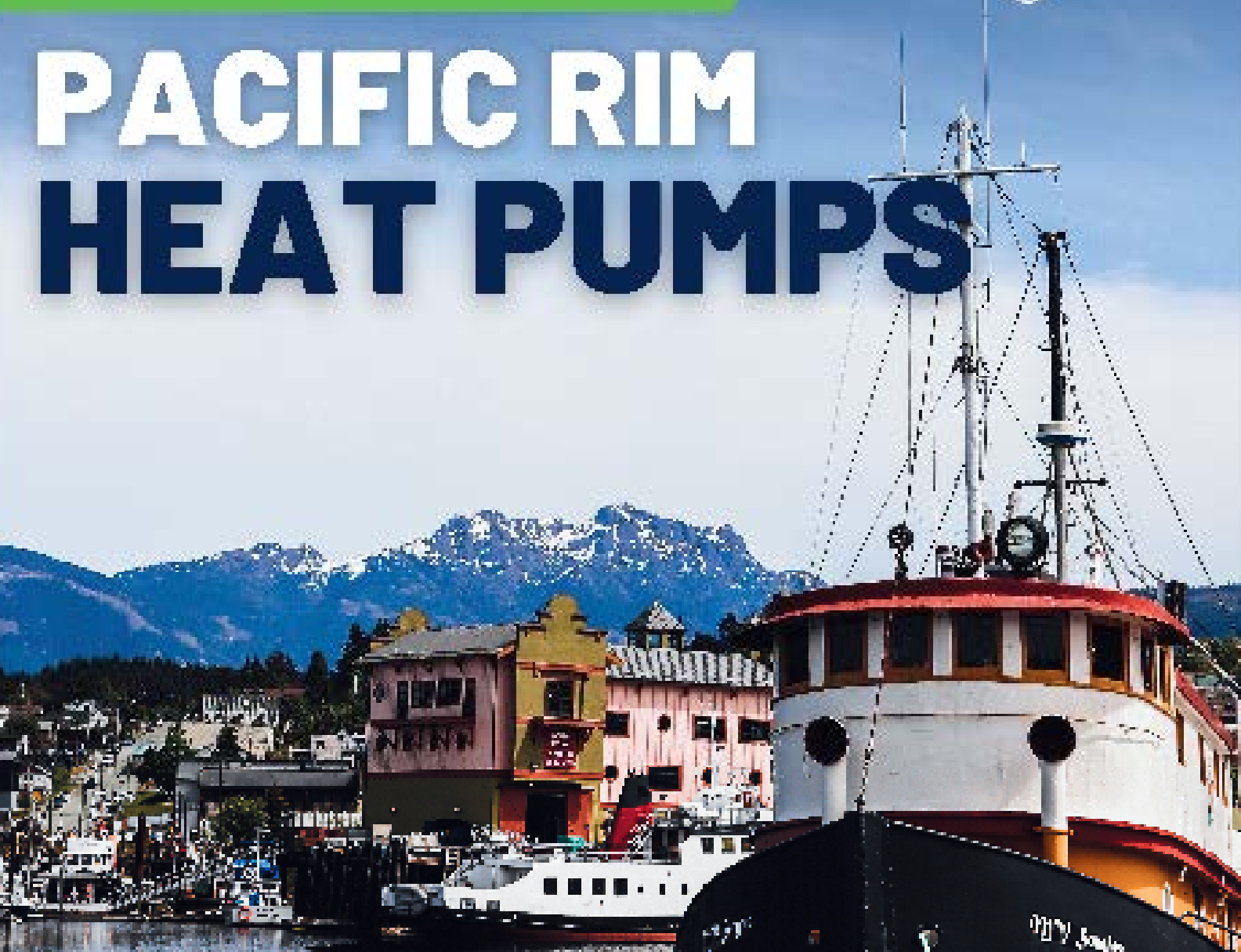
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