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for Older Adults and
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Winter/Spring 2022
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Is Supportive Housing For You?

Staying Independent

You have made the decision to move out of your home into a smaller, yet comfortable apartment that you can more easily manage on your own - where do you start looking?

Select a location that fits your lifestyle: There are plenty of location options in senior housing. Some are in the heart of the City offering easy access to bus lines, as well as amenities within walking distance. Others are in more suburban locations away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

While the exteriors look similar, it is important to know that not all apartment buildings are alike. Are you looking for somewhere that you may age in place, somewhere that assists you as your needs change?

If so, "supportive" housing for older adults is an excellent option to stay in your new apartment for as long as possible. Generally, to qualify for supportive housing, there are requirements based on age and income. Be sure to research the requirements before you begin the application process.

Search for wrap-around services: Simply stated, as your needs change, services are available to help you. Some buildings have Service Coordinators who go above and beyond to ensure your wellness, safety and comfort. Service Coordinators will sit down with you, help to assess your needs, and monitor and schedule services as you need them. They are responsible for establishing ties to service providers and agencies in the community, referring residents to such providers and monitoring the provision of these services.

TAX PLANNING AND WEALTH ACCUMULATION

COVID 19 has firmly injected itself into how we conduct our lives and has resulted in a continuing rollercoaster ride of tax law changes

.....

We can guide you through those tax laws and help to ensure the minimization of your overall tax liability and the maximization of your wealth accumulation now and into the future



Tax planning tips for 2021 and beyond:

- For 2021, non itemizing married filers can deduct \$600 in charitable contributions* and singles can deduct \$300. Itemizing taxpayers may claim contributions up to 100% of AGI (was 60%)
- Taxpayers 65 or older are eligible for an **additional** standard deduction in lieu of itemizing - \$2,700 for married filers - \$1,700 for singles
- As of 2020, there is no age cap for qualified traditional IRA contributions
- Federal estate and gift tax lifetime exemption is \$23.4 million for married couples in 2021 (\$11.7 million for singles) – annual gift tax exemption remains at \$15,000 per donor, per recipient
- 529 plans can now be used to pay student loan debt up to \$10,000**
- Medical expense threshold will remain at 7.5% instead of returning to 10%
- Earned income credit now available over 65 with investment income of \$10,000 or less (up from \$3,650) based upon level of wages, disability benefits, tips, etc.
- The IRA charitable transfer allowing retirees over 70-1/2 to donate IRA assets up to \$10,000 directly to charities continues to be available in 2021—the donations count toward the required annual payout
- 2020 and 2021 stimulus payments are not taxable—overpayments may not need to be returned to the IRS

LAURA A. THOMPSON, CPA

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**Excludes non-cash contributions (i.e. Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.)*

***May have state tax ramifications*

Ask what amenities are offered: Look for housing communities that offer on site laundry facilities, fully equipped kitchens and the majority of utilities included in the rent. Additionally, many communities offer on site wellness, exercise and educational programs, as well as optional meal plans to support the needs and desires of residents. Wouldn't it be nice to have everything you need right in your building – it is stress-free living!

Consider personal comfort and safety: If you are active and plan to be in and out of the building, check to see if the building has parking and a secure entrance. If you have a pet, be sure to ask if you may bring them and if the size of the animal is restricted.

Article by Cassandra Law, Senior Director of Supportive Housing, SeniorCare Network. SeniorCare Network is the non-profit real estate affiliate of Presbyterian SeniorCare and is committed to serving the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities through the development and management of quality housing communities that support a person's ability to age in place.

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Stay Fit, Even When You Can't Get to the Gym



If you want to get fitter, but the gym isn't an option, what are some equipment-free workouts or exercises that you can do at home?

If you're looking to get healthier, exercise is a great option. While dieting may be a better route toward weight loss, exercise is essential if you want to be physically fit. To reach this goal, you can join a gym or workout program, but what if you can't leave the house? This especially can be a problem if you don't have exercise equipment like weights or treadmills. Regardless, you still want to exercise. So, it's a good thing that you have plenty of options to work with!

Many of the reasons why you may not be able to leave the house or go very far can be broken into fitness categories, which also can define the exercises available to you. Today, we'll separate them into three groups.

Before we begin, there's something we need to say. As with any change in your fitness or dietary routine, check with your doctor before getting started. While these suggestions will be safe and healthy for most people, they may not be for everyone. Please confirm with your primary care physician that you are healthy enough to exercise before beginning any new regimen, even the ones we're writing about today.

Stuck Around the House

The first reason we will address is that although you're able to get around, you're stuck around the house for one reason or another. For these, take advantage of the outdoors for cardio and light strength training.

Take Walks

If you're able to get out of the house, of course you should give walking a try. As long as you have a safe area to do so, taking a leisurely walk can be incredibly healthy for you. Since walking is low-impact and scalable to your fitness level, it's a great workout for people just starting their fitness journey. As you progress and get fitter, you can add weights or hills to burn more calories, among other options to get more out of your walks.

Yardwork

One of the best ways to exercise is to mask it as something you enjoy doing or must do anyway. For this reason, yardwork and gardening are great outdoor activities that double as a workout. Yardwork, for example, combines strength training and cardio as you clean up your yard, pull weeds, and more. Incredibly, this chore can burn from 250 to 600 calories an hour! Gardening can burn a similar number of calories while also being low impact on your joints and less of a chore and more of a hobby.

Backwards Running

This may seem like a silly idea, and you may feel funny doing this around the house, but running backward is an excellent workout if you have the space and want to burn more calories than simply walking. Unlike regular running, backward running (sometimes called retro running) uses different muscles than forward running and is more demanding on your muscles, burning more calories. It can also improve your balance. Despite the more intense exercise, retro running has also been found to be less demanding on your knees and joints, preventing stress injuries to those areas.

Limited Mobility

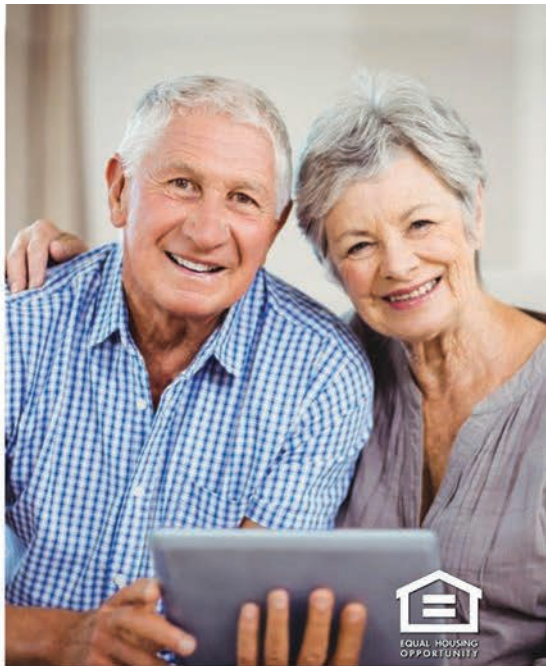
Next, we'll focus on people with limited mobility. You may fall into this category if you're able to walk, but not for long distances or struggle to stand without aid. For this group, we'll aim to improve your mobility with core and leg strength.

Affordable Housing for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

The Redevelopment Authority is the managing agent for nine elderly housing facilities, totaling 536 units, in Washington County.

Canon House, Char House and Liberty Tower are federally subsidized, Section 8 housing facilities with 104 units per building. Each one bedroom unit has a balcony, an equipped kitchen, and a temperature controlled heating/cooling unit. Residents must be at least 62 years of age or persons with disabilities. Rents are based on 30% of the adjusted monthly gross income.

- All facilities offer elevator access, indoor mail delivery (except Claysville Apts & Claysville Patio Homes), laundry facility, on-site management and maintenance.
- All nine complexes require applicants to meet the resident selection criteria such as program and income eligibility, rental history, and criminal background check.



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For additional information on a particular housing facility, please visit

www.racw.net/elderly-housing-facilities

Downloadable applications and requirements are available.



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Squats

Strengthening your leg muscles is a good idea for most people with limited mobility. We suggest a squat, which can improve almost every muscle in your leg. This can make you more mobile and prevent falls. If you're worried about falling, put a chair behind you, so that if you fall backward, you land softly on the chair. To do a correct squat, have your feet shoulder-width apart and bend your knees, keeping your back straight. Bend until your knees are at a 90° angle before returning to a standing position. Repeat this is 10 to 15 repetitions (reps) for four sets with a short break between sets. If that's too hard, do fewer reps, and if it's too easy, do more. Just make sure to listen to your body.

Leg Flutters

A core workout you can do while seated is called leg flutters or leg kicks, and they may seem simple, but trust us, they'll give you a solid workout. Flutters effectively exercise and tone your muscles from your stomach down to your knees and burns anywhere from 20 to 120 calories in a very short span. To leg flutter, sit up straight in your chair and place both hands at your side (either gripping the edges of the seat or flat on the seat). Next, extend both legs straight out so that your heels are off the ground before raising one foot to the highest point you can. At the same time, lower your other foot to about one inch off the ground. Switch your feet's positions and repeat for about 30 seconds (you can do less if that's hard). Do this about 10 times, adjusting for your fitness.

Knee Extensions

A simplified version of the leg flutters is called knee extensions. If you're finding leg flutters to be a bit too difficult, start with extensions to work your way up. This exercise is more focused on your legs, without working out your core as much, but it is a great way to strengthen a number of leg muscles to improve your mobility and balance.

To complete a knee extension, sit on the edge of a chair with your knees at a 90° angle. Raise one of your ankles until your leg is nearly straight (you don't want to lock your knee). Hold it for a second or two

before lowering your foot back to the ground. Do this with your other foot. Repeat with each leg for about 10 reps each for about two to four sets, depending on your fitness.

Bedbound

Finally, we'll look at exercises for the bedbound — those who can't walk or get around. Yes, you can still exercise while confined to a bed. While you may not be running marathons, you can get the benefits of working out. For this group, we'll focus on strength and light mobility. These are generalized suggestions, however. Since your options are a bit limited and defined by your personal health circumstances, you should work with your doctor to come up with a personalized exercise plan.

Leg Lift

Leg lifts or raises are similar to flutters in that they can strengthen your leg muscles and some of your lower core. At the same time, they can prevent pressure sores and help you retain leg strength by preventing atrophy. While lying on your back, raise one leg as high as you can. Try to keep the leg straight, but if that's too difficult, don't be afraid to add a little bend. In this case, cheating a little is better than not doing the exercise at all. Hold your leg for 5 to 10 seconds and then lower the leg back to the mattress, before raising the other leg. Repeat this eight to 10 times before resting (less if you need to). To maximize the impact of this exercise, repeat it a few times throughout the day.

Ankle Circles

This next exercise improves the flexibility and motion of your ankles. Place a rolled-up towel or even your other foot underneath your ankle to raise it slightly. Next, slowly draw a large circle with your big toe. After about 10 rotations, switch directions and do 10 more rotations. Switch to your other foot and do the same there. Much like the leg lifts, doing this exercise throughout the day will improve your mobility.

Arm Lift

You shouldn't ignore your arms while you're bedridden, either. An arm lift can strengthen your shoulder and upper arm muscles while

keeping them from atrophying. They're also pretty simple to do! While sitting or lying down, raise your arms straight above your head. Hold it there for 10 seconds before lowering it back down to your side. Repeat for eight to 10 repetitions for three to four sets before doing the same with your other arm.

Nobody likes being stuck at home, especially if you're looking to get into shape and have suddenly found your options limited. With these suggestions, no matter what the circumstances, you'll be able to start making your way toward better fitness and better health.

Jeff Snyder is a copywriter for Medicareful Living, powered by Ritter Insurance Marketing. Just like you, your health is one of a kind. What works for one person may not for another, so the information in these articles should not take the place of an expert opinion. Before making significant lifestyle or diet changes, please consult your primary care physician or nutritionist. Your doctor will know your own health best.



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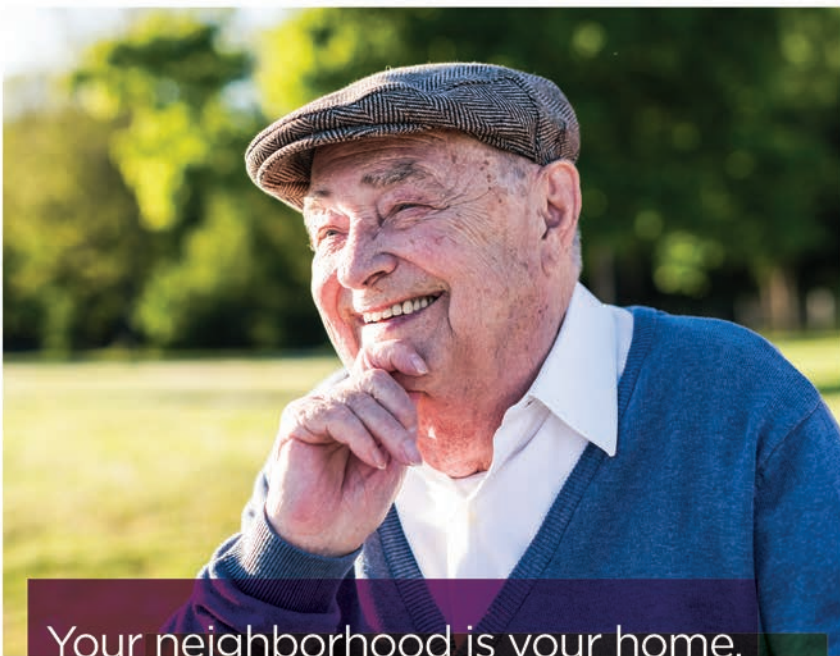
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UPMC Senior Communities benefits from medical oversight provided by Dr. David Nace, who serves on the federal Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes. He is regarded as a national expert in the safe operation of senior residences during COVID-19.

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What Makes for a Successful Aging Journey?

Have you thought about your own aging journey? Or maybe you are at a point in your life where you have to help a family member be better prepared for their aging journey. There's no better time than now to understand the implications of the significant growth worldwide and in our region of the aging population, and what it may mean for you and your family circumstances.

Did you know we're in the midst of an age wave?

- The number of people age 65 and older in the United States has grown rapidly over most of the 20th century, from 3.1 million in 1900 to 35 million in 2000.*Older adults are projected to outnumber children under age 18 for the first time in U.S. history by 2034, according to Census Bureau projections.
- By 2030, Pennsylvania's 60 and older population is expected to be 29% of the population—approximately 4 million people. The number of Pennsylvanians age 85 and older is expected to exceed 400,000 residents in 2030, according to the Pennsylvania Health Care Association.
- A 2016 AARP Family Caregiving study revealed that family caregivers are spending, on average, nearly 20% of their income on family caregiving expenses. The study also found that more than half of employed caregivers (56%) experience at least one work-related strain. The work impacts included working different hours, fewer or more hours, and taking time off (whether paid or unpaid).

Nearly 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 each day. Well-known celebrities are proudly displaying their real age. Today, there are more national and local resources available to help support the aging journey, from AARP (www.AARP.org/caregiving) and the National Council on Aging (www.ncoa.org) to the Southwestern Western Pennsylvania Area Agency on Aging (<http://www.swpa-aaa.org/>) and non-profit providers.

A 2019 Research Brief, written by Richard W. Johnson from Urban Institute, provides new evidence about the lifetime risk of needing Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS):

"Using longitudinal household survey data from 1995 to 2014 from the Health and Retirement Study, the research showed that 70% of adults who survive to age 65 develop severe LTSS needs before they die. After age 65, nearly three out of ten adults develop severe LTSS needs and receive paid home care, and about the same number receive at least 90 days of nursing home care. However, only 13 percent of older adults receive long-term Medicaid-financed nursing home care."

How can you prepare for the impact of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias?

One of the areas of greatest concern about aging is around Alzheimer's and related dementias.

FACTS ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS (ADRD)

- The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is growing — and growing fast. More than 6 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's.
- An estimated 6.2 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's dementia in 2021. Seventy-two percent are age 75 or older.
- As the number of older Americans grows rapidly, so too will the number of new and existing cases of Alzheimer's.
- By 2050, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer's dementia may grow to a projected 12.7 million, barring the development of medical breakthroughs to prevent, slow or cure Alzheimer's disease.

Source: <https://www.alz.org/media/documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

We aren't born knowing how to communicate with a person living with dementia — but we can learn. Caring for a person who is living with dementia poses many challenges for families. People living with dementia from conditions such as Alzheimer's and related diseases have a progressive biological brain disorder that makes it more and more difficult for them to remember things, think clearly, communicate with others, and take care of themselves.

Here are a few things you can do to help understand dementia and what your family members are experiencing.

1. Recognize the symptoms. You can often recognize the early symptoms if a family member is struggling to participate in or complete everyday activities — such as paying bills, using terms of endearment instead of specific names, changes in their vision, isolating themselves or refusing to leave their homes.
2. Understanding what you don't know. As cliché as this sounds, trying to understand what your family members are going through is an important part of providing them with the best care possible. It's also beneficial to learn how to communicate with them in ways that are supportive, understanding and empathetic.
3. Sign-up for a Dementia Education virtual seminar. Free e-learning workshops through the Alzheimer's Association are available at <https://training.alz.org/>. Additionally, a local aging services provider is offering a free series of virtual seminars to help educate the local community about caring for those living with dementia. To learn more, visit www.srcare.org/dementia-education.

For more information about aging services, visit www.SrCare.org or the Pennsylvania Department of Aging at <https://www.aging.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

**Source: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/12/by-2030-all-baby-boomers-will-be-age-65-or-older.html>*

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Aging in Place with Home Care Services



Advocating a positive vision of aging, elderhood advocates encourage us to turn a blind eye to the foolish notions so many of our peers hold that portray the aging process as a frightening, panic-inducing, gradual fade away into a kind of subhuman non-existence.

Rather, we are encouraged to think independently and realize aging for what it really is: a natural part of life that should be readily accepted, attended to, and integrated with the many other elements that ultimately construct and define our lives.

After all, age, disease, and disability, as well as long-term care do not define our existence as people; they are but just one aspect of life.

Through contemplative and affirmative thought, eschewing pessimism and choosing optimism and focusing on the positive, you are perfectly poised toward implementing a personal care plan for your life that is inclusive of the major pillars necessary to create a happy, healthy, sustainable, and functioning existence.

Among the major pillars of creating a sustainable healthy life is

After all, age, disease, and disability, as well as long-term care do not define our existence as people; they are but just one aspect of life.

ensuring that we are to have our health conditions, ailments, and chronic diseases attended to via high-quality levels of assistive long-term care and that the various tasks we may require assistance in are tended to by professionals who treat us with the utmost care, compassion, and respect.

Whether it is via personal care, primary care, nursing home care, in-home care or non-medical home care, a patient-centered medical home care, part of a retirement community, or any other form of elderly care we need to make sure that we are cared for properly and appropriately, and our health and well-being is respected and upheld.

Home health care assistance services fulfill most all our health, emotional, physical, and activities of daily living (ADL) needs in a professional manner that enables you to concentrate on being a lively, confident senior dynamo who is full of zest and zeal for life and is excited for the new experiences to be found in each passing day.

Any of the tasks, chores, ADLs, bathing, grooming, medical and financial management issues you may have trouble attending to on your own should be readily assisted by a home health aide experienced in providing this kind of basic assistive care in an effective, empathetic, and kind manner.

To do:

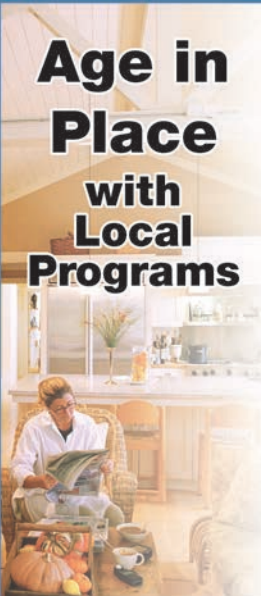
- Before choosing a home health care agency to help you with your in-home needs, ensure that the health care aides the agency will be sending to you are trained, licensed, credentialed, and have the depth and breadth of experience required to meet your needs.
- If possible set up an appointment to interview the agency as well as the professional that they intend to match you with.
- Come prepared with your most pressing concerns and a variety of questions that cover every aspect of those concerns.
- If possible, bring family and loved ones with you along to the

interview to gain their perspective on the quality of the business.

Home health care is a highly utilized service by senior citizens across the country for a variety of factors. In addition to enabling them to live individual lives that are self-reliant and dignified while allowing them to live within the comforts of their home, home health care services are popularly opted for due to their comparatively affordable pricing.

Your home health care agency should offer a range of specialized services that seniors can opt from to meet their individual needs.

- If you require IV-drips, specialized medical equipment, shots for diabetes, or even weekly blood tests or other specific medical situations, can your home health care agency readily provide this equipment and ensure that it is brought to every appointment by a professional knowledgeable in its use?
- Consider specific needs you have such as transportation, companionship, appointment management and more.



Age in Place with Local Programs

Access Program:
Funding for home modifications that allow greater accessibility in and throughout home.

Who Qualifies?
Low and moderate income county residents with a permanent, physical disability that limits accessibility in the home, when funding is available and all eligibility criteria are met.

Home Rehabilitation Program:
Loans to assist homeowners in making needed repairs and improvements to their houses.

Who Qualifies?
Low and moderate income residents who own and occupy an affordable house in Washington County, when funding is available and all eligibility criteria are met.

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Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington
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- Ask your prospective home health care agency if they are able to guarantee high-quality work in all the areas of most pressing concern to you.

With so many agencies available on the market today, it can be difficult to make the right choice. However, with a keen eye on aspects such as professionalism, empathy, reputation, and more, you can take the necessary steps and cursory research involved to easily discern the best service for your unique and individual needs.

Providing you with the level of assistance you require and a frequency you prefer, home health cares are invaluable resources that let you focus on becoming the healthiest and most dynamic version of yourself ever—with a life full of optimism, spirit, grace, enthusiasm, and, most importantly, strength.

Article excerpted from AgingInPlace.org. AgingInPlace.org's mission is to connect seniors and their loved ones with the right tools to make remaining in their homes and communities a reality.



From **companionship** to **Alzheimer's Care**, our trained caregivers can help you or a loved one continue to live at home.

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Tips for Being **KINDER** to YOURSELF



Love and connection are essential to our well-being—as individuals and as couples. Here are some tips for being more compassionate with yourself:

Words of Affirmation: Use a compassionate voice with yourself and allow yourself to notice and acknowledge your positives vs. amplifying your critical, negative voice. Hearing the words “You are good enough” and “I am proud of you” feels just as good when we say them to ourselves as they do when others speak them to us.

Quality Time: It is so easy to spend all our time focusing on others, yet we often leave little time for ourselves. What can you do to carve out some time to spend doing something just for you, and what will you do with that time?

Receiving Gifts. Who doesn't love to receive gifts? They make us feel loved and spoiled, don't they? We don't need to wait for someone else to give us gifts. And, you don't have to spend a lot of money either; sometimes the most inexpensive gifts are the best. Treat yourself to an ice cream cone and

chat with the people in line or buy a magazine...just because!

Acts of Service. These are things we know we like done for us by those we love. Maybe it's changing the sheets or making a fresh pot of coffee or taking out the trash. They don't take a lot of energy, but it feels so wonderful when someone else does them. Think of something you can do for yourself that would feel just as good!

Physical Touch. Snuggle with a pet, take a long shower, get a massage or a facial, even wrap your arms around yourself for a loving hug. There are lots of ways we can give ourselves physical attention when we need it.

These points are inspired by the “five love languages” outlined Gary Chapman's book, “The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate”. Check it out at your local library or easily find it at the bookstore or online.



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Walt Henry, *Executive Administrator*
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Heel Pain

Don't Delay Treatment

Any kind of pain or injury that affects the foot affects the whole body. Our feet are what connect us to the ground and provide a solid foundation for the rest of the body. When you experience heel pain or injury it's always important to see your doctor if the pain persists.

We asked Dr. Alissa Parker, a podiatrist for Washington Health System Foot and Ankle Specialists, when you should contact a doctor about heel pain.

"Heel pain resulting from injury, persistent heel pain, or heel pain that is worse with activity should be examined by a professional," she says.

If the pain is the result of a minor injury, there are a few things you can try at home to see if the pain will go away on its own.

"Patients can try rest, ice, supportive shoe gear and over the counter anti-inflammatory medications if they are able to do so based on their primary care doctor's recommendations," says Dr. Parker.

There are several conditions that are associated with heel pain. The most common cause is plantar fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis is the inflammation of the ligament that attaches to the bottom of the heel bone and supports the arch of the foot. Another common cause is insertional Achilles tendinitis. This causes pain where the Achilles tendon attaches to the back of the heel bone.

Though these are the most common causes of heel pain, Dr. Parker also sees patients with rarer conditions.

"Less common conditions include stress fractures of the heel bone, bone cysts, bone tumors and infections or skin issues," says Dr. Parker.

Dr. Parker stresses the importance of being proactive about heel pain and not taking a "wait and see" approach.

"A delay in treatment can, in some cases, cause scarring and thickening of soft tissue structures, making conservative treatments less likely to be effective," says Dr. Parker. "There are also less common causes of heel pain that should not be missed. Proper x-rays of the foot may be necessary."

Some people are more at risk for heel pain than others. Highly active people, individuals who work on their feet and individuals who work on hard floors generally have more heel impact daily. People who are overweight are more likely to experience heel pain because of the additional weight that their feet need to support.

If you fall into one of these risk categories, or just want to be proactive about preventing heel injury, there are some ways to minimize risk. "Daily calf stretching up to three times per day is a great way to try and prevent heel pain due to plantar fasciitis or Achilles tendonitis," says Dr. Parker. She also urges those at risk of injury to always wear supportive shoes and take advantage of special inserts and other supportive shoe gear. She also advises against walking barefoot, even at home, for extra protection.

Dr. Alissa Parker is a foot and ankle specialist and surgeon at Washington Health Systems. If you are suffering from heel pain or other foot and ankle issues, talk with your primary care physician about a referral to Washington Health Systems Foot & Ankle Specialists or schedule an appointment at one of our convenient locations by calling (724) 222-5635 or visit whs.org/footandankle.





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Lexie & Bud Rogers' Story

A Long Recovery from Covid-19



At the end of July 2021, after learning they had been exposed to someone with COVID-19, Bud and Alexia (Lexie) Rogers did the prudent thing—they got tested. Even though they came back positive, the Rogers weren't concerned. The couple was active and healthy. The parents of two adult daughters, both worked demanding jobs and cared for elderly parents. Still, they took the proper steps to stay on top of the condition, quarantining for 10 days and taking the recommended doses of vitamins and zinc.

"Bud started feeling a little off, and I felt like I had a sinus infection, so we asked the doctor what to watch for," Lexie recalled.

Their symptoms worsened quickly. Lexie was nauseous, and both experienced loss of appetite, extreme fatigue and weakness. By the end of the first week of August, Bud was sent for an antibody infusion, but a mix-up resulted in him being turned down and sent home.

The Medical Journey Begins

As the days passed, even the simplest of tasks became daunting. The couple realized this wasn't something that was going to pass without medical attention. When Bud fell in the kitchen and neither he nor Lexie had the strength to get him up, Lexie called 911. In a few short hours, Bud was hospitalized on a ventilator, and Lexie was in the intensive care unit on oxygen. Three and a half weeks went by before the couple would see one another again.

Both Bud and Lexie were diagnosed with COVID pneumonia, and Bud developed serious complications. He went into septic shock, a life-

threatening condition, and remained on the ventilator for over a week. During that time, he had a mild heart attack and had to have kidney dialysis when his organs began to fail.

Meanwhile, Lexie remained in the ICU for over a week fighting her own battle with low oxygen levels and difficulty breathing. Their adult daughters acted as healthcare advocates and cheerleaders for their parents, keeping their spirits up while picking up the slack on the home front.

A week and a half later, Bud improved enough to come off the ventilator, but he and Lexie remained in the hospital. The couple still hadn't seen one another, and phone conversations were difficult because Bud was suffering from COVID-related confusion and fatigue.

Ready for Rehabilitation

When the hospital began talking about releasing the couple around Aug. 20, they knew that going home wasn't a possibility. Although both were improving, they were in no condition to return to their normal activities or care for themselves at home.

"We knew we weren't ready to go straight home, but we had no awareness of skilled nursing or rehabilitation facilities," Lexie said. "A friend recommended Encompass Health, and, luckily, our insurance covered that, so on Aug. 25, I went to Encompass Health, and the next day Bud followed."

Bud was finally taken off COVID isolation, and at long last he and Lexie were reunited. The event was celebrated by the entire Encompass Health team. "It was very emotional for the staff to see Bud and Lexie together again," said Susha, Director of Therapy Operations at Encompass Health.

Throughout rehabilitation, Lexie focused on building her strength and improving her breathing. Although she had enjoyed frequent three-mile walks before COVID, when she arrived at Encompass Health, simply standing at the bedside could cause her oxygen



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Two weeks after entering rehabilitation, both Bud and Lexie were home.

level to drop. Bud didn't experience the same lingering breathing difficulties, but he had lost 35 pounds during his hospitalization and was weak and unable to even turn himself over in bed.

"Lexie's mobility was great, but her oxygen saturation dropped with walking," said Lara, physical therapy assistant at Encompass Health. "Bud

weaned off oxygen faster, but he had mobility and cognitive problems that made it hard for him to grasp information."

According to Thomas, COVID-19 patients who have severe symptoms, such as Bud, can experience an almost total paralysis that requires intensive therapy. It is important to start slowly and build their strength at a gradual pace. In Bud's case, physical therapy was needed to regain the core strength and balance that allowed him to turn and sit up in bed, and eventually progress to walking. Bud's occupational therapist also focused on fine motor movement, enabling him to carry out important self-care tasks.

"The therapy at Encompass was individualized, so Lexie and I had our own therapy sessions, but we were able to get together between sessions, and once in a while we bumped into each other while at therapy," Bud said. "We were also able to eat some of our lunches and dinners together. At least we could see each other after weeks apart."

Both Bud and Lexie progressed quickly under the guidance of the skilled staff at Encompass Health. While there, they learned about the rehabilitation process and important safety lessons, such as fall prevention. They also received three hours of daily therapy, taking breaks as needed, while increasing endurance and distance in walking.

One of the therapies Lexie considered the most beneficial was the respiratory therapy. In addition to breathing exercises designed to

improve lung strength and regulate breathing, she learned about an important respiratory tool.

"The first time anyone mentioned getting a pulse oximeter to measure oxygen concentration in the blood was at Encompass Health. It is a small device and very affordable, but it is so important. I wish I had known about that and what to watch for earlier," Lexie said.

Home at Last

Two weeks after entering rehabilitation, both Bud and Lexie were home. Bud and Lexie attribute much of their recovery success to the therapy they received at Encompass Health.

"The three hours of daily therapy were so helpful. I couldn't have done it if we had just been released straight from the hospital to home," he pointed out.

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They have nothing but praise for the staff at Encompass Health and are grateful for the passion of the therapists, nurses, doctors, food service employees and others who cared for them and inspired them to get better.

The staff acknowledged the goal from day one was to help the Rogers return to as full and healthy a life as possible, but they said much of their success was due to their own motivation.

"Both Bud and Lexie were very hard workers who wanted to get better. They were willing to do whatever it took, and that is a huge factor. Motivation is everything."

Editorial provided by Encompass Health Staff. Adapted story from blog.encompasshealth.com.



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Aging is inevitable, growing up is optional, and staying cognitively sharp is mandatory to maintain one's independence. At a certain age, people begin to become bombarded with mail and fliers for hearing exams and hearing devices. Why is it so important for a person to keep our ears healthy? It is not so much keeping the ears healthy as it is keeping the **brain** functioning. Many people do not realize the true link between our hearing and cognitive function. Our ability to hear comes from our ears, our ability to understand and process speech and sounds comes from our brain. **Brain atrophy** can occur when hearing loss remains untreated. This has been associated with cognitive decline and early onset dementia. The Better Hearing Institute states that research has shown that the use of appropriately fit hearing aids has helped reduce the symptoms of depression, paranoia, disorientation, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and social isolation.

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...the use of appropriately fit hearing aids has helped reduce the symptoms of depression, paranoia, disorientation, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and social isolation.

instruments. Medical hearing devices offer patients the ability to receive medically substantiated ongoing hearing benefit with annual retesting, reprogramming as an individual's hearing loss may change. These services enable the patient to receive all of the valuable speech cues to support and maintain sharp cognition, as well as the ongoing peak performance. Verification and calibrations need to be done with the aids **in the Patient's ear**. No or little professional maintenance usually leads to aids in the drawer, as benefit diminishes due to wax and debris from our ears, perspiration, dead skin and hair follicles, and dirt from handling. The aids need to be vacuumed out, and receiver and microphone filters, ear hooks, tubings, and domes need to be replaced. Ongoing care leads to years of better hearing from one pair of aids.

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of loss of independence in seniors, this stability is especially helpful when moving or walking. It also enables the wearer to understand conversation better while moving around.

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Editorial provided by Debra Swift, B.C.-H.I.S., Founder and Owner, Swift Audiology and Megan Myers-Auria, Au.D., CCC-A Doctor of Audiology.

About Swift Audiology - The practice provides hearing loss services, hearing protection, and medical hearing aid devices to patients at 4 convenient offices throughout the Pittsburgh region. For more information visit swiftaudiology.com or call 412-274-7285.



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Senior Life Washington (see outside back cover)

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Senior LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) is a "one stop shop" model of care. This state and federally funded Medicare and Medicaid Program provides long-term care for seniors so they can remain living at home and out of a nursing facility. There are no costs for services for those who qualify.

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UPMC Senior Communities (see page 13)

www.UPMCSeniorCommunities.com **1-800-324-5523**

We focus on improving and enriching each resident's life. From independent living, personal care, assisted living, and memory care to skilled nursing and rehabilitation, we make every resident feel cared for and at ease. For more information or to schedule a complimentary lunch and tour at any of our campuses, please call today!

Waynesburg Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center (see page 6)

300 Center Ave., Waynesburg, PA **724-852-2020**
www.Guardianeldercare.com/locations/waynesburg

A beautiful rural setting and a familiar face are never far away. Services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, stroke rehabilitation, wound care, dementia and Alzheimer’s Care. Veterans welcome! Call today for more information.

SGP * CONSUMER SERVICES Directory

Accounting / Taxes

Laura A. Thompson, CPA (see page 5)

4121 Washington Road, Peters Township **724-942-3661**
laura@lastcpa.com

We can guide you through current tax laws and help to ensure the minimization of your overall tax liability and the maximization of your wealth accumulation now and into the future.

Senior Services

PA Lottery (see page 31)

www.palottery.com

When older Pennsylvanians make the most of programs supported by the PA Lottery, we all benefit. Programs include free transit and reduced fare shared rides, prescription drug programs, and more.

People’s Gas (see page 23)

www.peoples-gas.com/access

Today, we are the largest gas distribution company in the state. By replacing over 300 miles of our pipes, we’re committed to helping you and your community get continued access to clean energy for moments that matter..

Transportation

Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority (MMVTA) (see page 37)

1300 McKean Ave., Charleroi **724-489-0880**
www.mmvta.com

65 or older ride free! Any Route. Anytime. Must have proof of age.



James A. Marks, DPM
Nicholas J. Lowery, DPM
Alissa R. Parker, DPM

Our Physicians and staff at WHS Foot and Ankle Specialists are proud to have built a reputation for delivering quality foot and ankle care with sincere friendliness and compassion. We can diagnose and treat all aspects of foot and ankle health, including diabetic foot care, toenail pathology, heel pain, reconstructive foot and ankle surgeries, fracture care, total ankle replacements and more.

Accepting New Patients

For appointments call (724) 222-5635

Four convenient locations
Washington, Waynesburg, Cecil and California

whs.org

Need help finding a Doctor?

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Line at: **(724) 250-4310**

or search our Physician Finder at **whs.org**





Senior **LIFE**  **\$0** | **\$0** | **\$0**
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DRUG COVERAGE

Making Senior Care at Home Easier and Centered Around You

Senior LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) is state and federally funded Medicare and Medicaid Program that provides long-term care for seniors so that they can remain living at home and out of a nursing facility.

Senior LIFE has a dedicated staff of medical professionals including doctors, nurses, homecare coordinators, social workers, physical and speech therapists, transportation and more. This dedicated staff, also known as the interdisciplinary team, is able to provide Senior LIFE members with an impressive list of medical care and homecare services, including:

- Medical care
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Medication management & home delivery
- Personal & in-home care
- Telehealth & wellness checks
- Access to the LIFE Health and Wellness center
- Occupational Therapy

What is even more impressive is that there are no costs for services for those who qualify, no copays, and no deductibles. Senior LIFE aims to be a "one stop shop" model of care. Care is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. **Applying is free, and there is no obligation to enroll.**

2114 N Franklin Dr, Washington, PA 15301 | (724) 222-5433
100 Evergreene Dr, Waynesburg, PA 15370 | (724) 852-2273
SeniorLIFEPA.com