

Successful aging in Sisters

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Successful aging requires intention and planning, and perhaps a modicum of luck. Here in Central Oregon, we are fortunate to have many well-qualified professionals and organizations to help navigate the path to and through the aging process.

Financial planning, regardless of the amount of assets involved, can help you make well-informed decisions regarding how and where you will live as you age. BlueStone Retirement in Sisters provides services that help one maximize Social Security benefits and other income sources, reduce taxes, and develop and implement a retirement income plan. There is no charge for the initial consultation.

John H. Myers, of John H. Myers Law Office, is a local attorney specializing in wills and trusts which should be set up while we are still competent. He offered some valuable information regarding the importance of having a will and why to consider establishing a trust, regardless of the value of your assets (*see sidebar at right*).

With advancing age, maintaining a satisfactory quality of life can be made difficult by health issues or lack of sufficient funds. There are a number

of ways to maintain or enhance your quality of life, but it takes being proactive about one's own health, both mental and physical.

A consistent level of physical activity commensurate with one's abilities, eating healthy, balanced meals, and getting adequate sleep every night can go a long way in aging well. Gentle yoga, walking, stretching, and even chair exercise are enjoyable ways to maintain flexibility as physical abilities wane.

Massage relieves stress, relaxes tight muscles, and increases a sense of well-being. Chiropractic care and physical therapy help keep a body aligned and functioning properly. Accountability to someone else for practicing healthy routines often helps keep motivation up. A membership in a gym, yoga studio, or athletic club, or recreational classes can provide that structure. All of those businesses can be found in Sisters.

If motivation isn't an issue, there are television programs, YouTube videos, and online exercise regimens that can be done at home, as well as in-home exercise equipment.

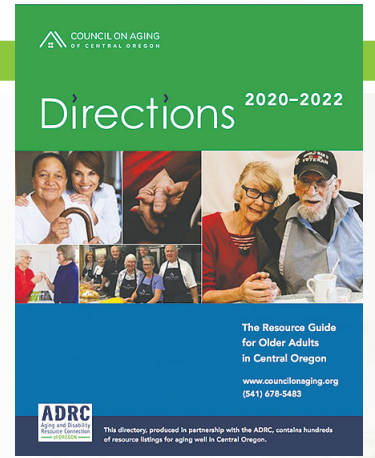
Deschutes County Health Services is offering virtual programs available online designed to help participants take charge of their health. Living Well with Chronic Conditions

begins Friday, January 29 for six weeks from 2 to 4 p.m. for a cost of \$10. Prevent Diabetes Central Oregon is a free-of-charge, evidence-based program offering attainable lifestyle choices. There are two classes from which to choose, beginning Tuesday, January 26, 1-2 p.m. or 5:30-6:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.deschutes.org/preventdiabetes or www.livingwellco.org.

Yearly vision exams and hearing tests, especially after age 60, or earlier with symptoms, can catch any deficits earlier to avoid creating more serious issues later in life. If hearing loss is ignored, it can create permanent damage to the auditory system, which is not fully correctable with hearing aids. Compromised hearing can lead to isolation and memory loss (*see related story, page 24*).

Good dental care is an important lifelong practice and can help avoid the development of other health issues. Regular checkups with the dentist and consistent tooth care at home are important habits to sustain.

An excellent resource for older adults and their families is the guide called "Directions," produced by the Council on Aging of Central



To download "Directions," scan the QR code with your smartphone.



Oregon. The guide provides quick, easy access to listings of supportive services, emergency contacts, financial and legal services, residential and social opportunities, and more. The guide is available from COACO, can be downloaded from the internet, and is often available at the Sisters Library and Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce offices in their lobbies.

At the end of life, assistance is available from local hospices like Partners in Care and Hospice of Redmond. For people dealing with a life-limiting condition, but who are not at the end of their life, the Transitions program offers services provided by volunteers who come to

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dusted with sea salt that was hand-harvested from the chilly Netarts Bay, just over the Coast Range from the farm.

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Step & Spine Physical Therapy

If you have a need for physical therapy, don't let concerns about COVID safety keep you away. Step & Spine is ready to help you — with protocols in place to ensure safety.

Delaying treatment just makes problems worse. Alana Vernon, a physical therapist at Step & Spine's Sisters clinic, is seeing the effects.

"People are coming in worse off than they usually do," Vernon says. "They're in a lot more pain."

Delay of treatment can mean it takes longer to resolve a problem.

Step & Spine helps patients problem-solve and get back to the activities that they cherish. And establishing a connection with a physical therapist



can be really important right now, relieving anxieties and ensuring that you weather the current storm in the best shape possible.

Your health has to be your top priority — not just avoiding getting sick, but in helping you to live to the fullest. Step & Spine is here to help.

Step & Spine Physical Therapy continues to grow with the addition of their new Madras office (formerly Apex Physical Therapy). *The team in Madras is pictured above.*