

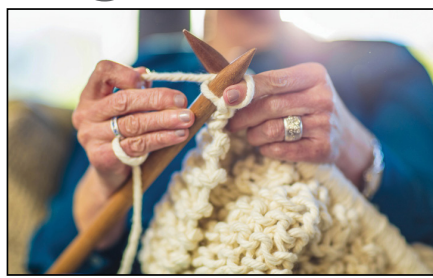
Home security tips for seniors

Seniors are often targeted by criminals. Though many criminals target people from afar via telephone or internet scams, criminals also seek to enter seniors' homes. Home security is important for people of all ages. By following certain safety tips and developing a home security plan, seniors can feel safer at home.

- **Lock windows and doors.** It may seem like common sense, but failure to repeatedly lock windows and doors can, and often does, give burglars easy entry into the home.
 - **Don't share or leave keys.** Avoid leaving keys under a mat or in a flowerpot. Others may be watching your actions and gain access to your home while you are away.
 - **Ask for ID.** When service people or other individuals come to the door, verify their credentials by asking to see identification.
 - **Get a home security system.** The best protection against burglars is a home security alarm, states HomeSecurityResource.org. Such an alarm often deters burglars from breaking in.
 - **Install a lockable mailbox.** Locked mailboxes restrict access to sensitive information, such as bank account numbers, sent in the mail. Make sure retirement checks or other payments are deposited directly into bank accounts instead of having them sent by check.
 - **Use home automation,** which can be utilized to turn on lights, set the thermostat, lock doors and much more.
 - **Adopt a dog.** Dogs can be an asset to seniors. Dogs provide companionship and can bark or alert seniors if someone is around or inside of the home.
- Home security is serious business for seniors who are vulnerable to criminals.

Explore relaxing hobbies to lower stress

Stress is a part of many people's daily lives. A recent survey from the American Psychological Association found that 44 percent of Americans feel their stress levels have increased over the past five years. Children also are struggling, with almost one-third reporting that they have experienced a health symptom associated with stress, such as stomach aches, trouble sleeping and headaches.



Sussex found reading reduced stress levels by 68 percent.

Make art

Engaging in a creative hobby sharpens the mind and improves focus. You may also want to try focusing emotions onto the canvas to help release tension. A 2014 study published in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy found that 81.5 percent of respondents with depression reported feeling happy after knitting.

Get moving

A form of art and music, dancing can promote well-being through exercise and expansion of creative ability. It also can be good for the mind. A study from Swedish researchers that was published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine found that a dancing intervention program, twice weekly for eight months, helped teenage girls struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, and other problems.

Many similar relaxing activities can tame stress.

Calming activities that can tone down the body's stress responses are great ways to alleviate stress. These hobbies and other interests can help tame stress by promoting calm.

Listen to and/or play music

Music can be energizing or calming, depending on which music you choose. Researchers at Stanford University found that rhythmic music may have therapeutic effects for treating a range of neurological conditions, as it stimulates the brain and can perhaps change how it functions. Familiar melodies and gentle music can

reduce the level of the stress hormone cortisol.

Gardening

Gardening lets a person tend to living things while getting some fresh air. Both the sunlight and the activity itself can be soothing and have a positive effect on mood. A study from the Journal of Health Psychology found that gardening, like listening to music, lowers cortisol levels.

Grab a good book

Taking the time to unwind and read can help ease tension in the muscles, lower one's heart rate and induce calm. Research from the consultancy Mind-lab International at the University of

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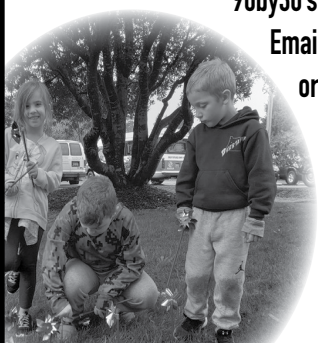
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