40+ Independent Living Activities: Promoting a Healthy, Fulfilling Retirement

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Is independent living the right fit?
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Most independent living activities include happy hours, game nights, fitness classes, art classes, and outings to local attractions to help senior residents, boost their skills, and continue their favorite pastimes. Independent living minimizes the daily hassle of chores, freeing more time for seniors to focus on their hobbies, foster friendships, and develop a healthier lifestyle. Communities offer a plethora of activities to help seniors thrive in the next chapter of life. Read on to learn about the activities you can find in many independent living senior communities.

Key Takeaways

- **Independent living communities are a great option for active seniors,** with on-site amenities and a variety of activities to promote a healthier lifestyle.
- **Independent living activities have many benefits and many various options,** from spiritual needs, physical health, and mental health to social connections.
- **A lively calendar can include something for all interests,** with residents taking part in social events, fitness classes, developing new hobbies, volunteering, and outings.
- **Turning your hobby you find a community based on your interests** can help you find a fulfilled retirement, offered activities, and common areas to use whether it meets your needs.

The benefits of independent living activities

Independent living communities offer encourage residents to socialize, stay physically active, and learn new skills, which can help them lead healthier, happier lives.[1][2][3] Independent living activities offer seniors free of cost to life as opportunity to lead an engaging and fulfilling lifestyle. There are many benefits of independent living activities, from improved mental health to better health, which allows seniors more time to participate in the various on-site activities.

Kile Gerstre, a senior support specialist at A Place for Mom with over two decades of experience in senior living, also emphasized the following benefits of independent living activities:

- **Encourages socialization.** Independent living offers so many opportunities for residents to get together with activities like card games, outings, happy hours/social programs, current events, and book clubs. Fires going to the dining room for meals becomes a social event.
- **Ensures optimal needs.** Many communities offer a variety of religious activities, depending on the community, they could have an on-site chapel or Bible group. Or, they may coordinate rides to a local church or place of worship.
- **Improves physical health.** Living in a community offers residents various options to stay active, such as fitness classes, yoga, and walking groups to help residents get more steps in their day. Many communities also offer fitness activities in on-site gyms, pools, and outdoor areas to help residents stay physically active in different ways.
- **Facilitates creativity.** Communities often offer a wealth of opportunities to help residents continue with their current passions or learn new skills. From art classes and woodworking lessons to choirs and groups, communities offer something for everyone.

While activities vary between independent living communities, most communities will provide a diverse calendar filled with activities in each category listed below to accommodate residents' unique interests. Activity directors in communities even allow time to have about residents' preferences and interests to alter and add activities based on their interests and suggestions.

The activities discuss are dates with you, except for a good hour and a half to fill an weekend. The weekdays included her preferences, interests, background, and hours." says Carol, a film-funded community for her mother with a Mount Mesh lodge. To couple of days later, the activities director started serving her to activities that would enjoy based on their connections."

Read more: The benefits of socialization for Seniors in Senior Living

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Social activities and events

Social and community dynamics continuously changing, the importance of maintaining a lively social life with independent living activities and events. From coffee chats to game nights, independent living communities help residents maintain a healthy social life with a variety of activities.

Independent living activities that encourage social connections may include:

- Movie nights
- Happy hours
- Wine tastings
- Ice cream socials
- Holiday and birthday parties
- Community picnics or barbecues
- Spa day at the luxury salon
- Interest clubs (book club, meets club, etc.)
- Game nights (board games, card games, poker, trivia, etc.)
- Karaoke night

Oftentimes, activity directors and other community staff help seniors socialize. They'll formalize like minded individuals and consistently invite them to activities based on their shared interests and connections. Kile Gerstre, a senior support specialist, describes whether they'd like to see certain activities incorporated into the schedule:

Land mentioned her mom was a big fan of Mexican Trivia, a Bonnie game, and she wanted to continue playing it after she moved into her independent living community. Because of her mom's love of Mexican Trivia, the activity director agreed to have to play and discuss other outdoors, before the move it, Land's mom started meeting a group of residents one a week to play her favorite game.

Within A Place for Mom's vast network of independent living communities, here's how many communities provide certain social activities:[4][5]

- About 80% of communities host happy hours and over 60% offer wine tastings.
- Nearly 90% of communities host holiday parties.
- About 67% of communities host birthday parties for interested residents.
- About 66% of communities host BBQs or picnics.
- Nearly 40% of communities offer resident-led activities like karaoke and singing groups.

Outings and day trips

Independent living facilities often plan and coordinate group outings and outdoor excursions to allow residents to explore their surrounding community. These activities enable residents to try new places and experiences while bonding with fellow residents.

For many older adults, access to complimentary transportation is a valuable independent living service. Although some residents may continue to drive, many communities offer access to reliable, hands-free transportation for activities as well as for shopping, medical appointments, and other errands.

Independent living outings that encourage residents to explore and get involved in their local community may include:

- Concerts, plays, or musicals
- Local museums
- Sporting events
- Movie screenings
- Community service projects
- Trips to farmers markets
- Visits to local trails or parks
- Visits to wine tasteroom or shops

Here's an overview of what percentage of independent living communities offer certain outings within A Place for Mom's network:[6]

- More than 90% of communities take residents on outings to enjoy off-site activities.
- About 86% of communities host live musical, theatrical, or dance performances.
- Almost 65% of communities offer community service opportunities.

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What an independent living activity calendar looks like

To organize and balance all the different types of activities offered, independent living communities typically create a calendar. These diverse calendars can fully accommodate residents' unique interests and preferences. Kile Gerstre, an independent living community, and a staff member for an activities calendar to see whether it'll be a good fit for you or a loved one.

Here's an example of what an independent living activity calendar may look like:

Independent living activity calendar sample

Sun						
Mon	8:00 am Yoga	10:00 am Card games	12:00 pm Arts & crafts	2:00 pm Happy hour		
Tue	9:00 am Walking club	11:00 am Book group	1:00 pm Bingo	3:00 pm Museum tour	6:00 pm Movie	
Wed	8:00 am Yoga	10:00 am Book club	1:00 pm Bingo	3:00 pm Karaoke		
Thur						
Fri						
Sat						

When visiting her mom community, Land noticed that the activity calendar was very accessible so residents are always in the know. While walking around, she noticed they were posted in the main hallways, by mailboxes, and in several common areas.

How to find a suitable independent living community

Taking time to narrow a lifestyle that's fulfilling and engaging after spending decades working or raising a family is invaluable. Independent living enables seniors to maintain autonomy while pursuing interests with exciting independent living activity options.

Before checking out independent living community, you should think about your preferences and interests as you start scheduling community tours.

EXPERT TIPS: HOW TO THOROUGHLY TOUR A COMMUNITY

- ***Get a feel for the demographics.*** *Are residents around the same age? Are they mostly married? Widow? Single? Are there children around? Are children welcome?*
- ***See what types of activities are offered.*** *Look at an activities calendar for a list of current activities, and try to see if residents are actively participating and enjoying themselves.*
- ***Look around common areas.*** *Check if residents are gathering in common areas, such as the dining room, lounge, or library to share dinner, game room, chapel, fitness room, or garden.*
- ***Make a list of "must-haves" versus "would-likes."*** *This can help you easily narrow down communities. For instance, bringing your pet might be a "must-have," while having an on-site pool could be a "would-like."*

Kile Gerstre, senior living expert | A Place for Mom

If you need help finding local independent living communities that meet your needs and preferences, consider using A Place for Mom. Our free care quiz asks about your questions and then personalized senior living options that fit your budget and lifestyle, all at no cost to you.

What families are saying about independent living facilities

Recent reviews for independent living in The Dalles

Providence Down Manor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Transportation to stores, nurses, and doctors is provided regularly. Individual transportation needs are also accommodated. Meals are accommodating to all ways. I have a 2 BR, which is spacious (about 1100 sq. ft.) bathed, but I would call the apts. on the small.
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Cherry Heights Living
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Cherry Heights is a local senior / independent living facility that provides rooms in six 7 categories. They seriously go out of their way to make it a great experience for their residents. My brother loves the food, the staff, and the dining service. They also give great communication with me regarding my brother.
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★ ★
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