


Beyond Bingo: The 50+ Best Assisted Living Activities for Seniors

By Merritt Whitley
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People have the same basic needs at any age: to explore, have fun, learn, and live life to the fullest. Activities for **assisted living** residents do much more than just pass the time. They help seniors lead healthier, happier lives.

Activities for seniors in assisted living suit all interests and lifestyles

Assisted living communities offer a variety of activities to suit residents' varying abilities and interests. Here are some of the top ways assisted living communities help seniors stay active.

Learning new skills

Lifelong learning is crucial to feeling energized and interested in life. Workshops and classes in senior living communities often include the following:

- Painting and woodworking classes
- Educational lectures
- Book clubs and writing workshops
- Computer and foreign language classes

Dancing

Dancing remains ever-popular at senior communities and is a daily event for most. Dancing is not only fun, but it helps keep residents fit. Plus, it's an excellent social opportunity.

Residents often enjoy a variety of dancing styles:

- Ballroom dancing
- Line dancing
- Swing dancing
- Square dancing

Entertainment

The show must go on! Entertainment is a mainstay of most assisted living facilities. Entertainers often perform at communities so residents don't need to travel. Sometimes, friends and family are even invited.

Types of senior living entertainment can vary:

- Stand-up comedy
- Visiting choirs
- Visiting choirs
- Pedigree dog shows
- Drama groups

Assisted living exercise activities

Exercise promotes healthy blood flow to the brain and increases mobility.

Who are you researching for?

Parent

Spouse

Someone Else

Myself

1 of 5

Today's senior communities strive to make fitness fun and easily accessible through different activities, such as:

- Meditation and Tai chi
- Yoga and chair yoga
- Gardening
- Swimming
- Zumba and Spin class

Music and karaoke

Singing is great for the soul. There's no such thing as bad singing if it comes from the heart.

Many assisted living communities stage their own competitions like "American Idol" or "The Masked Singer," but even old-fashioned karaoke is a blast. Residents may even be serenaded by community choirs or other talented musicians.

Whatever it may be, residents can sit back, relax, and enjoy:

- Singing contests
- Karaoke
- Shows from private musicians
- Children's choir visits

Special events

Many events are holiday-themed, but no special occasion is needed to have fun. Some communities hold carnivals for residents complete with cotton candy and dunk tanks, while others host senior proms or screenings of major events such as political debates and sports championships.

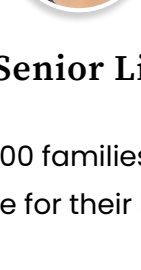
Each community hosts different kinds of special events, so be sure to explore ones that interest you or your elderly loved one.

- Classic car shows
- Art shows
- Fashion shows
- Pool parties
- Happy hours

Games

It's not just bingo! The majority of communities have a combination of both traditional and virtual games as activities for seniors in assisted living.

Nintendo's Wii — a video game system in which users interact with the game by moving their body rather than manipulating a joystick — is one popular amenity. Most residents find the Wii easy to learn and downright enjoyable.



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Popular Wii video games include:

- Baseball
- Bowling
- Tennis
- Golf

Traditional brain-boosting games include:

- Trivia
- Sudoku and Crossword puzzles
- Chess and checkers

Field trips

Who doesn't love going to new places, spending time with friends, or simply trying something new? Many assisted living communities plan field trips to help residents bond and learn.

- Concerts
- Local museums
- Sporting events
- Plays or musicals
- Movies

Outdoor excursions

People of all ages need opportunities to breathe fresh air, smell wildflowers, or walk among the trees. Frequent assisted living exercise activities set outdoors help residents immerse themselves in nature.

- Picnics
- Nature trail walks
- Community service projects
- Trips to farmers markets
- Visits to the park

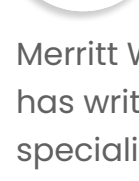
Health benefits of assisted living activities

Activities can stimulate older adults' minds and bodies in three key ways:

1. Physical preservation. Inactivity may be more important than when it comes to losing the ability to do things on your own, according to the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Exercise has been shown to decrease depression, falls, and **blood pressure** while improving strength, balance, and sleep. Physical activity also stimulates blood flow to the brain, which may help improve cognitive function.

2. **Mental stimulation.** Keeping your mind sharp through activities can reduce signs of memory loss and cognitive decline. For this reason, many assisted living communities provide mentally stimulating activities, or "brain games," to exercise residents' minds.

3. Reduced isolation. Researchers are learning more about the dangers of **social isolation** and loneliness among older adults. Too much time alone increases a senior's risk of dementia, as well as other health problems including high blood pressure, obesity, depression, and heart disease.

 Author
Merritt Whitley

Merritt Whitley is a creative copywriter at A Place for Mom. She has written for senior audiences for about six years and specializes in health, finance, and lifestyle content. Merritt has managed multiple print publications, social media channels, and blogs. She earned a bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University, where she focused on journalism, advertising, and public relations.

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