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by Darlene Wroe

The fireflies flickered in and out of the darkness, moving in an unseen trajectory over the dark yard.

The cool, damp shade of the trees attracted them after the stifling heat of the summer day.

They were more frequently present in my childhood, and so these days I am always excited when I do find them in rural places where long grass and tall trees still dominate.

The cabin is on a little oasis of nature, but its rocky climes, large mossy patches and prickly black spruce are less conducive to the cool-loving creatures.

When I roll over in bed and look out the window over the patch of blueberries, plants Labrador teα and sheep's laurel, I am always excited to see that reassuring flicker, relaying that all is well on the planet. But the island is surrounded on the mainland by properties with manicured lawns and high tech devices aimed at keeping the bugs away. There are fewer fireflies on the island than I would like. whether because of the natural setting or because of my savvy neighbours.

I read once on Facebook that the top song from your fourteenth year is the song that will follow you throughout your life - your theme song as it were.

Mine, apparently, is Get Back by the Beatles.

It's true enough as I now find myself reflecting regularly on the things I loved from my childhood. I didn't recognize then that all those things which I took for granted when I was a kid would someday be identified by me as the greatest treasures there are.

At the old homestead where my brother and sister-inlaw now live, I walked with their dog down the side road, watching, as I walked, the long waving grass in the wide field to the west.

There are towering trees in the field to the east now, but when I was growing up there, the field was open and when the wind rose the grass would rock like a wild ocean full of daisies, buttercups and Devil's paintbrushes.

I frequently would go out exploring there, like a pirate on the high seas, following my nose to find the treasures which lurked just beneath the roiling waves - the small but wonderful ripe red wild strawberries. Often I would return with red stained hands filled with bouquets of wild flowers.

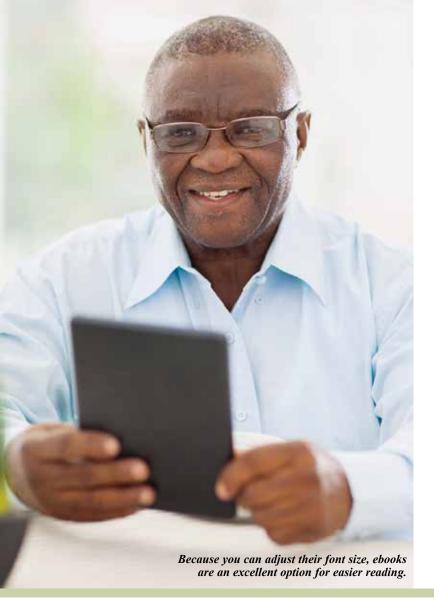
There were bobolinks aplenty when I was growing up. I would also regularly hear the owls, and birdsong filling the morning air when they came to get their fill of my grandmother's offerings of seeds and suet.

The sun still sets and rises in the same way, and the moon and stars still make their appearance.

A house is gone here. A barn is built there. The old cemetery is still there across the way, although people have taken to putting up solar lights, which would have freaked me out when little. Now I wander over as to a magnet to sit by my mother's grave, and rest my hand over my grandmother's, and gently touch the headstone of my grandfather.

Everything is different, but also the same. It's all okay. Everything that was is still part of me, although not necessarily seen.

Like the fireflies that disappear in the darkness, the quiet reassurance of a loved one will suddenly spark, showing the way forward, or back to the place I once belonged.



Four tips for readers with low vision

Has your diminishing eyesight made it difficult to read, even when you wear your glasses? Here are some tips on how to make reading a pleasurable activity once more.

- **1. Look for large print books.** Many books are available in large print editions designed to be easier to read for people with vision loss. You can buy them online or at your local bookstore, or ask your librarian about your borrowing options.
- **2. Use a magnifier.** You'll find a wide range of magnifiers in stores that can make reading more comfortable. Some models have built-in lighting, while others can be attached to a flat surface such as a desk. There are even electronic magnifying glasses with all sorts of features available, but they tend to be a bit pricey.
- **3. Download ebooks on your tablet or phone.** Apps like Google Play Books and iBooks offer a huge selection of books to purchase, and you can adjust the font size so that it's large enough to read without overtaxing your eyes.
- 4. Purchase an e-reader. Reading your ebooks on an electronic reading device puts less strain on your eyes. This is because, unlike tablets and smartphones, e-readers' screens aren't backlit. These devices also allow you to customize various settings, such as font size and line spacing, to whatever feels most comfortable.

Finally, if you're in the mood to hear a new story or rediscover an old favourite without straining your eyes, audiobooks are another way to go.

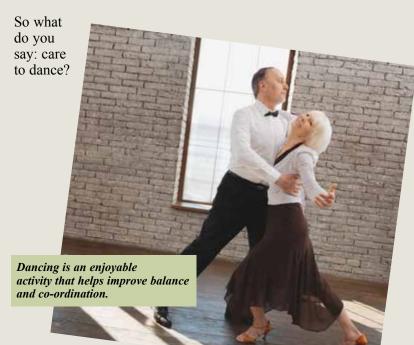
Discover the joys of dancing at any age

Do you believe dancing is something that only younger, in-shape, highly co-ordinated people can do? Not so! Classic or country, modern or folk, in pairs or in a group, dancing can be enjoyed at any age.

A wide variety of dance classes exist, including ones specifically tailored to seniors. If you think that you have two left feet, this could be the perfect chance for you to work on your balance and co-ordination. And like all physical activities, dancing is great for your health and well-being. In addition to helping improve cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and flexibility, it also stimulates memory and provokes a positive emotional response.

Taking dance lessons also provides the perfect opportunity for socializing and letting loose. Plus, there's nothing quite like taking on the challenge of learning something new — and the feeling of accomplishment that comes when you master a particular move or skill.

Finally, not only is dancing excellent exercise, but it's also a form of artistic expression that can have therapeutic effects, such as alleviating the isolation caused by illness. It may be especially beneficial for people with various neurological, psychological and musculoskeletal ailments and could help delay certain age-related health problems.



Put your health first and listen to music

Studies have shown that listening to music has many health benefits, especially for the elderly. In fact, not only does it contribute to lower stress levels and improved sleep, but it also reinforces the immune system. Keep reading to find out more.

SLEEP

Seniors who listen to soft music for 45 minutes before bed fall asleep faster, sleep for longer, stir less during the night and benefit from all-around more energizing sleep.

Why? Music affects our parasympathetic nervous system, which slows our heart rate and breathing — much like when you get ready for bed. Hence, by relaxing the body, music can actually prepare it for sleep.

STRESS

Researchers at McGill University's Psychology Department found that music can be more effective than prescription drugs for reducing anxiety in adults before surgery. The study also demonstrated that listening to music helps reduce cortisol levels (a stress hormone) in the body.



DID YOU KNOW?

NK (natural killer) cells that attack harmful bacteria as well as infected and cancerous cells are more prevalent in music lovers. Music therefore helps boost our immune system!





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Classes and activities FOR ACTIVE SENIORS

Have a bit (or a lot) of free time? Feel like stepping out of your comfort zone and trying something new? Here are four types of activities designed with seniors in mind that might interest you.

1. COMPUTER CLASSES

If using a computer, tablet or smartphone isn't exactly second nature to you and you'd like to take full advantage of the possibilities these devices offer, there are classes and workshops available to help get you started. You'll learn how to become more comfortable doing things such as sending emails, sharing photos of your grandchildren and using apps for both business and pleasure.

2. LANGUAGE LESSONS

If you've always dreamed of being able to speak and understand Spanish, Italian, German or Russian but never dared take the first steps, good news: it's never too late to start! Not only is learning a new language fun and rewarding, but it's also a great way to exercise your brain and improve your memory. And if you're planning to travel in the future, knowing the local language will make the experience that much more immersive and enriching.

3. SPORTS

Swimming, yoga, Zumba, tai chi — when it comes to classes that aim to get you moving and stay in shape safely, you've got a lot to choose from. Many of these activities are tailored to an older clientele and feature gentle motions that won't strain your joints. What's more, being physically active has tons of benefits, helping you maintain your independence and enjoy a superior quality of life. Regular exercise also helps prevent various illnesses and fosters better overall health.





4. ART CLASSES

Want to get in touch with your creative side? Let your imagination take over as you learn how to paint, knit or create stained glass masterpieces. These pleasant activities are highly rewarding, as they allow you to create something with your own two hands. More of a music lover? Why not sign up for piano or singing lessons?

What are you waiting for? Find out about the courses and activities available near you, and have fun!

Four tips to prevent and reduce joint pain

Joint pain can take a toll on your quality of life. Here are four ways you can relieve existing joint pain and prevent new episodes from developing.

1. GET MOVING

Not only is it a great mood booster, regular exercise is vital to preserve joint flexibility and reinforce muscle tone. Choose low-impact activities such as walking, swimming, cycling, tai chi and yoga.

Don't let joint pain stop you from exercising. It's crucial that you keep moving; inactivity is your worst enemy! It would be a good idea, however, to consult a doctor or a specialist for advice on finding the right sport for your fitness level and overall physical condition.

2. WATCH YOUR WEIGHT

Excess weight speeds up cartilage degradation, especially in the knees and hips. Try to maintain — or regain — a healthy weight.

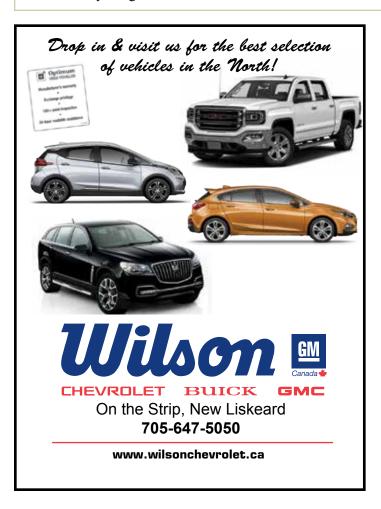


3. EAT HEALTHY

Maximize your chances of successfully fighting joint pain by sticking to a healthy diet high in antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables. Limit your consumption of sugar and saturated fats, which may contribute to exacerbating your symptoms.

4. SEEK PROFESSIONAL CARE

Many specialists can help you manage joint pain in your day-to-day life. Don't hesitate to reach out. In addition to your general physician, you may wish to consult a psychologist, physical therapist or rheumatologist.





Tuff's Talk

by Tuffy McNamara



Summer's Relaxing Moments

The most enjoyment I've had in an investment I made, was several years ago, my daughter Trudy and I were shopping in Canadian Tire and I noticed bird baths on a shelf and commented to Trudy, I'd love to have one of those, she said, well, if you want one, buy it, which I did! It has been worth every dollar I spent on it. I think the bright colours may attract the birds, and it keeps a person busy keeping fresh water (and deep water) for the birds to splash in while bathing.

One robin in particular has a routine daily, prances around my garden, then flies over to the bird bath, sits on the rim of the bird bath, has a few drinks, seems to check the water first, then jumps in and splashes water with

"her" or "his" wings then flies up to the telephone wires and sits up there drying - it is quite the spectacle.

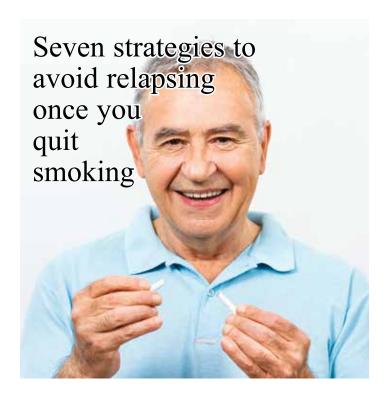
I was quite surprised when I saw a couple of bees sitting on the edge of the bird bath having a drink of water - now that was certainly an eye opener for me! I really never gave that incident a thought before -"bees having a drink of water!"

I also enjoy just sitting and painting rocks with copies of my flowers in the flower beds then I place the colourful rock around my flower beds.

When my Great Grandsons visit from North Bay, they sure like my big back yard and like the birds and bees around the bird bath! And of course, I enjoy their visits as well, they also like the idea of painting small rocks as well as feeding the birds.

Arden McNamara "Tuffy"





Have you decided to quit smoking, but are afraid of relapsing? You should know that it's not just a matter of sheer force of will. There are sound strategies that can help you stay on course. Here are seven:

- 1. Determine the reasons why you smoked and identify triggers (stress, social occasions, drinking alcohol, etc.) so you can prepare yourself to behave differently.
- 2. Come up with strategies to resist the urge to smoke by creating distractions (drinking water, chewing gum, calling a friend, etc.).
- 3. Temporarily avoid places where people smoke and events during which you have a tendency to light up.
- 4. Change routines that entail a conditioned response. For instance, if you have the reflex of smoking first thing in the morning, replace your morning cigarette with a shower.
- Increase your motivation to stay on track by going over the reasons that led you to quit and the advantages of not smoking.
- 6. Discover new interests to occupy your mind. Stay busy with healthy, fun activities that will make you forget your cigarette cravings.
- 7. Ask your loved ones, medical professionals or support services for help.

If you slip up, don't be too hard on yourself and don't be disheartened. Every time you quit, no matter for how short a period of time, you get that much closer to your goal.



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BE HAPPY

by Sue Nielsen

It's no secret that as we age, the body resists movement.

We know age is nothing but a number, but when that number reaches north of 50, our body begins to whisper sweet nothings in our ears and joints telling us, via aches and pains, to slow down.

So how do we combat this spin-off of our golden years?

The answer - we keep moving.

Movement is key to good quality of life, as we all know.

In terms of healthy aging one of the most important things seniors can do for themselves is to include exercise in their daily lives.

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines states that everyone should have 150 minutes of moderate to rigorous exercise in any given week.

The key to aging is to reduce sedentary time and

for me, that is a challenge because I work a desk job pounding a keyboard most days but I do take my brain out for regular bouts of activity in the process.

The physical aspect of my day is more of a challenge as I seek ways to motivate myself to get moving.

My happiness levels tend to spike when I am more active.

I think I should follow
the example of a couple
of coworkers from our
accounting department who
take regular walks on their
coffee breaks and lunch
hours.

During the summer months I am much more motivated towards physical activity that includes hiking, swimming and canoeing.

I swim almost every day in the velvety smooth waters of Bass Lake. The lake does wonders for my body, mind and soul.

Winters continue to be a challenge as I get lazy and sleepy like a hibernating

bear.

I find the psychological benefits of exercise leave me more relaxed, mentally alert with better balance and coordination.

Something I don't enjoy as I get older is I lack energy and this is incredibly frustrating for someone who has been active all her life.

My mind says go, go but my body says no, no.

I do find the natural world to be a terrific motivator and spiritual enhancer.

I read just recently that Health Canada had issued a warning about blood pressure medication being tainted with a carcinogen. I thought to myself, I am so fortunate.

Fortunate in the fact I don't take any prescribed medication but I do take an allergy pill daily as my allergies seem to be getting worse as I age.

And my blood pressure medication comes in the form of a paddle in my hand, my body in the seat of a canoe on a calm glass-like northern lake with the loon calling in a far off bay.

My weakness is for nonalcoholic sugary drinks.

Some people, especially my daughter, would say my pop addiction is harmful but I say there are far worse addictions out there.

I read recently of a 105-yearold Texas woman, Elizabeth Sullivan, who credited drinking three cans of Dr. Pepper per day for her longevity.

She said, "Every doctor that sees me says they'll kill you, but they die and I don't."

Sullivan said she had never been hospitalized and doctors couldn't find anything medically wrong with her.

Sullivan did eventually pass away in her sleep on November 1, 2017, at age 106.

Locally, there is an elderly gentleman in Cobalt who is a regular Temiskaming Speaker letter writer who claims the waters of Cobalt Lake are responsible for his longevity.

Helmut Whipprecht says he does not fear possible arsenic and mine tailings contamination in the lake because he believes arsenic is good for his body.

As John Lennon would say, "Whatever gets you through your life, it's all right."

I guess when all is said and done, do what makes you happy and with any luck you'll enjoy a long, healthy life.











What is syncope?

Syncope (fainting) is a sudden and brief loss of consciousness that occurs due to insufficient blood and oxygen flow to the brain. Sometimes preceded by dizziness, lightheadedness, blurred vision or nausea, fainting is usually accompanied by muscle weakness (which causes you to fall), extreme pallor and, in some cases, respiratory distress. When someone faints, you should lie them down and lift their legs to improve blood circulation.

TYPES OF SYNCOPE

There are different types of syncope, namely:

- Reflex syncope can be vasovagal or situational in nature. It can be caused by intense emotion, pain, coughing, stress, fatigue, swallowing or urination. This is the most common type of fainting. Since the trigger is usually the same, it's possible to recognize the warning signs and avoid the fall.
- Orthostatic syncope is caused by a drop in blood pressure, due to a sudden change of position, certain medications, or pregnancy, for example. It can also occur after eating (especially in seniors).
- Cardiac syncope is linked to a heart condition (arrhythmia, cardiac arrest, tachycardia, etc.) and requires urgent intervention.

Aside from the more dangerous cardiac syncope, fainting is usually benign. However, the fall that follows can cause wounds, bruising or broken bones and have serious consequences if you're driving, swimming or on the stairs. In any case, it's best to see a doctor to determine the cause and take the appropriate measures (avoiding triggers, limiting blood pressure medication, treating the heart condition, etc.).

Vertigo or dizziness?

You get up and the room starts spinning. Is vertigo or dizziness to blame? The answer might surprise you: it's vertigo.

Vertigo involves a spinning feeling, kind of like when you get off a merry-go-round. If you feel that everything around you is spinning or that you yourself are turning in circles, you have vertigo. It may be caused by an inner ear disorder (vestibular neuritis or laby-rinthitis, for instance) or a neurological issue. If there are other symptoms, such as a severe headache, speech impairment or double vision, you should see a doctor immediately. It could be a stroke.

Dizzy spells, on the other hand, are characterized by a feeling of instability and trouble with keeping one's balance, as if the ground were moving. Dizziness can be caused by many factors, including fatigue, stress, the flu, hypoglycemia and pregnancy. If you have regular dizzy spells, it's best to see a doctor.



The benefits of getting in touch with your creative side

Creativity is often considered to be synonymous with making art. However, being creative doesn't just mean devoting yourself to activities such as painting, drawing or knitting. It also means being resourceful, a problem-solver, and coming up with interesting projects or initiatives.

In all cases, engaging your creativity allows you to develop cognitive faculties, improve your ability to reason and concentrate, avoid boredom and, for activities involving fine motor skills, to work on hand-eye coordination. Furthermore, being creative can lead to

a feeling of satisfaction and thereby improve self-esteem.

In short, there are many good reasons to foster your creativity. But how to go about developing it? Some feasible approaches include: landscaping a garden, redecorating a room in your house, making mandalas, going on cultural outings, inventing stories for children, or even just letting your mind wander on a nature walk. There are countless options! Simply consider what feeds your imagination and stimulates your curiosity.





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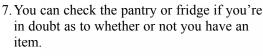
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Do you hate going out in bad weather? Or perhaps you have an ultra-busy schedule? Maybe you're temporarily confined to your own home because you're sick or recovering from an injury? In any of these cases, online grocery shopping can be a godsend. This handy service has the following advantages:

- 1. You can grocery shop anytime.
- 2. You'll nip impulse buying in the bud (you won't be tempted by those goodies located in the checkout aisle).
- 3. You'll find it easier to stay on budget, since you'll see your total automatically increase as you add items.
- 4. You can pick up or have your order delivered whenever you want.
- 5. You'll reduce travel and won't have to carry any heavy bags (if you opt for delivery).

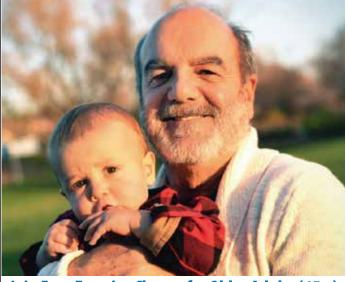
6. You can replenish items in your home as you run out of them.



ger in the beginning, but once you're used to it, online grocery shopping is much quicker than going to the store.







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Key advice for women with thinning hair

While more commonly observed among men, hair loss can also affect women. With age, many women notice their hair thinning and becoming increasingly scarce. So, how do you maintain a full head of beautiful hair? Read on for some tips.

THE RIGHT CUT

Keeping your hair long accentuates the stringy appearance of thinning hair, while cutting it too short may reveal bald spots. Hence, it's best to keep your hair short (but not too short!) or medium-length for more volume and movement. Avoid flat, single-length styles at all costs. A structured cut (that complements your facial features, of course!) is your best bet. Wide bangs are also a clever option to help camouflage the look of thinning hair.

THE PERFECT STYLE

If your hair is thinning around your temples, avoid tying it back. Instead, use stylish accessories like a scarf tucked behind the ears or a barrette to create the illusion of side-swept bangs. Is the top of your head balding? Carefully tease your hair at the roots and tie it back into a voluminous ponytail or twist it into a bun. Do you have curly

hair? Let your curls hang loose for natural looking volume!

THE IDEAL COLOUR

The darker your hair colour, the greater the contrast with your scalp, making the latter more visible. Don't forget that skin can burn when exposed to the sun and that people with very light hair have particularly vulnerable scalps. In short, a dye job between medium brown and dark blonde is your best bet for keeping your hair looking full and healthy.

One last tip: to keep your locks looking their very best at every age, visit a professional hairstylist.





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A joint project between the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) and the Ministry of Senior Affairs in partnership with the Age Friendly committee, Temiskaming Shores & Area



OACAO







Group outings and organized tours:

A STRESS-FREE WAY TO EXPLORE

Group outings and organized tours for seniors are great for those who'd like to go sightseeing without having to worry about logistics. If this sounds like you, read on to find out more.

GROUP OUTINGS

Feel like stepping out of your routine — and your house — without being away for too long? Then a group day trip is just what you're looking for. Ask your local seniors' association or leisure organization about the excursions offered near you. You're sure to have a lot to choose from, depending on your interests: a trip to the theatre, a day at the museum and a night at the casino are among the possibilities.

What's more, you won't have to take care of any planning.



This means you'll be free to fully enjoy the activity with other participants. The organizers will take care of all the details. Bus transportation and meals are usually included.

ORGANIZED TOURS

If you'd like to travel for a few days or weeks without having to think about your itinerary, accommodations and meals, then organized tours are for you. These travel packages ensure your safety and peace of mind by putting you in the hands of seasoned, knowledgeable guides. Furthermore, specialized staff is usually available for passengers with special needs.

When it comes to choosing a destination, travel agencies are your most valuable allies. They can offer you a variety of packages, whether you want to stay in your home country or set sail for a faraway locale. This means you're sure to find a trip that's suited to your interests. Themed vacations such as vineyard tours or historical circuits are ideal if you'd like your trip to focus on a particular aspect of your destination.

Finally, whether you're travelling alone or with family or friends, keep in mind that organized tours are perfect for meeting new and interesting people. Since you'll all be experiencing the trip together, you'll certainly get to know each other throughout your adventure. Who knows, it could be the start of one or more new friendships.





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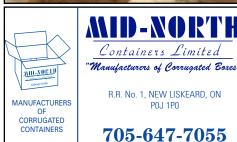












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