

## 9. Staying Active and Involved

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Staying active and involved is the key to maintaining health and independence and can lower your risk for many common diseases and help you to recover faster when you do get sick.

### *Exercise and Fitness*

Strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance are four assets that are important to preserving health and independence. Regular exercise and physical activity will assist you to maintain -- or even partly restore -- lost function in these four areas. Being active can also help you delay, and in some cases, prevent conditions associated with aging. No matter how frail a person is, exercise can be incorporated into your daily routine. A group fitness program can be beneficial by providing social interaction and motivation, which may assist you to overcome your resistance to exercising.

It is important to incorporate activities you enjoy into your exercise routine. Some exercise options include:

- ❑ Walking
- ❑ Swimming
- ❑ Dancing
- ❑ Cycling
- ❑ Gardening
- ❑ Tai Chi
- ❑ Stretching
- ❑ Resistance training
- ❑ Strength training
- ❑ Aerobic exercise

### *Safety Tips*

Always consult your doctor before beginning an exercise regimen. If you do begin an exercise program, consider these safety tips:

- ❑ Start slow. Add to your exercise routine gradually.
- ❑ Be sure to warm up your muscles before stretching. Try walking and light arm pumping to get the blood flow going.
- ❑ Keep breathing during strength exercises. Holding your breath can cause blood pressure fluctuations. Whenever lifting anything, you should breathe out and breathe in as you relax.
- ❑ Use equipment appropriate for the activity, such as a bike helmet or proper footwear.
- ❑ Drink plenty of fluids while active unless you are on a fluid restriction.
- ❑ Be aware when bending; always bend at the hips and not the waist. This will help to prevent back injuries.
- ❑ Before stretching be sure to warm up your muscles. Try walking and light arm pumping to get the blood flow going.

To locate a fitness program in your area, check with your local YMCA, churches, and senior centers, as well as your county AAA/ADRC.

You can also contact the following organizations for more information:

- ❑ The **National Center on Physical Activity and Disability**, at **1-800-900-8086** (voice or TTY), or **www.ncpad.org**, provides information and resources that enable people with disabilities to become as physically active as they choose to be.
- ❑ **National Institute on Aging** at **1-800-222-2225**, TTY **1-800-222-4225** or **www.nia.nih.gov**, offers a free on-line publications and an exercise video.
- ❑ **NIH Senior Health**, at **http://nihseniorhealth.gov**, is a senior-friendly website featuring information on popular health topics, and includes both a large-type and a talking feature that reads text aloud.
- ❑ **YMCA of the USA** at **1-800-872-9622**, or **www.ymca.net**, will assist you in locating a facility within your community.

## ***Health & Wellness Programs***

Health and wellness is important for both the aging and the physically disabled. Research has shown that giving people information on healthy practices leads to positive behavioral changes that powerfully affect one's health and quality of life. Encouraging people to engage in evidence-based disease prevention programs is a key strategy to address the impact of chronic disease and the prevention of secondary conditions.

The following programs are specifically designed for older adults (generally age 60 and older).

### **HealthEASE Health Education**

This educational series includes important information on six health promotion topics of interest to older adults and their caregivers. The six modules are titled:

- ❑ Exercise and Getting Fit
- ❑ Serving Up Good Nutrition
- ❑ Bone Up On Your Health – *osteoporosis and falls prevention*
- ❑ Be Wise About Your Medications – *medication management and substance abuse*
- ❑ Keeping Up The Beat – *self management techniques for cardiovascular disease*
- ❑ Maximizing Memory – *maintaining memory and cognitive skills*

The modules can be delivered individually or as a six-session series. Health and aging professionals are trained to deliver the modules through a half-day program provided by the NJ Dept. of Health and Senior Services.

### **HealthEASE Move Today Exercise Class**

A one-hour non-aerobic exercise class designed to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Exercises can be done while sitting or standing. Classes are led by trained peer leaders and meet weekly or bi-weekly for twelve sessions.

Program features include:

- ❑ A brief education component focusing on an exercise-related topic.
- ❑ Inexpensive exercise bands used to gain maximum effect from resistance exercises.
- ❑ A major focus on good posture and falls prevention.
- ❑ An exercise intensity scale and a weekly exercise log to track participant activity.
- ❑ A self-assessment process for participants to assess their health, physical well-being and intent for behavior change conducted before and upon completion of the program.

### **Live Long, Live Well, Walking Program**

Walking is one of the best ways for people of any age to become and stay fit. Participants of this program can make major strides toward preventing diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

This program encourages New Jersey residents, age 50 and older to walk at least 30 minutes most days of the week for a period of twelve weeks.

Participants can obtain a walking log to track their progress and receive a Walking Recognition Award from the State of New Jersey when they complete twelve weeks of walking.

### **Coordinated Screenings**

From time to time, local health departments partner with health, aging and disability services providers to offer free health screenings for the public. Activities at these events may include a variety of health screenings (including vision, hearing, blood pressure, cancer and podiatric), health education (including nutrition, physical activity and falls prevention), and testing (including blood glucose, cholesterol, body mass index, bone density) and immunizations. Through the State's HealthEASE program, protocols have been established to refer individuals with abnormal screening results to health care providers. For more information on coordinated screenings, contact your **ADRC/AAA** at **1-877-222-3737**.

### **Take Control of Your Health (A Chronic Disease Self-Management Program)**

Take Control of Your Health is an evidence-based, six-week course that meets once a week for two hours and is designed to give people with chronic conditions (such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, emphysema, asthma, bronchitis, and osteoporosis) and/or their caregivers the knowledge, skills and confidence they

need to take a more active part in their health care. Trained leaders who want to help other people learn to gain control of their conditions teach the program.

Participants learn strategies for managing symptoms, working with health care professionals, setting weekly goals, problem solving, relaxing, handling difficult emotions, eating well, and exercising safely and easily. It is designed to complement, not replace, professional health care services.

### **Project Healthy Bones**

This exercise and education program is for people with or at risk of osteoporosis and is based on research that links strength training exercises to improved bone density in older adults. It includes exercises that target the body's larger muscle groups to improve strength, balance and flexibility. The 24-week curriculum includes sessions on the importance of exercise, nutrition, safety, drug therapy, and lifestyle factors. This program is peer-led. Lead coordinators from local health departments, county offices on aging, Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVPs) and other community-based organizations coordinate the program at the local level and oversee program delivery and training for peer leaders.

### **Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors)**

Healthy IDEAS is designed to detect and reduce the severity of depressive symptoms in older adults with chronic health conditions and functional limitations. The program incorporates four evidence-based components into the ongoing service delivery of care management or social service programs serving older adults in the home environment. This program is currently being provided in parts of Essex, Hudson, Morris and Union Counties.

### **A Matter of Balance**

A Matter of Balance is a community-based program specifically designed to reduce fear of falling and improve activity levels among older adults. The program includes eight classes, each lasting two hours, presented over a four-week period by trained coaches using a detailed training manual, two instructional videos and a visit from a guest health professional. A Matter of Balance is available in select counties only.

- To learn more about these wellness programs, or to locate a participating provider in your area, contact your local **Agency on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Connection (AAA/ADRC)**, or the **NJ Division of Aging and Community Services** at **1-609-943-3498**.

### ***New Jersey Disability Health & Wellness Initiative***

The New Jersey Disability Health & Wellness Initiative (NJDH&W), funded originally by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is located at the Division of Disability Services (DDS). It seeks to promote healthy living and

prevention of secondary conditions among children and adults with disabilities. DDS works to identify gaps in the State health-care system and also identifies and recommends initiatives that will help meet those needs - to promote overall well-being for people with disabilities of all ages.

- ❑ For additional information, contact the **NJ Division of Disability Services (DDS)** at **1-888-285-3036**.

### ***Employment Opportunities***

Research indicates that individuals who participate in productive activities such as work have better physical and mental health and lower mortality rates.

#### **Workforce 55+**

A statewide program known as WorkForce 55+ (WF55+) brings together the talents of older workers and unmet needs of the communities by:

- ❑ Providing income and gainful part-time subsidized work activities for low-income older persons;
- ❑ Demonstrating how low-income older workers can help respond to the delivery of their community's service needs by working in community service jobs; and
- ❑ Transitioning job-ready older persons into quality jobs in private, public and non-profit sectors through training and job finding assistance.

The focus of Workforce 55+ is training and transitioning program enrollees into unsubsidized jobs with private sector and/or public sector employers.

- ❑ For information on this program contact the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, **Division of One Stop Programs and Services**, PO Box 055, Trenton, NJ 08625-0055, telephone **609-943-5107** or information can be obtained by calling the NJ EASE toll-free number **1-877-222-3737**.

#### **One-Stop Career Centers**

For individuals seeking employment, The One-Stop Career service delivery system promotes universal access to information and services needed to get jobs. The system serves as the single point of contact for job seekers and employers seeking information about workforce development activities and access to all local employment and training services.

One-Stop Career Centers can help you:

- ❑ Find a job
- ❑ Strengthen your job-search skills
- ❑ Get training
- ❑ Improve reading and basic skills
- ❑ Network your way to a job

- ❑ Use labor market information to make career decisions
- ❑ Start your own business, as well as
- ❑ Assisting individuals who are:
  - Disabled
  - A Veteran
  - An older worker

❑ There are local One-Stop Career Centers in every county (see **Appendix N**). Call **1-877-872-5627 / TTY 1-877-889-5627** for your local One-Stop Career Center.

**The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRs)**

Located within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the DVRs provides services that enable persons with disabilities to find jobs or keep their existing jobs.

**Services Offered:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Diagnostic evaluation (no cost service)</li> <li>❑ Vocational counseling &amp; guidance (no cost)</li> <li>❑ Placement services (no cost)</li> <li>❑ Job seeking skills</li> <li>❑ Supported employment (no cost)</li> <li>❑ Time limited placement and coaching (no cost)</li> <li>❑ Job accommodations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Skills training</li> <li>❑ College training</li> <li>❑ Physical restoration</li> <li>❑ Emotional restoration</li> <li>❑ Mobility equipment</li> <li>❑ Driver training</li> <li>❑ Vehicle modification</li> <li>❑ Home modification</li> <li>❑ Work adjustment training (no cost)</li> </ul> |
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**Services with Cost**

Expenses for medical services, training, books, supplies, tools, and equipment are based on an individual’s ability to pay. DVRs financial criteria are less restrictive than those of many other agencies. Counselors are required to locate comparable benefits, that is, identical services available from other sources.

❑ For additional information contact the **NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services** at **609-292-5987**, or visit their website at **<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/dvrs/DVRIndex.html>**

**Blind and Visually Impaired**

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) provides comprehensive employment services, including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Vocational evaluation</li> <li>❑ Counseling</li> <li>❑ Guidance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Training</li> <li>❑ Job placement</li> </ul> |
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- ❑ For additional information contact the **NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI)**, Northern Regional Office **973-648-2111**, Central Regional Office **732-255-0723**, and Southern Regional Office **856-482-3700**. Their website is **[www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/index.html)**.

Additional information you may find useful:

- ❑ **Civic Ventures** at **[www.civicventures.org](http://www.civicventures.org)** is a non-profit organization that explores new ways for people over 65 to continue to make a contribution. For more information about public service jobs, see its on-line pamphlet, "The Boomers' Guide to Good Work."
- ❑ **DisabilityInfo.gov** at **[www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov)** covers a variety of topics related to employment of people with disabilities.

## ***Volunteer Opportunities***

There are many opportunities on the local, state and national level for individuals to volunteer their time and expertise to benefit their community. The following represents just a few examples:

### **National Senior Service Corps**

The National Senior Service Corps, or Senior Corps, is funded and administered by the Corporation for National Service. Volunteers serve full or part time through local sponsoring agencies and organizations. It includes the following programs:

- ❑ **Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)** – This program provides stipends, transportation and other support services to low-income elders working as part-time volunteers who provide one-on-one assistance to children with special and exceptional needs. They also serve as mentors to youth.
- ❑ **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** – This program provides a variety of opportunities for retired persons aged 55 or older to participate more fully in the life of their community through volunteer service. Volunteers serve in a variety of agencies.
- ❑ **Senior Companion Program (SCP)** – This program offers part time volunteer community service opportunities for low-income persons age 60 and over. The volunteers work in community service activities serving adults with physical, mental or emotional impairments.

- ❑ To find out if these programs are available in your area please, contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), Area

Agency on Aging (AAA), or **Senior Corp** at **1-800-424-8867** or **www.cns.gov**.

### **Peace Corps**

The Peace Corps actively recruits older persons to serve as volunteers. Persons accepted as volunteers agree to spend at least two years assisting people of developing countries meet their basic needs for food, health care, shelter, education and economic development. Before being placed in a service position, there is a training period of 8 to 16 weeks, depending on the country and nature of the assignment. Volunteers receive a monthly living allowance, health services, and vacation.

- For additional information you can contact the **Peace Corps** recruiting office toll-free at **1-800-424-8580**, or write to them at 201 N. Varick St., Suite 1025, New York, NY 10014. Their website is **www.peacecorps.gov**.

### **SCORE Programs**

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) is a volunteer program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Through SCORE, seasoned volunteer business executives with management and technical expertise are connected with owners/managers of small businesses needing management counseling.

- To find the location of a SCORE office nearest you, contact the **Small Business Administration** at: 2 Gateway Center, 15th floor, Newark, NJ 07102, **1-800-634-0245** or **973-645-3982**; or at 4900 RT. 70 c/o Bank of America, Pennsauken, NJ 08109-4792, **856-406-1532**, or visit the website at **www.score.org**.

### **AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps (the domestic Peace Corps) is the national service program that provides people of all ages and backgrounds with education awards in exchange for a year or two of community service within the United States.

- For more information on AmeriCorps and other national service programs, please contact the **Commission on National and Community Service**, NJ Department of State, at **609-633-9627**.

### **Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)**

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a volunteer program for persons 18 years of age or older to work with low-income persons to assist them in improving the conditions of their lives. VISTA volunteers are assigned to local sponsors who may be state or local public agencies, or private non-profit organizations.

- For more information on VISTA, contact the **NJ Corporation for National Service**, 44 South Clinton Ave., Suite 312, Trenton, NJ 08609 or telephone **609-989-2243**.

You may also find the following helpful to connect you with volunteering opportunities:

**The Volunteer New Jersey Partnership** at [www.volunteernewjersey.org/vnj](http://www.volunteernewjersey.org/vnj) is a statewide web-based volunteer database, specifically geared to address and meet the needs of all NJ communities. Their database serves as NJ's virtual volunteer center capable of matching volunteers with charitable organizations looking for help.

## *Lifelong Learning*

### **Adult Education**

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development provides funds for English basic skills instructional programs which are offered statewide free of charge. These programs are designed for persons who are the least educated and lack the most basic educational skills. Adult basic education programs provide developmental reading, mathematics, and employability skills that are needed for productive employment and effective citizenship.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development also funds free ESL programs. These programs are designed to improve the English language communications skills of persons whose native language is not English and who are limited English proficient. Instruction takes place in English and stresses the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills needed to function in an English-speaking environment.

### **High School Diploma**

There are three ways for adults to earn a high school diploma in NJ: 1) earn a locally issued adult high school diploma by completing high school course requirements; 2) earn a state-issued high school diploma through successful completion of the General Educational Development test (GED) exam; or 3) earn a state-issued high school diploma through completion of 30 college credits leading toward an undergraduate degree. There are 26 GED Testing Centers located in 19 counties throughout the state.

- For further information on the above programs, please contact **Workforce Readiness and Literacy** at **609-943-5921**.

### **College Programs and Services**

Each public institution of higher education in NJ may, if they so choose, permit persons aged 65 and older to enroll in regularly scheduled courses without the

payment of any tuition charges, provided that available classroom space permits, and tuition-paying students constitute the minimum number required for the course. The courses may be for either credit or non-credit. Registration fees may be required. The age requirement may vary from institution to institution. For additional information, please contact the Registrar's Office of the public college you may be interested in attending.

## ***Recreation, Amusement, and Entertainment***

New Jersey offers an impressive array of outdoor activities including state and national parks, forests, and recreation areas to name a few. Seniors and persons with disabilities may be entitled to receive discounts and/or free entrance to various New Jersey recreational sites.

### **Beaches**

Many public beaches offer discounted passes to seniors and persons with disabilities. For further information, please contact the governing body of the municipality where the beach is located.

### **Forests and Parks**

With 41 state parks and 11 state forests, New Jersey offers several choices for the outdoor lover to choose from. Federal and State discount programs may also be available to eligible residents age 62 or older, or for individuals with physical disabilities.

### **Federal Programs**

The following passport (discount) programs can be obtained in-person or at most federally operated recreation areas where fees are charged.

- ❑ **America the Beautiful Annual Pass** – *for persons under age 62*, this passport allows for an annual entrance permit to federal parks, monuments, historic sites and recreation areas. The passport admits the permit holder and any accompanying passengers in a single, private, non-commercial vehicle. This does not cover use fees. Annual cost was \$80.00 in 2009.
- ❑ **America the Beautiful Senior Pass** – *for persons 62 and older*, this permit offers a free lifetime entrance permit to national parks, monuments, historic sites, recreation areas, and national wildlife refuges which charge entrance fees. It also provides a 50% discount on federal use fees charged for facilities and services such as parking, camping, boat launching, etc. One-time fee: \$10.00 in 2009.
- ❑ **America the Beautiful Access Pass** – *for blind and permanently disabled persons*, this passport allows for a free lifetime entrance permit to those national parks, monuments, and recreation areas, which charge entrance fees. This passport also provides a 50% discount on federal use

- fees charged for facilities and services such as parking, camping, boat launching, and the like. No initial fee.
- ❑ **Park-Specific Pass** – allows for unlimited entries only to the park unit for which it is purchased and does not cover or reduce use fees.
- ❑ For information on these programs contact the **National Park Service**, 200 Chestnut Street, U.S. Custom House Building, Philadelphia, PA 19106; telephone **1-877-465-2727**; website **www.nps.gov**.

## NJ State Park Program

New Jersey offers Senior Citizen Pass, a state run program for persons 62 or older, allows the holder free entry and free parking at any park, forest, or historic site administered by the Division of Parks and Forestry.

- ❑ For information on the Senior Citizen Pass, contact the **NJ Division of Parks and Forestry**, Administrative Services, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, PO Box 404, Trenton NJ 08625-0404; telephone **1-800-843-6420**.

## Hunting

New Jersey residents ages 65 and older are entitled to a license to hunt with hounds, firearms or with bow and arrow for a reduced fee instead of the regular fee.

- ❑ To obtain a hunting license, apply in writing to the **NJ Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife**, Marine Fisheries Administration NJ Department of Environmental Protection, PO Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400, or call **609-292-2965**. Proof of age must be submitted with the application.

## Fishing

New Jersey residents of at least six months, ages 65 through 69, may obtain a fishing license at a reduced fee. If blind, there is no charge for a fishing license to New Jersey residents. Residents over the age of 70 are not required to obtain a license or trout stamp.

- ❑ To apply for a license, write to the **NJ Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife**, Marine Fisheries Administration, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, PO Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400, or call **609-292-2965**. Proof of age must be submitted with application.

## Public Golf Courses

Many public golf courses offer reduced rates to senior citizens. To determine whether a particular public golf course offers such discounts, please contact that golf course directly.

## ***Senior Centers***

Senior centers are great places to meet for social, cultural and recreational activities. These centers can offer assistance and education related to local programs and services and serves a variety of social and recreational needs in the community. Many senior centers may offer the following types of services: arts and crafts, movies, aerobics, self-defense, Tai Chi, computer training, health screenings, shopping, trips, seminars and special events. Some also serve as congregate meal sites. Senior centers serve multicultural and bilingual groups and organize volunteer activities in the community.

- ❑ To find out about senior centers in your area call your local **Ageing and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)** or **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)**.

## ***Assistance at the Polls***

Voters, who are blind or disabled, or unable to read and write, are entitled to receive assistance at the polls. In any election any elderly or physically disabled voter assigned to an inaccessible polling place will, *upon advance request of that voter*, either be permitted to vote at the alternative, accessible polling place nearest to that voter's residence which has a common ballot or be provided with a civilian absentee ballot as an alternative means of casting a ballot on the day of election.

- ❑ Persons desiring further information on assistance at the polls should contact their County Commissioner of Registration which is either the County Board of Elections or Superintendent of Elections.

- ❑ Any questions regarding absentee ballots should be directed to their County Clerk or the **Division of Elections**, NJ Department of Law and Public Safety, PO Box 304, Trenton, NJ 08625-0304, telephone **609-292-3760** or **609-292-3761 / TTY 1-800-292-0039**.