

## Five Tips for Healthy Aging and Reaching Age 90 and Beyond

Living to age 90 or beyond can be rewarding, but is probably most rewarding when an individual is in good health and of sound mind. As a whole, we are living longer, already. Since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the average life expectancy has increased from age 49 to 79, [according to a report by CBS News](#). That's a whole 30-year increase roughly in only one century's time!

As the average life expectancy slowly continues to creep upward, many older adults choose to live in independent living facilities. Let's look at five ways these nonagenarians (people who live to be 90 or older) maintain healthy aging and a rewarding lifestyle, into their golden years and beyond:

1) **Mental stimulation.** Contrary to popular belief, working on puzzles is not the best way to stay mentally sharp during old age, [according to Prevention.com](#). Instead, focusing on activities that provide mental stimulation and healthy aging in a variety of ways helps work out that mental "muscle." These activities include picking up a new hobby or skill, reading books or studying a foreign language.

2) **Keep moving.** People who exercise as little as 15 minutes per day during their golden years, and beyond, on average live longer, [according to Dr. Claudia Kawas of the University of California, Irvine](#). Kawas is studying lifestyle factors of those age 90 and above. In particular, she has studied nonagenarian residents at Laguna Woods, an independent living community located just outside of Los Angeles. This same community was featured in the CBS News piece. Additionally, those who are slightly overweight often live longer than those who are of a normal weight or are underweight, Kawas adds.

3) **Eat right.** Diet plays an integral role in healthy aging, both physically and mentally. A diet containing high amounts of nuts, whole grains, berries and vegetables may reduce the risk of developing brain diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, [according to a recent study at the Rush University Medical Center](#). In the study, participants who strictly adhered to the recommended diet reduced their risk of the debilitating memory-loss disease by 53 percent. Foods to be avoided as part of this diet include red meat, margarine, cheese, sweets and pastries, fried foods and fast food.

5) **Moderation is everything.** Contrary to popular belief, living to be 90 or older does not require a restrictive lifestyle, according to an ongoing study at the UCI Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, coined "[The 90+ Study](#)." In the study, people who drank moderate amounts of caffeine and alcohol actually lived longer than those who abstained.

5) **Stay social.** Studies indicate that living in a social environment, such as an independent living facility will increase their healthy aging outlook, improve social interactions and add longevity. A rich social life was integral to prolonged life, [as reported by CBS News](#). Residents at independent living facilities aged 90 or older frequently socialize with one another, play board games, garden and take part in book clubs. These activities are often offered at high-quality independent living facilities.

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