

Be your own doctor

Just because you are getting older doesn't mean you will automatically become unhealthy!

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Look after your mind

Many people worry about dementia. Help yourself to avoid it - do new things with new people. Make the effort to socialise. Most importantly, recent research shows that regular exercise prevents or slows dementia.

Volunteering is really good for you. It keeps you connected and feeling useful makes you feel good.

Keep your brain busy. Doing puzzles is fine but learning new skills is better. Challenge yourself, for example, learn Russian!

Dr. Elena Mucci, Consultant Geriatrician at Conquest and Spire Hospitals, has some common sense advice on staying healthy as you get older. Her presentation called *'Avoiding Frailty in Older Age'* was delivered to large audiences in East Sussex in 2019 but had to stop because of the pandemic. It is hoped it will return in 2021.

Look after your body

Exercise really matters. All physical activity is good for you but anything that makes you breathe harder for a while is even better! Walk, join an exercise class, dance, garden, play with the grandchildren!

Get out of the house in all weathers. 30 minutes of brisk walking 5 times a week will not only help your heart and lungs but also helps memory.

Your bones need vitamin D to keep strong. Spend 5 to 15 minutes outdoors with the sun on your face and arms. Oily fish twice a week helps too!

Keep safe

Take a look at your home, what could you change to keep yourself safe and is easily fixed? Poor lighting, loose rugs, badly placed furniture, trailing cables can put you at risk of falls and fractures.

Falling over can do you much more damage than you might think. You don't want to finish up in hospital if you can avoid it. A stylish handrail in the right place can make a difference and helps you to feel safer.

Don't be too proud to use a stick. Ramblers and explorers use them all the time! (Get a colourful one - it needn't make you look old!) Use it indoors too, especially when away from home.

And if you are unwell...

Talk to a professional. When talking remember you are a person, not just a "patient". Always ask questions, make sure you understand and remember what they say. Prepare a notebook with your questions and write down the answers. Have someone with you too if you think that will help.

If you have lots of different prescriptions, talk to your GP or pharmacist. Do you need all those medicines? If you are taking 4 or more you should have them reviewed at least every 6 months.

If you have continence problems, first make sure it's not a water infection. Too much caffeine will irritate your bladder and don't drink too much in the evening: if you are up a lot at night, try to cut down on drinking after 6pm.

If you would like to find out more and get help to develop your own action plan to stay healthy as you get older visit your.eastsussex.gov.uk

