



Wellness & You



Elim Park Place Newsletter

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HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY



Moving to a CCRC Changes Activity Patterns

How does a living environment affect a person's quality of life? A research team chose the concept of "how place, and a person's relationship to place, is related to well-being" as the basis for their exploration.

A group of 116 people who moved into the independent living section of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) completed questionnaires before and one year after they moved. The respondents, average age 78.9 years and two-thirds women, answered questions about their engagement in 20 activities, such as housework, reading or watching TV, hobbies or gardening. About two-thirds reported being in very good or excellent health.

Researchers found that new residents did not change their overall levels of activity, but they did change the types of activities they engaged in. Both before and after moving, reading and watching television topped the list of activities they engaged in most frequently. After moving to the CCRC, there was an increase in selected social and cultural activities, such as attending concerts and parties, watching movies and joining meetings.

There was a decrease in household activities, such as grocery shopping and housekeeping. A higher score of total activity was a significant predictor of satisfaction with the community and a feeling of well-being.

The authors suggested that one of the reasons for the changes in activity patterns was the CCRC itself, where services such as housekeeping and dining are available, as is easy access to social and cultural activities.

Elim Park's Healthability™ Wellness Program encourages residents to engage in life by taking advantage of the many activities and events offered each day. As seen in the research, those who are involved have a greater quality of life. Adding physical activity to your daily life makes up for the activity that residents no longer get by taking care of their house and yard. Many residents are more involved at Elim Park than they were living in their home due to the ease and convenience of activities offered. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of all that is available for improved quality of life and an increase sense of well-being.

Healthability™ Wellness Assessment

Are you interested in improving your health? By answering a series of questions about your health status, family health history, and personal health habits, the Wellness Assessment will help you make wise decisions about the quality of your life. Log onto Elim Park's website, www.elimpark.org, and look for the Wellness Assessment on the Wellness page. You will receive an immediate score once you have completed the survey. Please contact Wellness staff if you have any questions .

EXERCISE SCHEDULE CHANGES

NO Exercise Classes

Monday July 5th and Friday July 9th

NO Land Classes-- Monday, July 12th

NO Aquatic Classes-- Wednesday, July 14th

NO Exercise Classes-- Friday, July 16th



ENDORPHINS

Endorphins are small protein molecules that are produced by cells in the nervous system and other parts of the body. These molecules make up brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters, which function to transmit electrical signals within the nervous system. Endorphins can be found in the pituitary gland, in other parts of the brain or distributed throughout the nervous system. They interact with the opiate receptors in the brain to reduce our perception of pain similarly to drugs such as morphine and codeine. Endorphins can be anywhere from eighteen to five hundred times as powerful as any man made analgesic and they are non-addictive.

In addition to decreased feelings of pain, secretion of endorphins leads to a feeling of euphoria. With high endorphin levels, we feel less pain and fewer negative effects of stress. Endorphins can be released by a wide range of activities. For instance, exercise triggers endorphin secretion. Endorphin release varies among individuals. Two people who exercise at the same level or suffer the same degree of pain will not necessarily produce the same levels of endorphin. Other activities such as meditation, hearty laughter, listening to music, even eating spicy food and chocolate prove to stimulate the release of endorphins.

Wellness Center Reminders

A few reminders when using the Wellness Center:

- ❖ Turn off the television when finished with cardio equipment
- ❖ **Do not turn** off the lights, especially in the locker rooms. Most lights in the Center are on sensor. If the switch is turned off the sensor does not work. The next person who walks in will not have light.
- ❖ Return the treadmill to zero percent grade when finished.
- ❖ Itchy skin after using the pool? Take a shower using soap and a washcloth to remove the chlorine from your skin. Apply lotion to damp skin to ease dryness.
- ❖ If you receive a new sticker from the dining department for your ID badge, please let us know so that we may update the check-in computer. Bar codes on the new sticker will not match existing information in the wellness center computer.
- ❖ If using powder in the locker rooms, please put a towel on the floor to capture the loose powder. This will help keep the locker room floors looking clean.

Benefits of Reminiscing

Opportunities to reminisce together and learn about someone else's life gives people a chance to move beyond everyday, typical conversations such as the weather, food, health and sports. The experts are finding that reminiscing and life review have positive outcomes on brain function. In a 2003 study that compared brain activity in 30 year olds to brain activity in 70 year olds while reminiscing, scientists found that the hippocampus in the brain was entirely "lit up" and engaged in 70 year olds while 30 years olds only engaged a small part of the hippocampal region. "There's growing evidence that other people are the most unpredictable things you can encounter. So activities that have you engaging with other human beings are a fantastic form of brain exercise," said Lawrence Katz, Neurobiologist and investigator at Duke University Medical Center.

Recalling and sharing life stories has the power to lower depression, exercise the brain, and engage those with dementia. Life stories also create new conversations and can improve bonds between families and friends while leading to a higher sense of purpose and meaning for older adults. Use the following prompts as conversation starters in the dining room, in Jazzman's, or at your next family gathering.

What was your favorite subject in school? What was your least favorite?

What is your earliest memory?

Did your car or truck ever break down? What did you do?

What's the best gift you ever received? Who gave it to you and why was it the best gift?