



Older People Speak Out
Promoting the value of older people

LIFE TIMES



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Staying active and on your feet – what to do and how long to do it for

As we grow older, continuing to stay active becomes a little more of a challenge. We tend to lose some muscle strength and struggle to maintain a sense of balance.

Staying physically active though is the single most important thing you can do to stay fit and independent. The more active you remain, the better the chance of keeping your muscles strong and your joints mobile. It will also help with your sense of balance and reduce the risk of fall, therefore helping to keep you independent and at the same time improving your overall health and wellbeing.

General advice recommends you exercise for at least 30 minutes, five days a week. It doesn't need to be so hard that you cannot talk, but it does need to increase your



breathing and heart rate in order to make a difference.

You should try to mix up your activities so you use different muscles and it continues to be interesting for you. Remember, if 30 minutes sounds like a lot, you can always break it into three lots of 10 minutes to make it a little easier.

If balance is something you struggle with, you might like to try exercises such as dancing, pilates or yoga. These particular activities will help with your balance and strength, but will also help keep your blood pressure and weight

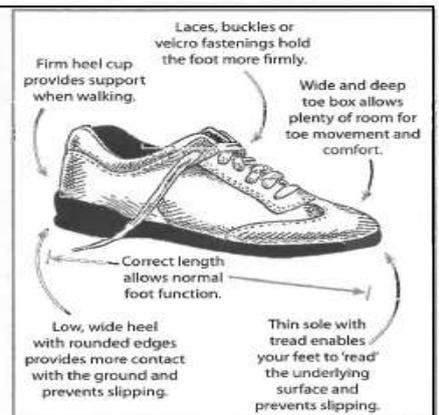
down. Other activities to keep in mind when trying to stay active are golf, swimming and lawn bowls.

Age is no barrier to exercise, however if you have any doubts about what you are capable of achieving in terms of exercise, it is best to consult your doctor.

Foot fetish

So that you can stay active and on your feet, it's important to make sure you have some well-fitted footwear.

As well as keeping you comfortable, this will also help reduce your chances of trips and falls. The safest footwear will have thin but firm soles with a tread, low square heels and a firm support around the heel to improve stability. Remember, your feet are part of your body too and it's important to look after them. To keep your feet healthy, keep your toe nails trimmed and get treatment for any bunions, corns or calluses.



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Web: www.opso.com.au/life-times

Look for our regular News Flashes and the Life Times newspaper editions on the OPSO website



Fun for the Frail & Frisky

Be active, healthy and radiant...

Needing a reason to get outside to soak up some vitamin D? What about putting aside a small plot in your garden and planting a little vegetable patch?

There's no need to go overboard with exhausting digging, just plant your vegetables in pots, an old toddler pool, or anything else you can poke some drainage holes in. Simply use some newspaper, hay, compost and soil to form a good base for your patch and you will soon be growing your own vegies and maybe even flowers.

Or if gardening isn't your thing, how about some golf putting practice?

Just set up some plastic mugs as 'holes' and lay them out in a 'course'. Then you can either play the course alone by counting your shots to make each 'hole' or play with a group and make a game out of it! Gets the arms, legs and mind going!

Do you have ideas you would like to share?

You can write to us at *Older People Speak Out, PO Box 1037, Mount Gravatt Qld 4122.*

Strong diet, strong bones

Along with physical activity, maintaining a healthy and balanced diet is very important for your overall health and wellbeing.

A healthy and balanced diet will help provide the energy you need to stay active and keep your bones and muscles strong.

First and foremost, it's important to make sure you drink enough water. Dehydration is common in older people and can cause weakness and dizziness and lead to falls. You should aim to drink at least six glasses of water a day.

Calcium is also very important for a strong and healthy diet. As we age we absorb less calcium and it becomes especially important to include it wherever possible. It's not just about drinking more milk, including foods like yoghurt, cheese, salmon, sardines, figs and almonds in your diet will also help increase your calcium intake.

Staying in touch with OPSO

Want to keep up to date with recent news from Older People Speak Out? Visit our website www.opso.com.au to subscribe.

You can also visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Older-People-Speak-Out-OPSO/151013694980647?ref=ts> where we regularly post about upcoming events such as the NSW seniors week concerts to be held on 17 and 18 March 2015 and also provide links to helpful news stories and other important information.
See page 5 for a taste of our latest Facebook items...



Old Bird's Eye View of the World – on the pleasures of revisiting one's childhood

I know that people can tend to look back on the nostalgic past with rose-tinted glasses. But not for me, when I look at this photograph of my Leaving Certificate high school year, taken in 1958. With a peripatetic school life that involved moving through a series of fragile friendships as I progressed through four primary schools and two high schools, it was only in the last of these, and in the two senior years, that I was lucky enough to find the terrific bunch of girls in this photograph, as well as a coterie of inspiring teachers, who combined to make these the best years of my school life. They were the real deal.



And, over recent years, they have proved to be a gift that keeps on giving. Comparing notes with other women who went to the same school, in different years, it turns out that our year did have a special something that the others didn't. A sort of glue that meant that some of them had kept up their strong friendships ever since, and they formed a core that has kept the rest of us in their wider circle over the years. And, quite recently, I contributed to this in a serendipitous way, and which I wrote about in *On serendipity: the pleasantly unexpected*. In that item I mentioned the happy rediscovery of an old school friend, 50 years on, at an airport, and the renewing of ties since then.

But the ties weren't just with me. As this now Californian-based friend was making regular visits back to visit her mother, each time she came back, at least some of our Old Girls' group had a lovely get-together as well, strengthening our bonds in so doing. And out of the most recent gathering came the seed of an idea, that has now blossomed. And that was the notion that "all of us would have something interesting to say about a childhood lived in the forties and fifties."

And so, it was agreed that we would each carry out an assignment, with a deadline for submission, "to record our most vivid memories from early childhood to around the time we were enrolled in our high

school." And one of our committee was appointed editor, to collect them in a monograph available to all.

With the deadline fast approaching, I knuckled down; and have been amazed at how memories have come flooding back, how lovely it has been to remember them, and how good it feels to now have – as a by-product – my written account for my grandchildren, of a childhood that is so different in so many ways, from theirs.

I'm sure we all went about the task in different ways. I started off with a stream of consciousness about what came to my mind spontaneously, and then looked at the suggestions given that "might trigger some memories." And they certainly did. They covered

the following topics:

- a. *Was your family affected by the Depression or WWII?*
- b. *What do you remember about your early encounters with those who used to be called "New Australians"?*
- c. *Did you have a member of your extended family living with you?*
- d. *Could you describe your mother's domestic routine?*
- e. *How were Sundays celebrated/observed in your house?*
- f. *What Radio programmes (e.g. Argonauts, Quiz Kids) did you listen to? What types of music were you exposed to in your home?*
- g. *What games did you play as a child? Did you have any hobbies?*
- h. *What role did sport play in your family?*
- i. *Did religion play a part in your family?*
- j. *What can you remember about Infants and Primary School?*
- k. *What books did you read? What films did you see?*
- l. *Did your family go away for holidays?*

As one of the migrants in the unusually multi-cultural bunch of girls in that era, I was a New Australian at the age of six, and so could write about that from the other side.

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Old Bird's Eye View of the World – on the pleasures of revisiting one's childhood

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Then, there were the memories of my transitioning into being simply an Australian, and segueing into what life was like for me way back then. Remembering hobbies like scrapbooks dedicated to the royals. And life as a bookworm soaking up Enid Blyton and the Just William and Billabong series. The caravan trip to Melbourne to see the Melbourne Olympics. Collecting autographs.

And being a child during the golden era of the radio, with all of those must-listen-to shows and serials, including an inglorious memory around Superman. Suddenly, it all came back: the "up, up and away" of Leonard Teale as Superman, starting each episode, and how that backfired on that poor actor when he

starred as the Duke in Twelfth Night. When he strode onto the stage of the Independent Theatre in his cape, he started voicing that famous monologue "If music be the food of love" in that oh so familiar voice, at a performance that we school children who had been set that play for our Intermediate, had come to see. And who all went crazy, over-riding him with whoops and cries of "Up, up and awaaay".

It has been so much fun to go back in time through this exercise that – with the permission of the committee that dreamed up this great idea – I thought I just had to pass it on. Enjoy!

Anne Ring © 2015

Who Cares anyway...

Every day many thousands of older people are being cared for across Australia by dedicated professionals providing high-quality care and support.

In 2012, more than 350,000 employees were employed in the aged care sector in residential and community settings as part of an appropriately skilled and well-qualified workforce.

Due to Australia's aging population the aged care workforce is set to continue its rapid growth with around 827,000 employees expected in 2050. There are currently a wide range of aged care qualifications, career development opportunities and skills training available as the industry will continue to provide opportunities for people to become involved.

Volunteers also play a very important role in supporting the aged care workforce, especially in rural areas. Volunteers mostly assist with social visits, helping with shopping and offering transport to appointments while direct-care workers, of which there are more than 240,000, are mostly nurses, physiotherapists and community care workers.

Whether they are providing support for older people to remain in their own homes or providing support in an aged care environment, these amazing people are there to help.

If you need some assistance, no matter how small, visit www.myagedcare.gov.au or call 1800 200 422.

Each month, *Life Times* will feature an article on housing options and issues. If you would like to contribute to the discussion or share your own experience, you can write to us at:

Older People Speak Out
PO Box 1037
Mount Gravatt Qld 4122

Technology is doing away with our language

Once upon a time we used to "wind the window up" in the car, or "pop the quarter glass". Today we "pull the window up", thanks to electronic windows.

A few decades ago the word "wireless" meant the radio. Now it's something entirely different. And "tweets" used to be for the birds. Today it also represents the process of posting a 140 character message on the social network Twitter.

The word "friend" has become a verb: "She friended me on Facebook". And the symbols @ and # are now among the most used on the keyboard.

Technology is not only changing the way we write, it's changing our language. And don't get me started on text speak! LOL!

Changes to aged care – what does it mean for the sector?

Further changes to the aged care system are due to roll out on July 1 2015. These changes mostly relate to Home Care Packages and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

The Department of Social Services and the Department of Human Services will be holding briefings for providers about these changes over the coming weeks. Sessions in New South Wales and Victoria have already sold out, however further dates are below:

- Hobart, TAS – Wednesday 18 March
- Launceston, TAS – Thursday 19 March
- Perth, WA – Tuesday 24 March
- Bunbury, WA – Wednesday 25 March
- Adelaide, SA – Thursday 26 March
- Port Augusta, SA – Friday 27 March
- Brisbane, QLD – Tuesday 31 March and Wednesday 1 April
- Townsville, QLD – Thursday 2 April
- Canberra, ACT – Friday 10 April
- Alice Springs, NT – Wednesday 8 April

Welfare reformed?

On 25 February 2015 the Federal Minister for Social Services released the Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*.

The review's purpose is to identify how to make Australia's welfare system fairer, more effective, coherent and sustainable and encourage people to work.

After some strong opposition, the age pension was left outside the scope of the welfare reform, however the recommendations provided to the Federal Government may impact those receiving the current carer allowance. If you would like to read more about this, please visit <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/news/2015/released-a-blueprint-for-welfare-reform>.

What are we saying on social media? And do you Like us?

Did you know that Older People Speak Out has a Facebook page? Social media, such as Facebook, is a great way to share information and encourage discussion and comment. Here are some of the recent items OPSO has been sharing on our Facebook page:

- Can ageism in the fashion industry be solved?
- WikiHospitals - you can now share your personal experiences of Australia's hospitals, both good and bad.
- Ageing gracefully - how women steer the line between inauthentic and old
- Why is an elderly grandmother chaining herself to a tree? What is she protesting?
- Pensioners behind bars: reports of a UK crimewave as pensioners struggle to make ends meet

Want to read more, or have your say on these articles? Log on to Facebook and search for Older People Speak Out. 'Like' our page and you can continue to follow our posts and join the conversation.



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