

HARC'S GUIDE ON HEALTHY AGING MONTH



The month of September celebrates Healthy Aging Month, which focuses on the positive aspects of growing older instead of the negative aspects and stereotypes.¹ Developing healthy habits become essential as we age and this month aims to encourage adults aged 45 and older to take action on their of physical, social, and mental well-being.¹ This infographic aims to promote healthy habits, provide local data, and inform our community on resources available for healthy aging in the Coachella Valley.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Incorporating exercise or physical activities in our daily life is a great way to proactively address our physical health. There are many benefits to being physically active such as preventing disease and reducing the risk of falls.²

If you are new to exercise, be sure to start slow and consult your doctor prior to starting an exercise routine. However, you don't need a strenuous exercise routine to maintain your physical health. Below are a couple of examples that may be easier to follow:

- Walk your dog for 15–30 minutes.
- Take up gardening.
- Try yoga to improve your flexibility and balance.



COACHELLA VALLEY DATA

In the Coachella Valley, 30% of adults age 45+ participate in physical activities or exercises every day of the week.³

Fortunately, most local adults find their neighborhood to be a safe place to walk, bike, and/or hike.³



LOCAL RESOURCE

The Desert Recreation District is currently hosting online physical activities such as adult fitness, morning stretching, yoga, and tai chi. For more information, visit <https://www.myrecreationdistrict.com>.



HEALTH SCREENINGS

In addition to including exercise into your routine, take this month as an opportunity to set up your annual physical, checkups or other health screenings! Make sure to visit your eye doctor and dentist as well as your physician. Many diseases can be prevented when caught early if you remain diligent about your health.



COACHELLA VALLEY DATA

Coachella Valley adults are more likely to see their doctor regularly as they age. For example, the percent of adults who have had a routine check-up in the past year is:

- 69% for those ages 45 to 54³
- 77% for those ages 55 to 64³
- 89% for those ages 65+

NUTRITION

In order to maintain good physical health, it is also important to sustain a healthy diet. The USDA suggests to balance your nutrition by:

- Make half your plate of fruits and vegetables. Focus on whole fruits and vary your vegetables.⁴
- Make half of your grains whole grains. Limit grain desserts and snacks like pastries.⁴
- Vary your protein routine with seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.⁴

COACHELLA VALLEY DATA

18% of adults aged 45+ spend less on food in order to prioritize other basic needs and 9% report a need with food assistance.³



LOCAL RESOURCES

- Riverside County Office on Aging, in collaboration with the Department of Public Social Services offer free resources for adult residents aged 60+ and residents with disabilities. These services include immediate food delivery for emergencies, 2-weeks supply of pantry and essential items, home-delivered and Grab-and-Go meals offered at community centers. For more information, visit <https://www.rcaging.org>.
- Due to COVID-19, several Grab-and-Go meals are available at multiple sites throughout Riverside County. To view the Grab-and-Go meal locations, visit <https://www.rcaging.org/COVID-19>.
- Some of FIND's Free Mobile Market community food distributions and food pantries remain open. You may find site locations near you by visiting: <https://www.findfoodbank.org/find-food/>.
- The Restaurant Meals Program for Riverside County allows CalFresh RMP eligible customers who are 60 years or older to use their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to buy nutritious prepared meals at participating restaurants. For details on participating restaurants, visit: <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us>.
- During this challenging time, many grocery stores have set specific hours for at-risk customers and shoppers in the ages 65 and over. A list of grocery stores offering special store hours, delivery services or pick-up options can be found in the following website: <https://www.visitgreaterpalmsprings.com/seniors-first/>.
- Hidden Harvest holds senior market events twice a month in seven locations across the Coachella Valley for residents. Although these senior market events have been placed on hold due to concerns about COVID, be sure to check them out in the future at <https://www.hiddenharvest.org>.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health has become a priority during these difficult times. Fortunately, many things that you do to improve your physical health also improve your mental health. Below are other examples to look after your mental health:

- Build a support system. Find a trustworthy individual who listens to you and has your best interest in mind.
- Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has shown to reduce the chance of relapse in depression.⁶
- Share memories. Research suggests that reminiscence therapy, in which people share personal stories and memories in groups, may reduce depressive symptoms.⁷



COACHELLA VALLEY DATA

In the past year, almost 26% of local adults aged 45+ had an emotional, mental, and/or behavioral problem that concerned them.³

When asked if they considered these problems severe enough to needed professional help, more than half (56%) said they considered these severe.³

RESOURCES

- TakeMyHand Peer Chat provides emotional support to people of all ages experiencing stress, anxious feelings or any other concerning behaviors that may cause distress. Visit <http://takemyhand.co/> for details and information.
- CARES Line (800-706-7500) is run by Riverside County Behavioral Health. This is a referral, evaluation and support line where licensed clinicians provide crisis intervention and connection to outpatient, inpatient and community resources.



SOCIAL HEALTH

By nature, we are social species that require social interactions. Lack of interaction with others can lead to health issues, isolation, and depression. Studies have found that individuals who participate in social or community activities are more likely to report good or very good health.⁵

Without a doubt, the current pandemic has shifted the way we socialize and engage with our loved ones, but this should not stop us from interacting with others

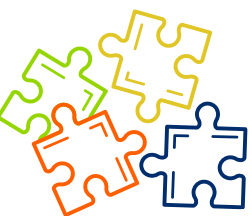
Feeling lonely? Pick up the phone and make a call to one of your loved ones. You may schedule a video chat conversation with a friend or your grandchildren.



COACHELLA VALLEY DATA

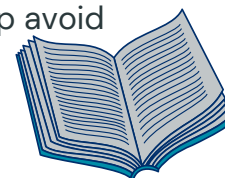
Local data shows that prior to the pandemic, 6% of adults 45 and older report feeling "often" or "always" lonely.³





MORE TIPS TO PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH IN SEPTEMBER... AND IN THE FUTURE!

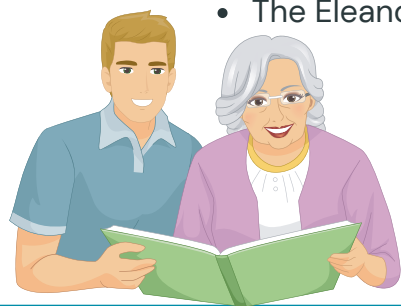
- Be positive in your conversations and actions. When you catch yourself complaining, change the conversation to something more positive.¹
- Smile! Research shows that people who smile more are happier.⁸
- Discover your inner artist! Have you always wanted to play the piano or learn how to paint? Seek online classes to discover the creative person in you.¹
- Keep your mind active! Read a book while you eat your breakfast or find a fun puzzle to work on. Keeping your mind engaged promotes cognitive health and may also help avoid Alzheimer's.⁹



SENIOR CENTERS

Senior centers are a great way to get support in all of these areas—like access to congregate meals, exercise classes, art classes, and opportunities for socialization—at an extremely affordable cost. To learn more about our local senior centers, visit their websites:

- Cathedral City Senior Center: <https://theccsc.org>
- Senior Center of Desert Hot Springs: <https://www.cityofdhs.org/senior-center>
- Indio Senior Center: <https://www.indio.org>
- Joslyn Center in Palm Desert: <https://joslyncenter.org>
- La Quinta Wellness Center: <https://www.laquintaca.gov>
- Mizell Senior Center in Palm Springs: <https://mizell.org>
- The Eleanor Senior Center in Coachella: <https://www.coachella.org>



SOURCES

1. <https://healthyaging.net/healthy-aging-month/september-is-healthy-aging-month/>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4461251/>
3. Coachella Valley Community Health Survey. (2019). HARC. Available online at: <https://harcdata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>
4. <https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/misc/dietaryguidelines/MyPlateMyWins.pdf>
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18973973/>
6. <https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/full-article/es/people-recurrent-depression-mindfulness-based-cognitive-therapy-reduces-relapse-461?hl=depression>
7. <https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/full-article/plus/effectiveness-pharmacological-interventions-older-adults-depressive-disorders-69405?hl=apostolo+and+reminiscence>
8. <https://econtent.hogrefe.com/doi/10.1027/1618-3169/a000470>
9. <https://homecareassistance.com/blog/ten-brain-stimulating-activities-may-reduce-risk-alzheimers#:~:text=Research%20has%20proven%20that%20brain,games%20can%20improve%20brain%20health.>



For more resources,
please visit:
HARCdata.org/covid-19