

Caregiver Education Series

The ADRC of La Crosse County and the Caregiver Coalition of La Crosse County are excited to announce a Caregiver Education Series. The series will start on May 21, 2024, and ends on October 15, 2024.

Each month there will be a different topic. Topics include Caregiver 101: Resources; Emergency Planning for Caregivers; Benefits; Financial Matters; Hiring Providers; and Technology Tips for Caregivers.

Dates:
June 25, 2024
July 16, 2024
August 20, 2024
September 17, 2024
October 15, 2024

Emergency Planning for Caregivers
Benefits: Medicare, Medicaid, VA... Oh my!
To Be Determined
To Be Determined
Financial Matters

Time: 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Location:
Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library
201 Neshonoc Rd
West Salem, WI 54669

Register by calling the **ADRC of La Crosse County 608-785-5700 or 1-800-500-3910**

Any questions can be directed to **Kristine Meyer at 608-386-0922 or kmeyer@lacrossecounty.org**

Summer Word Scrabble

imgisnwm _____
 cbliyec _____
 icnpci _____
 krrpesiln _____
 ehacb _____
 rsebfei _____
 caubebre _____
 mdaeLeon _____

panmcig _____
 itke _____
 stedaincsa _____
 lanrtmeweo _____
 ulassegsns _____
 suecnsre _____
 flilofspp _____
 liopspec _____

Kinship 4 Caregivers

Provides an hour of engaging, uplifting personal time for caregivers to practice self-wellness or receive caregiver education. Scheduled Thursdays so those in need of respite can utilize local programming for loved ones.

- ❖ 1st Thursday for Fun Activities
- ❖ 3rd Thursday for Education Topics
- ❖ Events typically do not provide meal, so “eat before we meet” if necessary.
- ❖ Activity or materials provided to inspire connection during times groups do not meet. Book Club in place of education in early Spring.

Kinship...

- ❖ Welcomes current and former caregivers for varying support options including education or activity to form new connections.
- ❖ Opt into the activities that appeal to you and your caregiving journey.

June

6th 12:30-2:30pm SPARK Documentary

Robin Williams Battle with Lewy Body West Salem Library 702 Industrial Ave. **16th 1:30p**

Caregiver Book Club “Keeping Love Alive”

Chpt.7,8& Append. First Lutheran Church 410 Main St. Onalaska

July

***** Take Home Summer Favorites Kit**

Pick up at ADRC or on OASIS Respite Day

18th 1:30 Education: Services Savvy

First Lutheran Church 410 Main St. Onalaska

August

August 1 2-4p Pontoon Ride

Mosey Landing W7207 N Shore Lane, Onalaska

15th 1:30 Self-Preservation while Caring

First Lutheran Church 410 Main St. Onalaska

September

****Sat. 14th 1:30-3p Caregiver Cruise Mississippi Queen**

Loved ones welcome! Riverside Park La Crosse * MUST Pre-REGISTER

19th 1:30p Make a Caregiver “To Go” Bag

First Lutheran Church 410 Main St. Onalaska

The Benefits of Gentler Hobbies

Research has suggested that gentler activities, like gardening and crafts, come with a host of health benefits

By **Natalie Schriefer** reprinted from **Next Avenue** April 12, 2024

When you find a hobby that resonates, stick with it. Having a hobby at all might be more important than choosing the "right" one,

Harvard's brief details [a 2023 study](#). Examining nearly 100,000 adults over age 65, the researchers found that participants who engaged in hobbies had higher life satisfaction than those who did not. This was true across all 16 countries included in the study.

Interestingly, both the study and Harvard's brief highlight a few beneficial hobbies — all "gentler" activities like gardening, crafts, and social clubs. This is unlike most generic "healthy hobbies" lists, which often focus on intense physical activity like [tennis](#) or [ballroom dance](#), or mentally intense hobbies like knitting.

Examining nearly 100,000 adults over age 65, the researchers found that participants who engaged in hobbies had higher life satisfaction than those who did not.

This focus on intensity might be lessening: Multiple studies have recently investigated the benefits of gentler hobbies. Thus far, the research has suggested that gentler activities come with a host of health benefits.

Recent Research

Harvard's news brief is one of many sources discussing the health benefits of gentler hobbies. A second 2023 study linked five less intense hobbies with successful aging: gardening, reading, watching TV, or listening to the radio, participating in social activities, and playing cards or other games. Out of more than 7,000 older adults, those with these five hobbies tended to be more physically active, have better mental health and have higher cognitive function, compared to those with few or none of these hobbies.

A 2020 Japanese study linked certain hobbies to decreased dementia risk. Over six years, they surveyed more than 50,000 adults over age 65, and found that travel and playing ground golf (a Japanese game that's a cross between golf and mini golf) lowered dementia risk for men and women. The researchers also noted that "the risk of dementia was lower as the number of hobbies increased."

"Leisure, as a whole, is more powerful than breaking it down to individual activities."

Finally, a 2023 Australian study found that engagement with the arts benefited older adults' mental health. This could include anything from creating art oneself to experiencing others' art at an event like a concert or an exhibition. In an interview with [Newsweek](#), one of the



researchers recommended that adults who want to engage with the arts "take part in the art form that makes them feel good."

Though these studies all focused on gentler hobbies, they each identified different activities. What this might suggest is that participation in a hobby — any hobby — is more important than the activity itself.

Asking the Experts

Heather Gibson, Ph.D., would argue just that. She said, "Leisure, as a whole, is more powerful than breaking it down to individual activities."

A professor in the Department of Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management at the University of Florida, and a fellow of the Academy of Leisure Sciences, Gibson co-edited the 2012 book "Leisure and Aging: Theory and Practice." She's studied activities ranging from sports tourism to girlfriend groups.

Much of her research has focused on women, so Gibson highlighted the importance of social connection for older women who are widows, live in rural areas or don't drive. In these scenarios, social networks might be challenging to build or maintain, but they're still "very, very important" for overall health.

Personalizing Your Activities

Gibson further noted that, when you do see your social network, what you do together is less important than *being* together. Whether it's sports, a coffee date or chatting in someone's living room, "the context," she said, "or the 'who' you're spending time with is actually more important than the activity itself." This allows for a lot of personalization, in terms of individual activities.

"Gardening also comes with other benefits, like being outside in the sun and connecting with others who garden, such as neighbors or a garden club."

Elizabeth Vásquez, DrPH, also advocates for personalization. She's a proponent of physical activity due to its association with increased cognition, on one condition: the activity must be tailored to your individual ability, not a generic adult's. Can't walk the oft-suggested 10,000 steps a day? Don't give up on all movement: "Even a five-minute walk has benefits," she said.

An associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University at Albany (SUNY), Vásquez noted, "The way we evaluate physical activity among older adults needs to be reframed."

She used gardening as an example. "People don't think of gardening as a physical activity," she said, but it is. Planting seeds, watering plants, and weeding each have a physical component, even if it isn't intense like competitive sports or weightlifting. Gardening also comes with other benefits, like being outside in the sun and connecting with others who garden, such as neighbors or a garden club.

"So it's not just the act itself," Vásquez said. "It's all the elements surrounding the act or the physical activity." Generic health guidelines don't always account for these surrounding elements, which, as Gibson argued, might be more important than the activity itself.

Generic guidelines also miss cultural differences. Vásquez, who is the director for the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities at the University of Albany, noted that many studies on older adults look at golf. "It's a very big thing among white Americans, but it's not as big among, perhaps, Latinos and African Americans."

Moving forward, Vásquez hopes that examining cultural differences will create "more culturally appropriate variations of physical activity." This could help more adults meet their activity goals. Her own research in this area includes a 2023 study on the racial and ethnic differences in physical activity, osteopenia, and osteoporosis.

Things get murkier when it comes to how an individual's physical and mental abilities shift as they age. What happens when someone has a hobby that they can no longer enjoy? Devin Celeste Barth, a community occupational therapist and a Ph.D. student at Colorado State University, has seen older adults struggle to accept these changes.

Find a Hobby That Resonates

"There's a grief component that is often neglected throughout the aging process," Barth said. She sees gentler hobbies as one potential way to process this grief.

"Some of these 'gentler' hobbies are nice stepping stones to being willing to try something that maybe is uncomfortable or challenging."

For example, she sometimes works with student veterans who are struggling with an all-or-nothing mentality. If they can't perform perfectly at school, why bother trying at all? When someone comes to her two weeks before finals with a mountain of incomplete assignments, she breaks down the big goal — pass the course — into a smaller one by asking, "Can we read two chapters in the next hour?"

When a student achieves a small goal, Barth calls this a micro victory. She sees gentler hobbies as serving a similar function for older adults. "Some of these 'gentler' hobbies are nice stepping stones to being willing to try something that maybe is uncomfortable or challenging," Barth said.

In short, it doesn't have to be your old hobby or nothing at all. When you're trying to find something new, an end goal of "Find a new hobby" might feel complex and abstract and if you aren't sure where to start, you might not start at all. A more manageable goal might instead be "Attend one art exhibition," "Try out a book club," or as Barth herself suggested, "Plan something with friends."

"It doesn't have to be a big plan like 'Bike across the city,'" she said, but trying one new thing, whether you stick with it, can give you the confidence to try it again. Maybe you'll become a member of that local book club. Or maybe the act of going — and then deciding it's not for you — can bolster you to try something else instead, like volunteering with a neighbor. Already you're making progress from that limiting "old hobby or nothing" mindset.

In the end, look for something that resonates. When you find it, stick with it because having a hobby just might be more important than choosing the "right" one.

We know it's not always easy – starting small can help. Which one of these things can you do today?

Cooking for Two

Skillet-Roasted Chicken with Pico de Gallo

Cook Time: 25 mins

Servings: 2

Ingredients

Pico de Gallo:

- 1 large red onion, divided
- 1 large tomato - cored, seeded, and diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
- 1 small garlic clove, chopped
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 small lime, juiced, divided

Chicken:

- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons ground ancho chile pepper
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 2 boneless, skin-on chicken thighs
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

Directions

1. Chop 1/4 of the red onion and place in a small mixing bowl. Cut remaining onion into rough wedges and reserve for the chicken.
2. Add tomato, jalapeno, garlic, and cilantro to the chopped onion. Add olive oil and 1/2 of the lime juice; stir mixture together and set aside.
3. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
4. Mix cayenne pepper, chile pepper, cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper together in a small bowl.
5. Trim and clean chicken thighs. Lightly brush both sides with olive oil, then coat with the spice mixture.
6. Heat remaining olive oil in a cast iron skillet over high heat until you can see steam coming up from the pan. Add chicken and sear on both sides until skin is crispy, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Remove from the heat. Sprinkle with reserved onion wedges and remaining lime juice.
7. Place in the preheated oven and cook until chicken is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, 12 to 15 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).
8. Plate chicken and top with pico de gallo.

Cook's Note: You can use bone-in chicken thighs if desired.