



## Great benefits from *the great outdoors*

***“In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows.”***

*– Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Perhaps now more than ever, the great outdoors is becoming more important for people of all ages and walks of life. Our recent months of staying at home and distancing from typical social activities may have led to our finding a greater connection with the natural world. Few pastimes restore the body and soul like spending time in nature. Research has confirmed that being outside does more than just lift your spirits, it provides a boost to your physical and mental well-being.

This boost is especially important for seniors. As we age, our day-to-day life can become mundane. Declining

health and mobility lead to the inability to go out and explore new places like we once did. This can cause feelings of isolation, loneliness, and being stuck in the same routine. Getting closer to nature is linked to more positive feelings and better mental health, along with lower levels of depression and anxiety.

One study found a 20% improvement in attention span after spending just one hour in a natural environment. Getting outdoors encourages seniors to increase their physical and mental activity levels, which can contribute to warding off cognitive decline, dementia, immobility and certain diseases. This may be the single most important benefit for seniors. No matter your level of mobility – simply sitting in a park or swinging on a

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swing set, enjoying a change of scenery, or listening to the sound of moving water can help you feel more alive and provide a sense of energy and vitality. If you or your loved one struggle with depression or feelings of hopelessness, this is an immeasurable gift.

Traditional exercise isn't the only way to spend more time outside, and unless you are particularly spry, a challenging hike might be out of the question. However, the good news is, there are countless ways to get more active and spend time outdoors. Here are a few easy places to get started:

### **Visit a park with a body of water**

If you are in decent health and can venture outdoors either by walking or in a wheelchair, do yourself a huge favor and spend some time near a body of water. Ponds, lakes, streams, creeks, and rivers are all ideal. The slow, trickling noise of moving water has been proven time and again to calm people and promote a feeling of relaxation and well-being. Many parks have paved, wheelchair accessible paths and walkways leading to the water. Check online before going to make sure it's the right place for your ability level. If you do rely on a wheelchair, or need a little extra assistance, our Assisting Hands® caregivers can provide transportation and companionship to you.

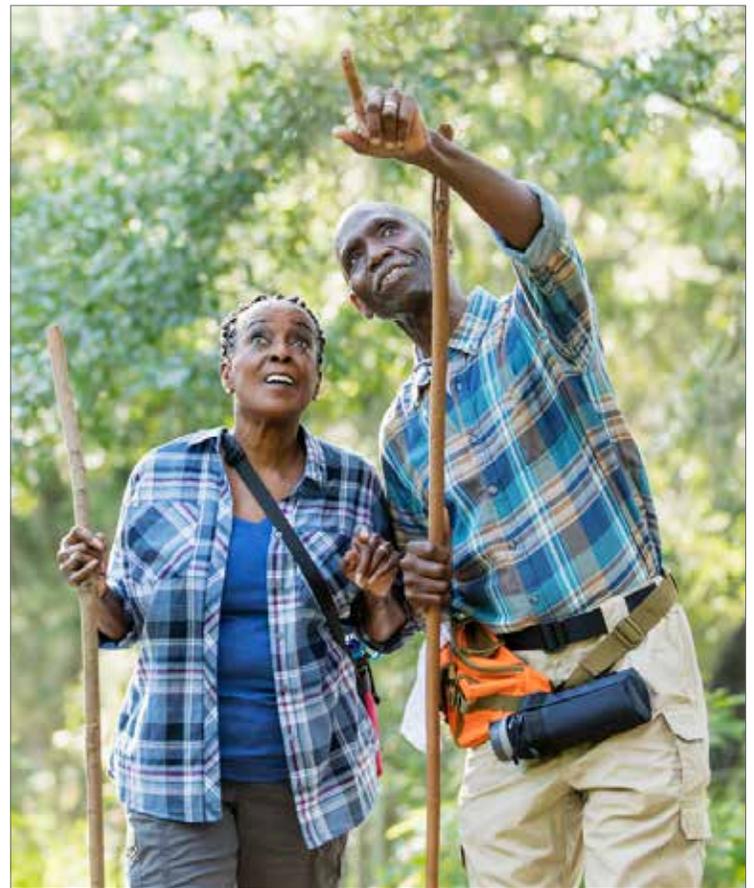
### **Create and maintain a small garden**

Gardening is a great way to interact with nature and get some fresh air and physical activity at the same time. If you have room, consider creating a small, natural area with native plants that attract honeybees, birds, and butterflies. On a smaller scale, plant container gardens of bright, well-liked flowers, or even easy-to-grow vegetables. If mobility is limited, have a friend place the container gardens near a window where it can be seen, without all the efforts it takes to get outside, as this is a great way to improve your outlook.

### **Birdwatch**

From filling up bird feeders in the yard to taking a walk through the park, birdwatching is an enjoyable activity that motivates seniors to get up and get moving. Even those relying on a wheelchair can participate.

Because bird feeders don't require much square footage, they're ideal for places with limited outdoor space like apartments and assisted living facilities. Although they require more maintenance, hummingbird feeders can provide much joy as the little creatures come to feed. Get



a bird book to help identify each new bird species that is seen. Ideal for people with limited mobility or declining health, birdwatching is a great way to experience nature without exhausting yourself or loved one in the process.

### **Go for a walk**

Most cities and towns have paved community trail systems designed for walking or biking. What's more, most retirement or assisted living facilities have paved walkways for strolling. For seniors who are physically able, going for a walk is one of the most beneficial ways to get out and enjoy nature. Because walking is a low-impact activity that boosts the heart rate slightly, it's a wonderful way to reap the benefits of both exercise and the outdoors at the same time. As with any outdoor activity during the summer months, use extra caution – limit your sun exposure to avoid harmful burns, and stay indoors if it's simply too hot.

Heading out into the great outdoors is a wonderful way for you or your loved one to improve not only your physical health, but also your mental well-being. Contact Assisting Hands® for more senior-friendly ideas. Our individualized care services ensure that seniors maintain the best potential quality of life, alleviating loneliness and isolation, all while giving the reassurance needed to remain active and engaged.

# Organizing tips to make things easier – *and safer*

**Make a plan and assess which rooms in the home need immediate attention.** Go through your home with a family member or caregiver to help identify any potential problems. Is the garage or basement overloaded? Do you have outdated foods in the kitchen or pantry?

**Use a daily checklist to keep track.** Make a checklist or calendar to keep track of appointments, medications, events, caregiver schedules, and more. If possible, create it electronically using an app so you have the ability to share with family and other caregivers. Included with this should be a list of all current medications. Take time to look for expired medications and properly dispose of them.

## Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is challenging!

Visit [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com) for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

*Sudoku puzzle courtesy of [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com)*

7		6					1	
	9			4		5		
	2				9	6		
6				3				7
1				5				8
		9	1				5	
		5		7			4	
	1					2		3

**Remove fall hazards from floors and stairs.** Items like rugs, excess furniture, and electric cords can become hazardous. Hang a basket on the wall near the stairway to hold items that need to go up or down. Add an extra railing, if possible, to make the stairs more manageable as well.

**Clear and organize any clutter.** Remove clutter from steps and walkways. Label storage areas and baskets for quick identification. Adding lights to dark areas will make it easier to see the floors while moving through your home. Use brighter light bulbs, open curtains and blinds to let the light in as well.

**Make the most often used items easier to access.** The rule of thumb here is: raise stored items to waist height and store items no lower than your upper thigh.

**Have all valuables and vital documents in one safe place, under lock and key.** Keep these items together, well organized, and readily available. Having insurance papers, financial records, and other important documents in a central location can save frustration and countless hours of searching later when you need them.

**Keep all bills in one designated workspace.** Store these items in one place along with your checkbook, envelopes, and stamps. Stacks may include documents, paid and unpaid bills, receipts, brokerage, pension and Social Security statements, medical expenses, and contracts. After sorting the items, organize the bills and other financial documents using a categorized binder or folders.

## National Senior Citizens Day

August 21, National Senior Citizens Day, recognizes the achievements of the more mature representatives of our nation. Their valuable contributions to our communities create better places to live. They deserve the respect and dignity their achievements earn them.

If you can, spend time with the senior citizens you know. At the very least, call them and let them know they are appreciated and loved. If you are a senior citizen, check for special discounts and promotions that may be offered at stores and restaurants in your area.

Summertime favorite!



# Simply Delicious



## Lemon Meringue Pie

*A picnic without lemon meringue pie is no picnic at all!*

**Yields:** 8 servings; **Prep:** 35 Mins; **Ready In:** 4 Hours

### Ingredients:

- 1 (14.1-ounce) package refrigerated pie crusts
- 1 1/4 c. sugar, divided
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 large eggs, plus 4 large egg yolks and 3 large egg whites
- 2 tbsp. Meyer or regular lemon zest, plus 3/4 c. lemon juice
- 6 tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1/8 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 (7-ounce) jar marshmallow creme

### Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400°F. Unroll 1 pie crust and lightly brush with water. Top with remaining pie crust and roll to a 12-inch circle. Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, fold edges under, and crimp. Prick bottom with fork. Line piecrust with parchment paper; fill with dried beans or pie weights. Bake until edges are set, 13 to 15 minutes. Remove weights and parchment paper, and bake until golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool completely.
- Whisk together 1 cup sugar and cornstarch in a medium saucepan. Whisk in whole eggs, egg yolks, and lemon juice.

Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened and bubbling, 7 to 9 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon zest and butter until melted and smooth. Transfer to crust and smooth top.

- Beat egg whites and salt on medium speed with an electric mixer until foamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Gradually add remaining 1/4 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Beat in vanilla. Beat in marshmallow creme, in four batches, until smooth, about 1 minute. Spread over pie.
- Bake until meringue is lightly browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack. Chill, if desired.

## Free online museum tours

Use your computer or tablet to see some of the world's most famous works of art from the comfort of home!

### Detroit Institute of Arts

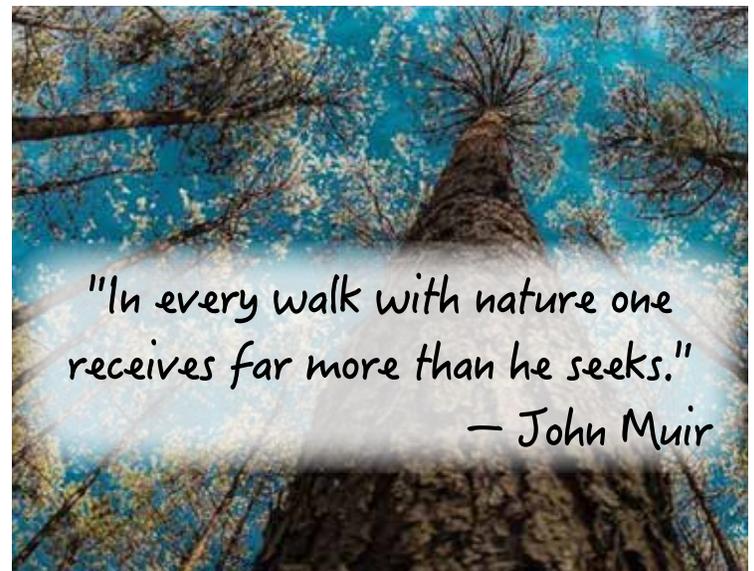
Modern art, realism, impressionism and more. One exhibit features Frida Kahlo. Visit: [www.artsandculture.google.com/partner/detroit-institute-of-arts](http://www.artsandculture.google.com/partner/detroit-institute-of-arts)

### Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Five virtual exhibits walk you through the inspiration behind O'Keeffe's greatest works, from modernism to watercolors. Visit: [www.artsandculture.google.com/partner/georgia-o-keeffe-museum](http://www.artsandculture.google.com/partner/georgia-o-keeffe-museum)

### The Louvre

France's most famous museum is offering four virtual tours: The Advent of the Artist, Egyptian Antiquities, Remains of the Louvre's Moat and Galerie d'Apollon. Visit: [www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne](http://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne)



*"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."*  
— John Muir