

## December 2023

### 12/4/23: Check in on Loved Ones Near and Far

The holidays are a time of togetherness and enjoyment for most of us, but they can be especially lonely for those who are isolated to begin with.

This isn't just bad for mental health, but it affects physical health as well. Social isolation has been associated with high blood pressure, anxiety, cognitive decline, and more. Dr. Steve Cole says that isolation acts as a stimulus to other health conditions.

So, what can you do to prevent isolation for yourself and your loved ones?

- Set goals and create a self-care plan that includes activities for physical, social and spiritual wellness.
- Volunteer
- Find a hobby or do something you enjoy
- Find a support group and connect with others
- As always, talk with your doctor or a mental health professional. There's no shame in talking to a counselor about what you're experiencing.

Finally, consider doing something small to reach out to others whom you care about. Send a card or letter to someone once a week. Bake an extra dozen cookies and deliver them to a friend, neighbor or coworker. Or use technology like video messages and social media to stay connected.

For more information on staying connected socially, visit [eehealth.org](http://eehealth.org) or [panola.agrilife.org](http://panola.agrilife.org).

[https://www.eehealth.org/blog/2021/10/older-adults-isolation/?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.eehealth.org/blog/2021/10/older-adults-isolation/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social)

### 12/11/23: Sneak some Activity Into your Work Day

While everyone's work situation and lifestyle is different, the vast majority of us could use a little more physical activity in our days. Moving just 3-4 minutes every hour can reap huge benefits for your mental and physical health- including things like boosted mood, increased energy, focus and productivity. And who couldn't use some of that? I'm Clarissa Moon here with 5 tips on sneaking more activity into your day.

- 1) Active Transportation: If you're able, walk, wheel or cycle to and from work, even if it's just for part of the way. Driving? Park farther away from your destination. Working from home? Go on a walk or bike ride before and after work to simulate a commute.
- 2) Exercise to Energize: The daily grind can be, well, a grind. Getting some physical activity can act as a reset button and boost your energy. Even though you may not want to exercise *because* you're tired, research actually shows that getting active can be just what you need!

- 3) Multi-task. Find opportunities to be active while working. Take phone calls while on a walk or take a walk to visit someone face-to-face rather than emailing.
- 4) Set movement reminders: Blocking out time in your calendar will make you more likely to stick with the activity.
- 5) Help establish a new social norm: be a leader and encourage others to join you!

There's your 5 tips on sneaking in more activity! For more information visit [participaction.com](http://participaction.com) or [panola.agrilife.org](http://panola.agrilife.org).

<https://www.participaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PA-SneakItIn-TipSheet-Employee-EN.pdf>

### **12/18/2023: If it Looks like a Quack...**

Health fraud scams can be found everywhere, boasting miracle cures for many ailments and conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, weight loss and more. Keep in mind that if it looks like a quack and it sounds like a quack... It's probably a quack! I'm Clarissa Moon here with a few tips to protect yourself from those pesky quacks.

Here are a few red flag marketing terms to be aware of:

- Miracle cure
- Quick fix
- Ancient remedy
- Secret ingredient
- Scientific breakthrough

I hope these red flags help keep you protected from the army of quacks this season. For more information, visit [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov) or [panola.agrilife.org](http://panola.agrilife.org).

[https://medlineplus.gov/healthfraud.html?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=&utm\\_campaign=](https://medlineplus.gov/healthfraud.html?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_term=&utm_content=&utm_campaign=)

### **12/25/2023: Move those Achy Joints**

One common ailment, and excuse for not exercising, is joint pain. However, many people don't realize that exercise can actually *help* your joints. Exercise helps keep joints flexible and strong. It can also help you lose weight, which takes pressure off aching joints. Every pound you lose takes 4 pounds of pressure off your knees and 6 pounds off your hips. But how to get moving when moving is painful? I'm Clarissa Moon here with a few tips.

Start by warming up with some gentle movements. Simple exercises such as side bends, shoulder shrugs, arm circles, overhead stretches, and bending toward your toes are all good warm-up moves. Repeat each one three to five times.

Getting active strengthens the muscles that support your joints. Aerobic exercise (or cardio) helps your most important muscle: your heart. Try some low-impact exercises like walking, swimming, or yoga to get started.

Strengthening exercises such as weight training help you build the muscles that support your joints. You can use hand weights, resistance bands, or even a 1-liter water bottle. Start with weights that you can lift 12 to 15 times without slouching or poor form.

End your workouts with some stretching to relax.

Remember- exercise should be challenging but not painful. Mild soreness is normal after a new exercise but anything that lasts more than a couple of days means you need to slow down. If you have lasting pain, then it's time to consult a professional.

I hope these tips help inspire you to feel the gentle burn and get those joints limbered up! For more information visit [webmd.com](http://webmd.com) or [panola.agrilife.org](http://panola.agrilife.org).

<https://www.webmd.com/osteoarthritis/ss/everyday-exercises-for-oa-slideshow>