



Pre-Appointment Decision Box

Older Adults

Maintaining Independence in Daily Activities

With aging, some individuals lose their ability to perform tasks of everyday living, such as eating, dressing, bathing, housekeeping, cooking, using the telephone, using transportation, and managing money. Possible causes of older adults' loss of independence in daily activities include: extended bed rest, side effects of medication, a need for invasive devices such as a catheter or an oxygen cylinder, experiencing more than one disease at the same time, worsening of a chronic condition, or a personal crisis.

There are several options to maintain independence in daily activities. Depending on your priorities, you may or may not decide to make a change. The choice is up to you. These options can cause benefits or harms and it is difficult to predict how they will work for you. We recommend that the decision take into account your values and priorities, and that you share this decision with a healthcare professional.

Consider the following:












1. *What is my main health problem?*
2. *What do I need to do to meet my health goals?*
3. *Why do I need to do anything?*
4. *What else do I need to know?*



What is most important to you?

SELECT WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AND LOOK AT THE OPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

✓ **Choose a single item at a time.**

Improve my ability to perform daily living activities	<input type="radio"/>		
OPTIONS TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE:			
			
Improve my independence in self-care and mobility	<input type="radio"/>		
OPTIONS TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE:			
			
Avoid hospital admissions	<input type="radio"/>		
OPTIONS TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE:			
			
Improve my mental strength	<input type="radio"/>		
OPTION TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE:			
			
Find solutions on my own	<input type="radio"/>		
OPTION TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE:			
			
Other:	<input type="radio"/>		

Options to maintain independence



Physical Activity Tailored to Older Adults

Good choices are walking, yoga, water exercises, balance or flexibility exercises, and weight training. The activity should make you sweat. You should be able to hold a conversation but may find it difficult to sing.

BENEFITS: Physical activity has many health benefits including reduced risk of disease and improved bone health, mood, mobility, and sleep. It can also help to reduce falls.

HARMS: Physical activity can cause temporary muscle soreness after exercising. It can also cause muscle, bone, and joint problems.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: In general, to experience positive impacts from physical activity, people must be physically active for at least 3 weeks, either for 20 minutes 3 times a week, or for 2 hours once a week. Whatever the duration and frequency of the exercise, it takes time.



Rehabilitation or occupational therapy at home

Rehabilitation or occupational therapy is provided by healthcare workers as part of homecare services. After an initial assessment, your healthcare provider will prepare a program based on your goals.

BENEFITS: Receiving therapy may help to avoid an incident, such as a fall that would require a trip to an emergency department. Receiving therapy may increase your ability to remain in your home longer.

HARMS: Receiving care in your home may contribute to feelings of isolation.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: A program may take at least six weeks to complete.



Smart Homes

Smart technology can be built into your home to monitor what is happening and improve your experience in your home. These technologies can be used by health care professionals to monitor your health.

BENEFITS: Increased ability to perform daily activities and decreased hospitalization.

HARMS: Increased dependence on technology.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: The cost of purchasing or installing equipment can be expensive. Extra costs can include monthly fees for internet service. The availability of Smart Home technology may depend on where you live. If you live in a remote area, you may have trouble accessing the technology. If you're not familiar with computers, you may also find Smart Home technology difficult to use.



Yoga

Yoga includes physical, mental, and spiritual practices that originated in ancient India. It involves holding stretches as a kind of low-impact physical exercise, and may involve meditation, visualization, breathing exercises, and music.

BENEFITS: Increased balance and mobility.

HARMS: Older adults who do yoga may experience minor adverse events such as knee pain, lower back pain, or minor muscle strain. Some may also experience a worsening of existing lower back pain.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: To feel the benefits, the person generally needs to do yoga for 60 minutes or more at a time, 1 to 2 times a week, and for at least 8 weeks.



Self-management programs

Self-management support programs are educational programs provided by healthcare staff. These programs aim to increase your skills and confidence in managing your health.

BENEFITS: Participating in self-management programs helps to increase independence in daily activities and reduce hospital readmissions.

PRACTICAL ISSUES: You may find taking part in self-management programs time-consuming.



Brain exercises

Brain exercises can include doing activities and games like reading, crosswords, and sudoku.

BENEFITS: Increased ability to perform daily activities and increased mental processing speed.

HARMS: You may feel some anxiety to do well if done in a group.



Wait and monitor

You also have the option to do nothing. You will wait and monitor to see if things change.

BENEFITS: You avoid the inconvenience of making a change to your lifestyle and have time to find solutions on your own.

HARMS: Decreased chance of maintaining or improving independence in daily activities, increased risk of dying, and increased admissions to a long-term care home. Feelings of helplessness and distress can impact your quality of life. You may also find that in time, you may need more help in the home.

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