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# Senior fitness — You may have more choices than you think

Do you struggle with starting or maintaining a fitness routine? Don't worry, you're not alone. While most of us know that exercise is beneficial, fitness can be daunting, especially if you're over 65 and want to be sure that you work out in a way that is safe and effective.

The good news? Physical activity is key to maintaining health and mobility as you age, and if you are 65 or older, the right Medicare Advantage Plan can provide tools and resources to help you get off the couch. If you just need a little motivation to reengage in your fitness and social routines or would like to start a new one, there are more choices than ever in exercise and wellness options.

## Meeting seniors where they are

No matter your age, the ongoing pandemic has caused tremendous changes in our lives, including an increase in physical and mental health issues because of social isolation. Many seniors were understandably cautious due to a heightened health risk and experienced a greater disruption of trusted routines. More good news? We continue to see a return to our lifestyles and activities.

A recent nationwide poll by Tivity Health, a leading provider of healthy lifestyle solutions, including SilverSneakers®, the nation's leading community fitness program designed for older adults, shows that seniors no longer just work out at the gym or home, but enjoy the freedom to exercise how and where they please: indoors, outdoors, at the gym or community center, together or alone, in-person or virtual. The poll also found that over the last few months, 78% of seniors have engaged in some type of physical activity, the highest proportion in months. More seniors are engaging in activities that bring them joy and can include a variety of movements - walking, household chores, gardening, hiking, etc. By identifying how the



STOCK PHOTO Living Senior

past few years have unsettled these daily routines, we can take steps to help older adults re-energize and re-engage in healthy activities that are enjoyable and encourage valuable social connections.

## All you need is an iPhone

By joining forces with Apple Fitness+, the award-winning fitness and wellness service designed to be welcoming to all, SilverSneakers members in participating health plans will soon have access to Apple Fitness+, with workout types from Strength to Yoga, guided meditations, and more at no additional cost. Programming allows members to exercise where they want, when they want with world-class workouts and fitness programming curated for a range of skill levels and interests.

"We know that fitness isn't one size fits all, especially with today's dynamic senior population," said Richard Ashworth, president and CEO of Tivity Health. "Seniors need a variety of options for physical activity that fit their lifestyles. Our partnership with Apple Fitness+ offers

fitness for all skill levels, interests and goals including a wide array of content presented by expert instructors and celebrity guests."

## Seniors can change the fitness industry

The fitness industry is changing. According to the International Council on Active Aging, a large and growing number of products and services are being developed to allow people to fully enjoy the gift of a longer life, which requires a foundation of good health. Exercise remains critical for seniors to maintain a healthy immune system that's able to fight off disease and consistent exercise can improve balance and strength and help prevent falls.

One trend the pandemic saw was the rise of digital and virtual care, and it's here to stay. About one in four seniors are currently using a device to monitor their health and well-being, and the use of video calls to socially connect with friends and family has steadily increased.

(BPT)

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**above:** The new year brings new opportunities to improve your health and January is the perfect time to jump-start your fitness journey.

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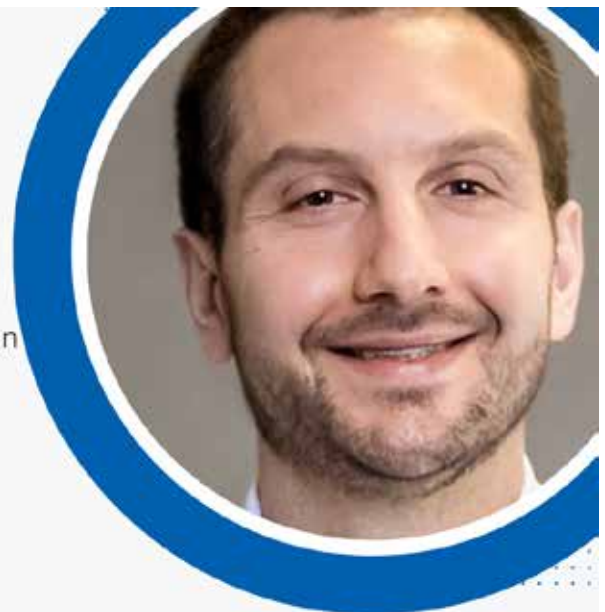


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## Older bowlers savor time at the Lanes

By Jason Arndt

STAFF WRITER

Regardless of skill level, or how long a person has played, the Nifty Fifty Plus Co-Ed Bowling League welcomes anyone older than 50 to join in on the fun.

Nifty Fifty Plus, which meets every Friday afternoon at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington, consists of more than two dozen members with room to grow.

Milli Cramer, secretary for Nifty Fifty Plus, said the group carried many names dating back at least 40 years.

"We start in September, and we usually are done in either March of April," she said. "This year we will be done in March."

Cramer reported the group has at least 24 members with a high of 40 people set 20 to 25 years ago.

### Staying active

Club President Richard Kuzelka, who has been part of the group for six years, said he decided to join because he needed to find an activity instead of simply staying at home.

"It is a lot of fun, we don't really worry about how good, or how bad we bowl," he said. "Everybody cheers for everybody else."

Additionally, since the group meets weekly, Kuzelka has met many new friends, some of whom he engages with beyond Towne and Country Lanes.

For example, some members of Nifty Fifty Plus participate in a card club at the



Neil Martin, a member of Nifty Fifty Plus Co-Ed Bowling League, picks up a bowling ball before approaching the lane at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington.

JASON ARNDT PHOTOS Living Senior

Burlington Senior Activity Center.

"It is fun to keep people active instead of sitting at home," he said.

For John Brensinger III, a long-time member, he simply keeps coming for the relationships with group members.

"We come here, and see a lot of smiles, and hear a lot of laughs," he said. "We are very happy people."

Brensinger said he never considered himself as a competitive bowler.

While he played as a youngster, it wasn't until another Nifty Fifty Plus member encouraged him to join the club, which he did more than a decade ago, that he became competitive.

"I have met a lot of good people here," he said.

### Relaxed environment, reasonable fees

The U.S. Bowling Congress sanctions many bowling leagues, championships, and even has multiple national teams representing the United States.

But that is not the case for Nifty Fifty Plus, which merely looks to foster a relaxing, and fun-filled environment for seniors.

"We are out to have fun, we are not out

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7




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**above:** Mary Lois watches and hopes to pick up a spare during a Nifty Fifty Plus bowling game. **right:** Nifty Fifty Plus member John Brensinger celebrates after bowling a strike during a game at Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington.

JASON ARNDT PHOTOS *Living Senior*



## BOWLERS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

to try to beat the other guys, we just like to have fun and we do. I have got a lot of friends here. Everybody here is just so nice,” Cramer said.

Since Nifty Fifty Plus isn’t an officially sanctioned league, Cramer said club members are able to pay reasonable to join the group for the 30-week session at Towne and Country Lanes.

“It works out well, we don’t charge anybody if they are not here on a Friday,” she said. “Our fees are very reasonable.”

While the group boasts about 24 members, Cramer and other bowlers have room to add more, and is not limited to people who live in the Burlington area.

Cramer said members come from the Kenosha area, Waterford, Twin Lakes and beyond.

“We would like to go up higher, at one point, I think we had 40 members,” she said. “That was quite a long time ago, like 20 to 25 years ago.”

While the league meets every Friday, Nifty Fifty Plus can accommodate members, who may have other personal commitments such as attending family birthday parties, anniversaries and even doctor’s appointments.

Considering the club accommodates people’s schedule, Cramer said Nifty Fifty Plus can always use substitutes, who can fill in when needed.

“We keep looking for substitutes because a lot of people have different things they have to do, or they might get sick, so we also are looking for anybody that can sub,” she said.

Kuzelka concurred.

“If people have things going on in their personal lives, birthdays, anniversaries, we could use some substitutes,” Kuzelka said.

“Sometimes they can’t make it, so

we use a lot of subs to make up that difference,” he added.

As for group membership, Cramer said Nifty Fifty Plus has people as young as 50 up to 87 years old.

But the group could use the younger crowd, especially people who are looking for an activity once they retire, or close to retiring.

“Nifty Fifty is bowling for senior citizens, you have to be 50 or older,” she said. “We are hoping to get more young people that are going to retire, or have extra time on their hands.”

While the group promotes a relaxed environment and a welcoming atmosphere, Kuzelka recognized Nifty Fifty Plus members oftentimes look out for each other in the community.

“When something happens, we stick together when things go bad,” Kuzelka said.

### Supportive venue

Towne and Country Lanes, 246 S. Pine St., Burlington, is a family-owned bowling venue and was established in 1958.

In 1971, Merrill and Lorraine Draper bought the business, and continued the tradition of offering bowling to the area.

Since then, Theresa Riemer, daughter of Merrill and Lorraine, has become general manager while Cotie Holbeck runs the pro shop and serves as day time manager.

“We try to treat customers like family. We take care of customers as well as we can,” Holbeck previously told Southern Lakes Newspapers. “We know most of the customers by name.”

Cramer and Kuzelka each recognized Towne and Country Lanes officials for offering an ideal atmosphere for the Nifty

Fifty Plus group.

Upon completion of the Nifty Fifty Plus season, Towne and Country Lanes holds a party for its members, according to Cramer.

“The people at Towne and Country have been very good to us,” Cramer said. “They have a party at the end of the year and it just wraps everything up for us. We just can’t say enough about all of the people here.”

Kuzelka said owner Merrill Draper has participated in Nifty Fifty Plus bowling on some occasions.

Like Cramer, Kuzelka expressed gratitude to Towne and Country Lanes.

“We are supported very well by management here,” Kuzelka said. “They are always supportive and give us some good deals on bowling.”

While Nifty Fifty Plus simply bowls for an activity, Towne and Country Lanes as well as River City Lanes in Waterford plan to host a competitive event for seniors, which will begin in 2023.

Both venues will serve as hosts of the 42nd annual Wisconsin State Senior Championship early next year.

Riemer said Towne and Country Lanes previously served as hosts on two other occasions, and the event promises to bring thousands to the area from February through April.

“We will be welcoming over 2,000 bowlers to our area, plus spouses that come to visit and travel with them,” she said. “Not only is it a great thing for our business, but for the City of Burlington and surrounding areas.”

“The City of Burlington, Waterford, and surrounding areas are going to see an increase in business because of the bowlers coming from all over the state of Wisconsin.”



Towne and Country Lanes, of Burlington, features 18 lanes for customers of all ages and skill levels.

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# Winter fun at the lanes

*Towne and Country offers leagues, open bowling*

By **Jason Arndt**

STAFF WRITER

Towne and Country Lanes, of Burlington, and other bowling venues expect to see an influx of customers heading indoors to participate in multiple leagues and open bowling days with winter's arrival.

Theresa Riemer, general manager for Towne and Country, said the Burlington venue also experiences an increase in people participating.

"Winter is our busiest time of the year by far," she said. "Around here, those that don't ski or ice skate, or do outdoor sports want to come inside."

The winter season, she said, typically runs from October through April and consists of leagues for all ages and skill levels, along with a growing youth program typically held on Saturday mornings.

### Youth boom

According to Riemer, the youth program has increased significantly for 2022-23, with more children ages four to 18 coming in on Saturday mornings.



"Our Saturday morning program has exploded this year. The Saturday morning program has a lot of people," she said.

The younger crowd, she said, typically starts with bumper bowling with the rails up to prevent gutter balls in the lanes.

"They will be bowling anywhere from two to three games every Saturday depending on what league they are in," she said. "We have coaches here for each of the leagues to help with basic instructions all the way up to advanced instructions for the older kids."

Additionally, Towne and Country Lanes serve as the home venue for Burlington, Catholic Central and Wilmot Union high school bowling programs.

For the second consecutive year, Burlington and Catholic Central have formed a boys varsity co-op program, while Wilmot has varsity and junior varsity co-ed squads.

Additionally, unlike last year, Burlington High School finally has enough girls to form a varsity team, according to Riemer.

"We did not have a girls team last year, but we have a girls team this year," Reimer said. "The boys team, we have more members this year. The Wilmot teams have a few more bowlers."

Towne and Country Lanes typically sees anywhere from 75 to 100 youth bowlers, according to Reimer, who said most participate in either the Saturday morning program or the high school program - not both.

"It is something different for the kids to do besides football, or basketball, or soccer," Riemer said. "Our program is structured so that kids who are in those sports such as football, soccer, basketball, can also work bowling into their schedule."

The youth boom, meanwhile, comes a couple of years after bowling experienced a slight decline in participation.

Cotie Holbeck, who has a well-established bowling career and serves as pro shop operator at Towne and Country, welcomes the rebound in activity.

"Over the last couple of years, bowling is starting to ramp up again," Holbeck said. "There are so many kids that are coming in and are willing and want to get better. They learn and have a good time."

Starting bowlers young, he said, is critical to helping the sport grow in the future.

"When you start them when they are kids, they are going to be lifelong bowlers," he said. "The youth bowling today is the future of bowling right now."

"It is great to see more kids involved."

The recent growth, according to Riemer, reflects an industry trend both locally and nationally.

"Overall, in the industry, they still say that high school bowling is the largest growing sport everywhere," she said.

Locally, she credits parents, who started as youth bowlers at Towne and Country Lanes.

"The kids that are coming into the program are kids of former junior bowlers," she said.

## Decades in business

Towne and Country Lanes was established in 1958.

In 1971, Riemer's parents, Merrill and Lorraine bought the business, and continued the tradition of offering bowling to the area.

"We try to treat customers like family. We take care of customers as well as we can," Holbeck said. "We know most of the customers by name."

Along with multiple leagues, and open bowling times, Towne and Country Lanes also offers a venue for birthday and company parties as well as pro shop for people looking to begin the sports or upgrade equipment.

"I offer a wide variety of sales, I also custom fit and drill bowling balls that I order from different warehouses through a distributor that I use," Holbeck said. "I do have some accessories - balls, bags and shoes - I sell it all out of here."



Cotie Holbeck, of Towne and Country Lanes, rolls the ball down the lane for a strike.

JASON ARNDT *Living Senior*

## Big business

River City Lanes, of Waterford, and Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington will serve as hosts of the 42nd annual Wisconsin State Senior Championship early next year.

The tournament will open Saturday, Feb. 11, with the last squad held on Sunday, April, 30, according to the United States Bowling Congress.

Riemer reports Towne and Country Lanes previously served as hosts on two other occasions.

"We will be welcoming over 2,000 bowlers to our area, plus spouses that come to visit and travel with them," she said. "Not only is it a great thing for our business, but for the City of Burlington and surrounding areas." The City of Burlington, Waterford, and surrounding areas are going to see an increase in business because of the bowlers coming from all over the state of Wisconsin."

The Wisconsin State Senior Championship, which is still accepting entries, is open to bowlers 55 and older.

Towne and Country Lanes, 264 S. Pine St., Burlington, is accessible online at [towneandcountryslanes.com](http://towneandcountryslanes.com).

For customers looking for open bowling, Riemer suggests calling Towne and Country Lanes ahead of time, since hours vary depending on day.

For more information, call 262-763-7333.

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# The impact of reading on long-term cognitive health

Older adults recognize the threat posed by cognitive decline, which can make it hard for individuals to live independently.

According to data from the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research published in 2020 in the journal *Epidemiology*, since the mid-1990s, rates of dementia cases in the United States have risen steadily. Since that time, the annual increase for men is 2.0% and for women it is 1.7%. Researchers concluded that, “undercovering determinants of increasing cognitive impairment risk should become a research priority.”

As doctors grapple with figuring out why dementia rates are growing, individuals can do all they can to help reduce their risk for serious cognitive decline. Some reduction in cognition is to be expected with age, but dementias, such as Alzheimer’s disease, should not

be accepted as an inevitable side effect of aging. In fact, reading more can help people keep their brains sharp.

Studies looking at the effects of daily reading activity on the risk of cognitive decline point out that reading does, in fact, make a big difference. According to research by Yu-Hung Chang, I-Chien Wu and Chao A. Hsiung, from the Department of Public Health, China Medical University and Institute of Population Health Sciences, a 14-year study of people aged 64 and above determined those with higher reading frequencies were less likely to have cognitive decline at 6-, 10- and 14-year interval measurements. This remained the same at all educational levels. The authors concluded that reading was protective of cognitive function later in life.

Dr. Wade Fish, director at Northcentral University’s Graduate School, advises

that reading can improve memory and concentration, and also relieves stress. Brain-stimulating activities like reading have been shown to slow down cognitive decline in older age.

While reduction in cognitive decline is one benefit of reading, *Psychology Today* also reports that bibliotherapy, or the therapeutic use of select reading materials, can alleviate many different mental health challenges. It can improve one’s social cognition and ability to empathize with others. Reading also can be associated with a longer life.

A cohort study drawn from the Health and Retirement Study collected by the University of Michigan’s Institute of Social Research and supported by the National Institute on Aging found book reading was associated with a 20% reduction in mortality.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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# *Habits that affect* **cognitive health**

Various changes to appearance and health are associated with aging. Issues such as diminished vision, waning muscle strength and gray hairs are among the more common and noticeable side effects of aging. Cognitive decline is another symptom often associated with aging, even if that needn't be the case.

Certain lifestyle choices can protect against cognitive decline and dementias. While there is no surefire way to prevent dementias, here are some good habits for maintaining cognitive function well into your golden years.

## **Exercise frequently**

Harvard Health reports that exercise, in addition to the many other benefits it provides, may help improve cognitive function in people who have already experienced memory issues. Exercise may be particularly advantageous to people who carry the APOE4 gene variant,

which makes people more susceptible to Alzheimer's. Speak with a doctor about how much exercise is needed and what is safe for your age.

## **Enjoy video games**

Playing a favorite video game may improve long-term cognitive function. Researchers at Cambridge Brain Sciences found study participants who played non-cognitive-training video games were associated with better performance in several cognitive domains, but only for younger (age 18 to 64) participants. Cognitive training games, on the other hand, were not associated with any cognitive improvement.

## **Stay socially engaged**

According to a study published in the journal *Experimental Aging Research*, seniors who have high levels of social engagement also have better cognitive

function.

Getting together with friends, participating in a club, attending religious studies, and any other activity that gets you out with other people can help with cognitive function.

## **Eat a healthy diet**

Eating a diverse array of healthy foods is beneficial. Nutritious diets can help reduce the risk for illnesses that may affect cognitive ability. Eating well also helps keep the brain healthy. A Mediterranean diet appears to lower the risk or slow the progression of dementia in people who have the condition.

## **Get help for sleep disorders**

Lack of sleep can affect memory and learning. By getting help for sleep disorders, you may reduce your risk for cognitive issues.

(METRO CREATIVE)

While it is not possible to prevent or cure cognitive conditions like dementias with lifestyle changes, certain behaviors can lower the risk of developing these illnesses or reduce their severity.

STOCK PHOTO *Living Senior*



# The basics of diabetes & diet

The number of people living with diabetes has risen dramatically over the last four decades. According to the World Health Organization, between 1980 and 2014, the number of people with diabetes rose from 108 million to 422 million.

The dramatic spike in diabetes cases in such a short period of time highlights just how big a threat the disease poses to the health of people across the globe. That makes now a perfect time to learn more about diabetes and what individuals can do to manage their disease.

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease related to how the body produces or utilizes insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce sufficient insulin or cannot effectively utilize the insulin it produces.

## What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

The WHO notes that more than 95 percent of the people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, type 2 diabetes occurs when the body does not use insulin

properly, whereas type 1 occurs when the body does not produce insulin.

## Can diabetes be managed?

It's important that individuals diagnosed with diabetes recognize that both types 1 and 2 can be managed. The ADA reports that diet and routine exercise are vital to managing type 2 diabetes.

The ADA urges people who have recently been diagnosed with diabetes to speak with a registered dietitian nutritionist to find foods that are healthy and help them feel satisfied at the end of a meal. Lingerings may compel people to make poor dietary choices that could make their condition worse.

The ADA's "Nutrition Consensus Report," published in 2019, is a comprehensive review of 600 research articles over a five-year span conducted by a panel of scientists, doctors, endocrinologists, diabetes educators, and dietitians.

That review emphasized the significance of working with an RDN, noting that recommendations about diet for diabetes patients must take factors specific to each individual, including

their life circumstances and preferences, into consideration. The review also noted that each person responds differently to different types of foods and diets, so there is no single diet that will work for all patients.

Though there is no "one-size-fits-all" diet for people with diabetes, the ADA created the Diabetes Plate Method as a simple way to help people with diabetes create healthy meals.

The method urges individuals to fill half their plate with non-starchy vegetables, such as asparagus, broccoli, green beans, and salad greens. One-quarter of the plate should be filled with lean proteins such as chicken, lean beef (cuts like chuck, round or sirloin), or fish (salmon, cod, tuna). Plant-based sources of protein also count, and these include beans, lentils, hummus, falafel, edamame and tofu, among other foods. The final quarter of the plate should be reserved for foods that are higher in carbohydrates, such as whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, whole grain pastas), beans and legumes, or even fruits and dried fruit.

More information can be found at [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org).

(METRO CREATIVE)

More people than ever before are being diagnosed with diabetes. Diet plays a significant role in managing life with diabetes.

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