

Quality of Life in Old Age

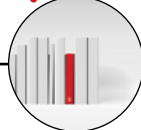
A good quality of life can be more complicated to achieve¹ for older people, who are affected by one or several illnesses or who simply become frail². However, they are citizens too, with a wide range of interests and aspirations for the future. Most of them are still willing to make a contribution to society and conduct an active, fulfilling life.

- **Health and wellbeing.** In order to improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone³ and functional health, and to reduce the risk of depression and cognitive decline, older adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week. In adults aged 65 years and above, physical exercise means activities, like walking, cycling, swimming, gardening or dancing. As it is the case with younger adults, older people should follow the principles of a healthy, varied and balanced diet, high in protein, vitamins and minerals (fruit, vegetables, fish, cereals, milk, meat, bread and eggs), that ensures adequate nutritional intake.
- **Social life.** Today, many retired⁴ people are more active than they were when they were actually working. Enjoying an active social life is very important to them. Mostly, they spend time with their grandchildren, picking them up from school or keeping them company when parents are at work. In developed countries, older people are also involved in voluntary activities that make an important contribution to society. Voluntary work often represents a valid alternative to paid employment, because it meets everybody's needs of having a purpose and something useful to do, as well as having a place to go to and a daily routine. People who wish to go on learning and sharing their knowledge, skills and interests in a friendly environment, may enrol at the University of the Third Age. This is an international organisation that offers retired members of the community several courses, including Computers, History, Music, Languages, Philosophy, Art, Literature, Drama and so on.
- **Travel and leisure.** Nowadays elderly people benefit from a better standard of living, and they have increased opportunities to see new cultures and enjoy new experiences. Specific touristic programmes are planned for seniors, usually arranged in guided package tours based on a well-organized and safe service together with a comfortable and hygienic accommodation.⁵ The itinerary, schedule and scope of a tour for older travellers requires careful consideration as well. Coach tours are very popular, because they guarantee companionship for those travelling alone and are relatively inexpensive, especially in the low season. These tours are frequently chosen by older travellers who are free from work and family responsibilities. Another reason why older tourists tend to prefer guided tours is health concerns, so that they can be sure they will be provided with the necessary assistance in case of problems.

Glossary

1 reach – 2 weak – 3 one of the hard parts of the skeleton of a vertebrate – 4 who have stopped working – 5 a place where one sleeps

activities



↓ READING COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

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| 1 Why is good quality of life a difficult goal for old people? | 7 What is the best travelling option for older tourists? |
| 2 What kind of physical activity is required to maintain functional health? | 8 Why do many older people choose low season touristic programmes? |
| 3 What does a healthy and balanced diet consist of? | 9 What are the main aspects to consider when choosing a holiday? |
| 4 How can seniors maintain an active social life? | 10 Why do senior citizens prefer group tours? |
| 5 What is the main benefit of voluntary work? | |
| 6 What is the University of the Third Age? | |