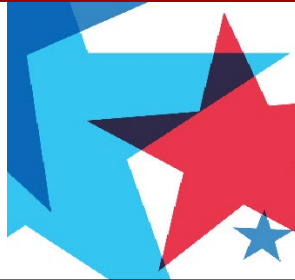


Healthy LIVING while aging!



July 2026 |

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Independence at Every Age: Simple Ways to Stay Strong, Safe and Connected

by Natalie Mazzullo, M.Ed.

July is a time we celebrate freedom and independence — values that remain just as meaningful as we grow older. Maintaining independence as we age doesn't require big changes. Often, it's the small, everyday habits that help us stay confident, healthy and connected to the life we enjoy.

Start with movement. Gentle, regular activities — like walking, stretching or dancing — helps maintain strength, balance and flexibility. Even 10–15 minutes a day can make a difference. If outdoor temperatures are high, consider early morning walks or indoor options like community centers or malls.

Staying connected is just as important as staying active. Reach out to a friend, attend a local class or join a group activity. Social connection supports both mental and physical health and helps reduce feelings of isolation. A quick phone call or shared meal can go a long way.

Simple routines at home can also support independence. Keep frequently used items within easy reach, ensure good lighting and remove tripping hazards like loose rugs. Small adjustments can make your home safer and easier to navigate.

Don't forget about nutrition. Eating well fuels your body and mind, especially during the warmer months when appetites may change. Focus on light, refreshing meals that are easy to prepare and packed with nutrients. Here is a tasty recipe to try this summer.

Natalie Mazzullo is the Healthy Aging Initiative Coordinator for Extension under the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources.



Quick & Easy Summer Recipe: Fresh Fruit Yogurt Parfait

Ingredients (serves 1–2):

- 1 cup low-fat yogurt (plain or vanilla)
- ½ cup fresh berries or sliced fruit (peaches or bananas)
- ¼ cup granola or crushed whole-grain cereal
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)

Directions:

Layer yogurt, fruit, and granola in a bowl or glass. Repeat layers and drizzle with honey if desired. Serve immediately.

Tip: Use seasonal fruit for best flavor and cost savings.

Local Resources to Support Your Independence

- University of Nevada, Reno Extension – Healthy Aging Initiative: Offers classes, workshops and resources to support healthy living and lifelong learning.
- Nevada 2-1-1: Dial 2-1-1 or visit nevada211.org for help finding food, transportation and community services.
- Local Senior Centers: Provide social activities, fitness classes and meals in a welcoming environment.
- AARP Nevada: Offers programs, volunteer opportunities and information on aging well.

Independence is not about doing everything alone — it's about having the support, confidence and resources to live life on your terms. This July, take a small step toward maintaining your independence. Remember, every step counts.

Please visit extension.unr.edu/Healthy-Aging to enjoy our accessible, online newsletter and discover additional Healthy Aging education and resources. Or, email HealthyAging@unr.edu.

July Wellness Tips: Stay Safe in the Heat

- Drink water throughout the day—even if you don't feel thirsty
- Avoid outdoor activity during peak heat (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing
- Use fans or visit air-conditioned spaces like libraries or malls
- Know the signs of heat exhaustion: dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating



Did You Know?

As we age, our bodies don't adjust to heat as easily. Certain medications can also affect hydration. Staying cool and hydrated is one of the simplest ways to protect your health during the summer months. Visit the Sanford Center for Aging's Medication Therapy Management Program at <https://med.unr.edu/sanford/health-services/medication-review>. This program offers a free medication and supplement review for those over the age of 60.

Brain Boost: Summer Word Scramble

Unscramble the words below:

1. RYRBERSTAW _____
2. ENUNSHIS _____
3. ARWETMELON _____
4. IPEDNENNEDCE _____
5. RYDAOTINH _____
6. EDRFEMO _____

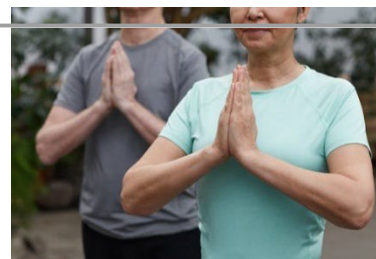
Answers:

Strawberry, Sunshine, Watermelon, Independence, Hydration, Freedom

Get Involved This July

Looking for something to do? Try one of these simple ideas:

- Attend a local senior center class or social hour
- Visit a museum during discounted or free days
- Start a small creative project—painting, journaling or music
- Invite a friend or neighbor for a cool, indoor lunch



July Observances

- Independence Day (July 4)
- UV Safety Awareness Month
- National Picnic Month
- National Parks and Recreation Month
- Disability Pride Month
- Social Wellness Month

Hydration Reminder

Stay hydrated by drinking water during the hot summer months. Keep a reusable water bottle nearby and aim for small sips throughout the day. Add lemon, cucumber or berries for a refreshing twist!



Travel & Outing Safety

- Plan trips during cooler parts of the day
- Keep a small "go bag" with water, snacks, medications and a list of emergency contacts
- Park in shaded areas when possible
- Let someone know your plans if traveling far from home

