People feel best when they are not vulnerable to the transitions that occur as they age. The key is to create a level of security for yourself that melts away worries and allows you to function better so you can live the life you want to live. Seeking resources to support your aging transitions is a smart approach to healthy aging.
Transitions Impact Your Health

We know people are often significantly stressed by their transitions in life. Older adults can become stressed by the transition from an active work life to a retirement lifestyle or shifting from being healthy to having to deal with a chronic health condition.

Transitions create significant potential threats to your physical, emotional and cognitive health. Retirement can diminish your sense of purpose and reduce your social interactions. This can create an adverse effect on your cognitive function and your mood. Physical issues can be accommodated, but dementia cannot be reversed, or its progress prevented, once it begins.

Recognizing you are in a transition is the first step to minimizing its impact on your health. You then need to evaluate how well your current lifestyle and living environment support your opportunities for healthy aging as you transition through the aging process.

Assess Your Resources

It has been known for decades that health begins where you live, learn, work and play. Yet most older adults are resistant to stepping back to evaluate how well their surroundings support or hinder their ability to age well.

The home that safeguarded you and your family when you were younger may now be a safety hazard. Steps become harder to navigate and home maintenance becomes more challenging. If it becomes too hard to go out, you may become secluded in your home and reluctant to tell anyone you are lonely. Social isolation minimizes your quality of life and can result not only in depression but also a decline in your cognitive function.

Engage in a candid assessment of the resources you have in your life that contribute to your health and well-being. You may not be able to totally control how you age, but you can exert great control over how you respond to your transitions by smart use of all your resources.

Take Control of Vulnerability Gaps

Most people spend years looking forward to a healthy retirement. Yet they often do not focus on identifying what they need to do to ensure they can actually live a healthy retirement. Those who desire to age well look for ways to reduce their vulnerabilities. They take control to minimize the impact of these potential challenges.

By identifying the vulnerability gaps in your life and lifestyle as you transition through the aging process, you can take full advantage of all the resources available to you. Your resources include your home, transportation, opportunities for social interactions, and access to good nutrition. Prepare the legal documents necessary to ensure your wishes are clear in the event of illness or death.

Make sure you take advantage of resources that ensure social interaction, create opportunities for on-going learning, and offer access to proper nutrition. Incorporate resources to keep you safe and help you maintain your independence. Explore new resources and tools to enhance your quality of life.
There is a confluence of factors that impact your health as you age. Some are beyond your control, but there is so much you can do to be successful and safe as you grow older. One of the most essential things you can do to take care of yourself in this phase of life is to be proactive and to plan ahead. Don’t wait until there is a crisis before you take action. Finding ways to manage your medical conditions or chronic illnesses with your health care provider is important. As an example, the future also looks promising for wearable technologies to monitor critical functions like heart rate and blood pressure to detect problems like cardiac rhythm disturbances or syncope inducing processes before they become emergencies. Finally, make sure you have resources in your living environment that promote your cognitive health and provide you with connections to others.

GOAL: Identify one gap in the resources you need to sustain a healthy lifestyle and determine how to fill it.
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