Stay Active Through Lifelong Learning

Curiosity Never Retires

Engaging in physical, mental and social activities is often seen as a key to healthy aging. Lifelong learning can fulfill this need. For older adults, lifelong learning can take on many forms, including hands-on and in-depth learning. Everything from taking history courses, to discussing politics, to learning how to kayak can, and do, fall under the lifelong learning umbrella.

While Lifelong Learning Institutes designed for older adults are often located on college campuses, they are far different from the formal education undergraduates receive—there are no tests, no grades, no educational requirements and no homework. All that’s required is a love of learning!

Lifelong Learning Institutes can help:

- Increase social engagement
- Improve physical health
- Expand cognitive acuity
- Provide volunteer opportunities

Getting Started

Are you interested in lifelong learning? Good news—there is likely a Lifelong Learning Institute nearby! Colleges and universities host more than 400 Lifelong Learning Institutes across the United States. This directory can help you find a Lifelong Learning Institute near you: http://bit.ly/LifelongLearningDirectory.
Success Story: Sam

Years ago, Sam was a fashion artist for every department store in Philadelphia. When the field shifted to photography, there was no further need for his services—his career died and Sam’s life spiraled out of control. He became destitute, depressed and isolated and saw little meaning in his life.

One day, on a walk near a Lifelong Learning Institute at Temple University, Sam saw an art exhibition being assembled in the lobby. After a brief chat with the art teacher who was arranging the display, Sam received a visitor’s pass to attend the program. Something about this chance meeting gave him hope. Soon after that meeting, Sam received a scholarship to participate in the class.

Just one year later, Sam went from being a student to a teacher at the Institute. His participation in the Lifelong Learning Institute has reinvigorated his interest in art and education—and helped him re-engage in the world. From a chance meeting, Sam’s involvement with lifelong learning has made a world of difference for his well-being.

Connect with the Joys of Lifelong Learning

Sound interesting? Participate in Lifelong Learning Institutes—and the social, intellectual and physical activities they provide.


This fact sheet was produced by the Osher Lifelong Learning, a partner in the engAGED National Resource Center, which is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) with funding from the Administration for Community Living. For more information, visit www.engagingolderadults.org.

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90ECC0001-01-00, from the Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.