
PURSuing YOUR GOALS WITH INTENTION



Pursue With Intent

What this guide covers:

Life is full of opportunities to grow, learn, and redefine yourself—no matter your age. By setting meaningful goals and pursuing activities with intention, you can create a life filled with purpose, fulfillment, and joy. This guide will help you identify and accomplish pursuits that bring value and identity to your life.

Why Intentional Pursuits Matter:

Setting concrete goals and pursuing intentional activities can help foster your sense of purpose and meaning, as well as present opportunities to define yourself in new ways. Having a clear sense of identity and purpose will help you maximize and maintain your wellbeing throughout your later years—a significant time period and opportunity that previous generations didn't have.

What you need to know:

It's easy to stay busy. In fact, it's easy to stay too busy these days. After decades of working, raising children or grandchildren and simply building our full lives, we tend to feel most productive when we are on the go. But are we productive, or are we doing things that just keep us busy and don't bring meaning, fulfillment or identity to our lives? While specific pursuits will vary depending on your interests, consider the following three ways to pursue with intent:

- Challenge your perspective
- Challenge your brain
- Challenge your body



1. Challenge Your Perspective

Cultural activities, engagement in the arts and traveling can broaden your perspective, spark your imagination and even change your world view. Start by exploring local opportunities. Even if you've lived in the same community for years, there are likely many opportunities you haven't uncovered. You can play "tourist" for the day, taking a walking or biking tour through a part of town you've never visited. You can research local music and arts events online. Finding new ways to engage in your own community can help you feel more confident in what it will be like to age there. Need another reason to get started? Use this as a chance to strengthen your connections with existing friends by trying something new together, or as an opportunity to connect with someone new in your community.

Interested in traveling farther away? Traveling to new and different places can expand your world view, increase empathy and connection with others, and create lots of opportunities to experience new things. Regardless of your life stage or condition, there are ways to create unique and valuable travel experiences. A growing trend is senior group travel—guided tours, educational adventures and active excursions. Two well-known companies that specialize in tours for

older adults are **Road Scholar** and **ElderTreks**, but there are many others to choose from depending on your interests and needs.

2. Challenge Your Brain

Learning new things increases self-confidence, creates common interests you can share with others and helps you keep your mind sharp. Lifelong learning is more about the process than the results—you'll often benefit more from the challenge of learning something new rather than what you learn.

To keep yourself engaged and interested, learn subjects and skills that are meaningful to you. Consider things you loved as a child or young adult, as well as things you've come across over the years and always wanted to try.

Think about the people whom you respect and admire—do they have knowledge or skills you'd like to develop? Whether you're interested in academic subjects, languages, music, hobbies or any other activity, focus on opportunities to learn something new. This will maximize both the challenge and benefit to your cognitive health, not to mention the excitement of experiencing and learning new things.

3. Challenge Your Body

The benefits of physical activity are well documented. Maintaining moderate levels of physical activity can help you maximize and maintain your independence. Physical activity can reduce the risk of falls, heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes. It can improve overall wellbeing and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. It helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, and can control arthritis-related swelling and pain,* and may even lessen cognitive impairment and reduce the risk of dementia.**

But physical pursuits can be about more than just the physical and cognitive benefits. The feeling of

accomplishment in reaching physical goals can also add to our overall wellbeing. It doesn't matter if you're interested in running or walking in a race, learning to play pickleball or swimming laps at the gym. And it doesn't matter what level of assistance you need to pursue those interests. Physical activity of all kinds adds to your quality of life as you age. Simply moving more in your day-to-day living by gardening, cleaning or walking to the store can add to your wellbeing. If you have concerns about what types of physical activity may match your needs, talk to your physician or physical therapist.

The how behind intentional pursuits:

To ensure you accomplish your personal goals and ambitions, be SMART about your goals. Not familiar with SMART goals? This means setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound goals



Specific goals ensure you know exactly what you want to achieve.



Measurable goals ensure you know whether you've achieved it.



Achievable goals ensure you are realistic about what's possible.



Relevant goals ensure your pursuits are aligned with what's important to you.



Time-bound goals ensure you have a forcing mechanism to make progress.

*Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/benefits/index.html>

**Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3258000/>

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