



spotlight on health

Medical Experts Advise Older Americans: Don't Just Sit There, Do Something

(NAPSA)—A sedentary lifestyle is as hazardous to your health as smoking cigarettes, warns the U.S. Surgeon General. Older Americans are at special risk of losing strength, flexibility, endurance and balance without adequate exercise. Inactivity has also been tied to many of the debilitating health conditions associated with aging.

In fact, the National Institute on Aging warns that seniors hurt their health far more by not exercising than by exercising. The good news is that now it is easier than ever for them to get up and go, even if they have never been active before.

“Find out what the experts on aging have to say,” recommends Mark Matenaer with Bankers Life and Casualty Company, an insurance company that specializes in life, health and annuity products for seniors.

Matenaer recently produced the video “Aging Gracefully” for Bankers in partnership with world-renowned expert on senior health Robert Butler, M.D., head of the International Longevity Center. The video offers advice to older persons about living fully and healthfully.

Dr. Butler suggests starting slowly and with the activities you like in order to maximize the likelihood you will stick with them. He advises, “If you have never been active, then it isn't a good



Remaining active is a simple way to keep healthy throughout your golden years.

idea to start with a marathon. Begin with five minutes, then gradually increase the time you exercise to 30 minutes per day.”

Following are some ideas Dr. Butler recommends on ways you can increase your activity:

- If you like shopping, consider walking laps inside your favorite mall. Not only is this good exercise, but it is also a good excuse to window shop.

- Adopt a dog from animal rescue. Not only will you save a life, but you will also have a great walking companion. Here's another tip: consider adopting an older dog rather than a puppy. Older dogs are generally more

docile and easier to handle. They are also usually in the most need of a good home.

- Rediscover old hobbies. If you once loved tennis or golf, chances are you will love it again if you give it a chance.

- Playing with children is a great way to stay young at heart. Chasing a toddler around can be just as much exercise as an afternoon at the gym, only it is more fun. Community centers are always looking for extra hands. Call yours for more information.

- Housework is a good way to get some exercise and spruce up your home. A recent study suggests that women in the 1950s were actually more fit than women today because they did not have labor saving devices such as dishwashers, laundry machines and freezers.

- Learn the polka. Dance classes are a fun way to burn some energy without really feeling like you are exercising. They are also an excellent opportunity to rekindle romance or meet new people.

- For more ideas, call your local recreation center, gym or senior center. Many offer free or affordable classes. They can also help match you with other people your same age and ability level. This is a great way to meet new people in your community.

Call Bankers at 1-800-655-9090 to receive a free copy of the video “Aging Gracefully.”