



Triad NEWSLETTER

SAFETY, CRIME PREVENTION AND
HEALTHY LIVING FOR OLDER ADULTS

Volume 2, Issue 2



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Our Last Program of 2022

Planning for Life Transitions: Which Options are Best for You?

Thursday, December 15th at 10:00 via Zoom,
presented by:

Amber Bormann, Brookdale Senior Living

Darian Dalsen, Comfort Keepers

Heidi Musombwa, Mindful Daydreaming Adult
Day Center, and

Molly Dean, Agrace.

Knowledge is powerful and allows us to make better decisions on life transitions! We welcome you to join us to learn about the senior care services available to assist in planning your personal life transitions. Our goal is to help you to determine which options are the best for you. Once you know about all the options, it will help you in your planning. We will discuss, why planning in advance is key, and how different services can help support your future. We will run through different examples and scenarios in which adult day centers, home care, long-term care communities and hospice can be of assistance.

To receive the Zoom link, email TriadEvents@rsvpdane.org.



Second Thoughts About E-Bikes

By Jim Jenkins, Triad Committee Member

A while ago I wrote an article in these pages enthusiastically promoting e-bikes for seniors. At that time, I'd ridden one for about four mostly carefree years. I'd had a couple spills, yes, but little more than my ego was bruised.

That changed last fall. I had a right-of-way battle with a Honda Civic, which seldom goes well for the guy on the bike. He didn't hit me, but I went over the handlebars as he sailed through the intersection. The result? Rib and shoulder injuries that had me laid up painfully for more than a month.

Between then and now my bike has sat pretty much un-used. The weather got cold, and I had a knee replaced along the way. All is well now, and the bike stands ready to take me on those Dane County trails I love so much. But I'm scared.

I'm scared because I'm 75 and while I'm in decent riding shape, I know that if I go down, things are likely to break. And if they break, they won't heal as readily as they would have twenty years ago. I've crashed my e-bike three times in five years. So, to say I'll never crash again is pretty optimistic. But I can analyze my crashes and see how I can ride more safely in the future.

I've realized that each crash was caused, in part, by my own errors, in technique and judgement. Each involved my deciding, at the last minute, to change direction or stop, making a tight move in a small space at low speed. Maybe you can learn something from them, too.



Crash 1:

Riding back from McFarland with my family, I wanted to make a U-turn on the paved bike path. I gauged the width of the path, saw nobody coming, slowed to a crawl and tried to do a slow U-turn... one I would easily have made on a regular bike. I lost control of my 58 lb. e-bike and went down. Luckily, nothing was injured but my shiny new e-bike, and I rode it, dented and scratched, home.

Lessons: E-bikes are heavy! You can easily lose balance in a slow speed, sharp turn. I am in my mid-70's, with weaker muscles, poorer balance and slower reflexes than I used to have. I never should have attempted the turn. I should have stopped and walked through the turn.

Crash 2:

I was riding to a coffee shop on Drake Street at Randall, across from the Dane County Zoo. I was on Drake, nearing the corner. I saw that there was a bike rack on the green space between the street and sidewalk. I made a quick decision to veer off the street and onto the sidewalk, to park at the rack. The sidewalk had a blind corner; a bush blocked my view of Randall. A couple pedestrians rounded the corner from Randall, onto Drake, as I approached the rack on the sidewalk. I swerved to avoid them and went down. I wasn't hurt — but again, I was lucky.

Lessons: Don't make quick moves that change the balance at slow speed. Don't approach blind corners without taking control of your bike. Don't ride on the sidewalk. Repeat ... don't ride on the sidewalk! Get off and walk your bike.

Crash 3:

I was on a popular bike trail, nearing a usually quiet street intersection. Nine times out of ten, in our bike-friendly county, cars slow down when they approach a green-painted bike path crossing. This car was the one that didn't! At first, the car seemed far enough away that I could make it. Then I realized I couldn't. I jammed on my brakes, throwing the balance of the bike forward, and to the left. Over I went, as the car breezed through the intersection.

Several bystanders helped me get up and out of the street. I called my wife to meet me at a nearby parking lot and she took me to urgent care, where they X-rayed me and sent me home with badly-bruised ribs and a tear inside my shoulder. I was laid up and in pain for over a month. It rattled me, and my bike has sat in the garage ever since.

Lessons: A car will always win! If you see one coming into your path, stop smoothly, rear brake first, and let it pass, even if you think you have the right of way. Panic braking throws off the balance of any bike, and particularly a sixty pound e-bike with hydraulic disc brakes.

I hope these tips will help you navigate your e-bike ride safely. I don't mean to scare you off: e-bikes have provided a great way for seniors to get enjoyable exercise while reducing their carbon footprint. But be aware of the ways they differ from the bikes you grew up riding. Even if you consider yourself an experienced bicyclist, take time to learn and get comfortable with these new machines that drive, balance, turn, stop and roll a bit differently than the old Schwinn or Raleigh hanging in the garage.



Vision Changes and How to Adapt to Them

A Program Review By Jane Bannerman, Triad Committee Member

This program was presented on March 29, 2022, by Brent Perzentka, a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Specialist with the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Watch the full program on our Youtube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/@triadsofdanecounty>

Two key points made by the presenter are:

- It is very important to have your eyes checked regularly as you age.
- If you have a substantial change in your vision, see an ophthalmologist as soon as possible for a medical evaluation.

Some common changes in vision are due to normal aging

We need more light to read and do other tasks. At age 80 we need 4 times the light we needed as a younger person.

We struggle with problems with contrast. Printing done in black letters on white background or white on black may be ok, but other colors combinations may make the letters difficult to read.

Dry eyes are more common as we age, thus you may need eye drops.

Night vision decreases and driving at night is more difficult. Thus, we may need to do more of our errands during the day.

Some suggestions for how to adapt to changes in vision

- Eyes take longer adapting to different lighting conditions. Take your time when going from a bright outdoors to a dark interior. Move more slowly and give your eyes a chance to adapt to the new lighting condition.

- You may need more lighting for certain tasks such as reading, knitting or chopping vegetables on the countertop. Good task lighting options are available to help you see better. Lights should directly light up your work.
- Motion sensor lights which automatically light up can be useful to light the way from bedroom to the bathroom at night. You don't have to search for the light switch or flashlight; the lights are automatic.
- If you need more lighting in the kitchen, there are battery operated under cabinet lights available to help light up your workspace.
- Look around your house for potential tripping hazards such as throw rugs and clutter on the floor that could be tripped on.
- Driving can be more difficult so do your errands during the day. And drive routes that you know.
- Know yourself and do not drive if you are not fit to drive.
- Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (<https://wcblind.org>) at 754 Williamson Street has many kinds of lights, magnifiers and other adaptive equipment. The organization also offers low vision evaluations, vision rehabilitation services and access-to-technology services. Their phone number is 608-255-1166.



I Get Around. Let's Talk About Safe Mobility

A Program Review By Jane Bannerman, Triad Committee Member

This program was presented on January 19, 2022,

by Kristine Niestrom, DPT. Kristine is the Rehabilitation Director at Ageility. They provide rehabilitation services to the community and residents of Coventry Village. Watch the full program on our Youtube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@triadsofdanecounty>

What is mobility?

Mobility is the ability of get where you want to go, when you want to go there. Planning for a decline in mobility is very important, The CDC has an excellent web site: https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/older_adult_drivers/mymobility/index.html

This website includes three checklists you can work through.

My Self: A plan to stay independent. Here are their suggestions.

- Very important to have a physical checkup each year. Many health issues can affect mobility.
- Review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist. More medications, more risk of interactions. Be especially careful the first few days after starting a new medication to see how you will react to it.
- Get an eye exam regularly, each year if possible. Your vision affects your balance and is very important to maintaining your mobility.
- Strength and balance activities, done at least three times a week, can reduce your risk of falling. Other activities, like walking, are good for you but don't help prevent falls. For exercise suggestions, go to www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises

My Home: A plan to stay safe at home.

This checklist has suggestions for various areas of your house. Here are few from each section.

- Check the floors in each room and reduce tripping hazards.
- Check the Kitchen. Always use a proper stool to reach items that are too high.
- Check the Bedrooms. Use night-lights to see a path in the dark. If you have no electrical outlet, use a battery-operated light.
- Check inside and outside steps. Put handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Check the bathroom. Install grab bars to help you in and out of tub or shower and a non-slip rubber mat or strips in the bath or shower.

My Neighborhood: A plan to stay mobile in my community

- Find transportation options in your community.
- Consider a driver refresher course for seniors.

Speaker concluded the presentation with information about Assistive Devices. If you feel you might benefit from a cane or walker you should get evaluated by a physical therapist. Many factors, including strength, balance, cognitive function, environmental factors, etc., can influence which ghoice is best for you.

1. Canes can be helpful, but many users do not get properly fitted and instructed on proper use.
2. Walkers also come in many styles. These should be selected with the advice of a physical therapist for the individual best fit.

How Do You Know Which Exercises or Activities Improve Balance?

By Ashley Hillman, Safe Communities' Falls Prevention Program Manager

Did you know that there are certain types of exercise that are better for enhancing balance? Walking is great aerobic exercise for your overall health, but it's actually not an activity that has been proven to help improve balance. However, dancing, pickleball, yoga, ping-pong, and Tai Chi are examples of activities that DO improve balance, thus decreasing your risk of a fall. There are certain types of exercises that you can incorporate into your daily routine that help improve balance. Let's explore!

Static Balance means practicing while your feet or your seat are NOT moving. An example of this may be standing on one leg (maybe try it while you brush your teeth!). While practicing, it's always a good idea to have a surface available for you to hold onto.

Dynamic Balance means practicing while your feet or your seat ARE moving. It might be time to pull out your dancing shoes because we've learned that dancing improves balance. In Dane County, we have *Ballroom Basics for Balance™*, a super fun dance class where you might learn the East Coast Swing, Cha Cha, or Waltz all while having fun and improving balance. Another example of practicing dynamic balance is stepping over something that might be in your path.

Dual-Task Training means doing something with your body then doing something else with your body OR your brain. This can be a tricky exercise, so while you want to challenge yourself, you don't want it to be too difficult. Some examples might include walking sideways while counting backward or following a dance routine.

Strength building in the context of improving balance focuses on your legs and core (trunk) area. The goal is to be able to move your body while minimally using your arms and hands. We use our leg and core muscles for many daily activities, such as getting up from a chair, sitting into a chair, or stepping onto a sidewalk.

Now that we know which types of specific activities improve balance, it's helpful to know how often or long one should engage in such activities. The recommendation is three hours per week, but these three hours can be broken into "snack size" activities. You don't need to do them all at once. Incorporate activities into your daily routine. While you're brushing your teeth, try standing on one leg. While cooking in the kitchen and moving to get something further down the counter, walk sideways and count backwards, all the while ensuring there is a counter or sturdy surface in reach should you need it. The key is to start small and gradually increase the challenge.

There are numerous community classes that have been identified as having the key components to improve balance. These include Tai Chi, dance, yoga, and numerous others that can be found on the Safe Communities website <https://safercommunity.net/fall-prevention-classes/#falling>. If you see a "b" next to a class, you'll know that it has been given the "Balance Stamp of Approval". And if you're currently taking a class and would like it to be evaluated to see if it contains the key types of activities to improve balance, contact Ashley Hillman at 608-235-1957 or ahillman@safercommunity.net. We hope to see you in one of Dane County's many balance enhancing classes soon!



Six Reasons Why Swimming Can Be Good for You

By Amber Bormann, Brookdale Senior Living

Backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke — we all know a thing or two about swimming from childhood summers spent flailing in floaties. What you may not know is how good swimming can be for you as you age.

1. Swimming can help reduce the risk of osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a chronic bone and joint condition that can turn a trip and fall into a trip to the hospital. Its incidence in adults increases with age: it's estimated that osteoporosis affects 27% of women in their 70s and 35% of women in their 80s. Moreover, nearly half of adults ages 50 and older have a condition called low bone mass, an indicator that they may be at risk for osteoporosis. Although the numbers may make an osteoporosis diagnosis seem likely, science suggests swimming may help. According to a meta-analysis published by BioMed Research International, swimming may help improve bone mineral density in the spine and may be a good program for the clinical prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. Although research on the relationship between swimming and osteoporosis is nascent, it's nothing to be ignored.

2. Swimming is gentler on joints

Swimming's benefits on your bones aren't just preventive. Rather, incorporating swimming into your routine may help you get relief now. According to a study published by the Journal of Rheumatology, swimming may help reduce joint pain and stiffness while improving muscle strength and functional capacity. Swimming can even help increase overall quality of life—who wouldn't be happier with less pain and more mobility? Ultimately, the study concluded that the benefits

of swimming exercise were comparable to cycling, a more strenuous sport. In other words, if you want the benefits of rigorous exercise with less joint strain, you better find your fins!

3. Swimming can help improve posture stability

If posture stability isn't a term you're familiar with, it's time to add it to your vocabulary as you enter your late 50s or 60s. Research suggests that posture stability is a key indicator of how likely a senior is to fall. Fortunately, swimming may help improve a senior's posture stability and other signals of brain-body coordination. According to a study published by the Journal of Nutrition, Health, and Aging, seniors who swim may have better balance and shorter reaction times. Given the nature of the movements required to swim, seniors who swim may experience improved accuracy of their repetitive movements and hand-eye coordination.

4. Swimming may help limit worsening of age-related pain

Although swimming is a mostly painless, low-impact activity, what makes aquatic exercise truly special is that it can help reduce your risk of injury and pain when you're not in the water. In 2005, Stanford University published a longitudinal study on the effect of aerobic exercise, like swimming, on musculoskeletal pain in healthy seniors. Participants were divided based upon level of activity. After 14 years of collecting data, the study concluded that while all participants experienced a general increase in pain with age, those who participated in regular aerobic exercise like swimming experienced less musculoskeletal pain.

5. Movement in water helps build muscle

If you're looking for a resistance workout without weights, look no further than the swimming pool. Exercising in water can be less strenuous than other forms of exercise because of the buoyancy water gives the body. However, your muscles still must work against the weight of the water. Water provides 12–14% more resistance than air, so even a leisurely stroll becomes a muscle-building workout under water.

6. Swimming may help improve mental health

With all the sunshine and good times, it's pretty difficult to be unhappy in a pool. It may come as

no surprise, then, that people who swim report marked improvements in mental health. Is there something about swimming that just makes life go, well, swimmingly? According to a comparative study conducted by the City University of New York, participants who swam reported acute decreases in anger, confusion, tension and depression compared to non-swimmers. Likewise, an article published in *Sports Medicine* reported that the psychological benefits garnered from aerobic exercise like swimming are "comparable to gains found with standard forms of psychotherapy."

So, if you're looking to brighten your outlook on life, try looking through goggles next time.



Don't Get Scammed Out of a Gift Card This Holiday Season

By Tiffany Bernhardt Schultz, Southwest Wisconsin Regional Director
Better Business Bureau

Whether you're buying a gift card online or purchasing from the gift card wall at a big box retailer, shop carefully to make sure you're not falling for a scam.

Before purchasing, BBB recommends the following tips:

Know who you are buying from.

Unfamiliar websites advertise gift cards for popular retailers at steep discounts. These websites might be designed to steal the purchaser's credit card number and/or other personal information. Purchase gift cards directly from the merchant to avoid a potential scam.

Buying a physical card? Take a closer look.

No matter where gift cards are displayed in the store, con artists are known to remove them from the rack and record the numbers, including the activation PIN. Before purchasing, look carefully at the packaging for any tears, wrinkles or other indications of tampering. Check for an exposed PIN. If anything looks suspicious, take a different

card and give the compromised card to store management.

Research how to use the card.

Not all retailers have the same policies when issuing a gift card. Double check the terms and conditions on the type of gift card purchased.

Be wary of websites that offer to check your gift card's balance.

Some websites that claim to check a gift card's balance are really designed to drain the money off the card. These sites ask for the card number and PIN or security code.

Register your gift card.

If the retailer allows the option to register the gift card, take full advantage. Registering the card protects the balance if it's reported as lost or stolen.

Treat it like cash.

If the card is lost or stolen, report it to the card issuer immediately. Most issuers have toll-free phone numbers available on the back of the card or online, to report a lost or stolen card.



Winter Home Maintenance

By Sarah Kruse, Communications Coordinator at SAIL

AARP publishes a checklist of reminders for protecting your home and staying safe for each season and it is time for the winter reminders. If you need assistance with these chores and are looking for trustworthy professionals, checking with your neighbors and friends can be a good first step to find recommended resources.

1. Keep paths and driveways clear of snow and ice. Apply sand and salt to increase traction as needed. Keeping a bucket of sand near your doors to spread can assist you in avoiding falls if you must go out in bad weather. Free sand is available throughout the City of Madison. You can find locations at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/residents/winter/snowice/sand.cfm>.
2. If you drive, keep a blanket, shovel, sand and first aid kit in your car.
3. Stock up on canned goods and household items, including lightbulbs and batteries. Buy compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs). Although they cost more than incandescent bulbs, they're more energy efficient and last longer.
4. Check for proper lighting inside and outside the house to avoid falls and for added security.
5. Check any holiday lights inside and outside the house and make sure they are in good working

order. It is best to plug lights directly into outlets and avoid the use of extension cords.

6. Make sure space heaters work properly, and never leave them on unattended or placed too close to furniture or draperies.
7. Check sinks, bathtubs and toilets for leaks in the faucet or tank.
8. Before deep freeze temperatures set in, turn off the water pipes that lead to outdoor faucets. Then open the outdoor faucets to ensure that no water remains inside the pipe or hose bid. Water that freezes inside pipes can cause pipes to burst, and burst pipes cause extreme damage. If you have frost-free outside faucets, be sure hoses are disconnected and drained.

Another resource for assistance with these types of projects is Sharing Active Independent Lives (SAIL). SAIL is a nonprofit membership program providing older adults throughout the Madison area with a vibrant senior community of learning, activity, socialization, and support for one another. One of the many benefits of SAIL membership is access to a directory of pre-screened service providers and volunteers who can assist with tasks like those listed above. To learn more visit the website at sailtoday.org or call 608-230-4321.



September Car Check a Great Success

Thank You, Blane Einbeck and Smart Motors, and Thank You, Neil McCallum and AARP Driver Safety

By Mike Thomsen, Triad Coordinator

The Madison Triad re-started its Car Check safety inspection program after a two year hiatus due to Covid-19. This year we teamed up with Smart Motors on Odana Road in Madison and the AARP Wisconsin Driver Safety program to provide a month-long focus on driver and vehicle safety opportunities. AARP Driver Safety began September with its Smart Driver refresher course, totally free to participants thanks to Smart Motors generosity. Then on September 22 we held the Car Check safety inspections and the AARP Car Fit driver safety consultations, all again thanks to the support of Smart Motors.

The Car Check program would not have been possible without the generous sponsorship of Smart

Motors. Over 20 cars and vans received thorough safety and maintenance inspections totally free of charge thanks to Smart Motors. In addition, many drivers were able to talk with AARP's Car Fit consultants about achieving a safe, comfortable driving position inside their car.

We want to thank Blane Einbeck, the marketing director at Smart Motors, and the entire Smart Motors organization for their generous support and community spirit. We also want to thank Neil McCallum, the volunteer leader of the AARP Wisconsin Driver Safety program, and the entire Car Fit team for making it possible to hold Car Fit as part of the Car Check event.



Neil McCallum (left) and Blane Einbeck (right)