

A healthy outlook

by Dena Kent-Esbjerg



Keeping healthy these days can sometimes be a struggle, especially for those who must work every day, take care of their children, run their errands and try to fit in some family and physical activity time.

But for our seniors, it is a different kind of struggle. With nowhere to go, and where interactions are limited, the time just spent sitting is becoming very unhealthy in these trying times.

At Wellings of Corunna, they are reintroducing some of their fitness programs and activities to help the seniors get out of the Covid slump and back up and moving. Their gym is now back open, (with smaller classes of course), and are teaching exercise classes three times a week for one hour. Their shibashi classes have resumed as well, in smaller groups, allowing their seniors to enjoy gentle movements and stretching to keep them limber.

They have introduced Wii Golf and Wii Bowling tournaments as well as billiard and shuffleboard tournaments, all with safety precautions in place. The daily schedule of activities that include bingo, euchre, dominos, bridge and even Thirsty Thursday's all play a part in

the health and wellness of their seniors.

Their 'Health and Wellness Program' is purpose-built, where the staff are working on addressing the broad range of health and well being needs of those over 55 years of age.

"People are spending long periods indoors, probably involving long periods of sitting and doing little activity", says Shelly Rodgers, community consultant at Wellings. "That in itself creates problems."

It is particularly worrisome about the potential for increased risk of falls from muscle loss during the COVID-19 crisis. And when strength and balance are quite closely related, weeks or months of inactivity in isolation could really cause difficulty for many seniors.

"Move It Or Lose It", says Kat and Nat, creators of the Wellings blog site. "It's important to keep our energy up by keeping our body moving. All it takes is about 30 minutes a day, which can be broken up into segments to make it more manageable. This helps to strengthen muscles, and having strong muscles is good for heart health, balance, stability and coordination. Remember dancing is considered movement, so feel free to dance around the room like nobody's watching."

But it is not just the physical aspect of the problem, it also involves the mental wellness of their seniors. Here they have created a "Fireside Chat with Billy" (Bill Yurchuk, General Manager) once a week and have guest speakers from organizations such as Strangway, Rapids Healthcare Team and LEO (Lambton Elderly Outreach) who will speak directly about creating a healthy environment and enjoying your life.

"Stock up on laughter whenever you can," says Natalie Tommy. She suggests that you watch funny movies, enjoy jokes and share your laughter with others. Remind yourself of a time in the past when you laughed yourself silly and that will lighten you up.

Research tells us that smiling, even when we don't feel like it has a positive impact on our brain. So....smile....say cheeeeese; embrace the good old belly laugh!

Take some time and check out Kat and Nat's blog for some great wellness tips at www.mywellings.com/blog and get ready for a few laughs.

