

A practical guide to help you age well in Colchester & Tendring

Live healthily, happily and independently for longer



North East Essex
Health & Wellbeing Alliance

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Who is this guide for?

This guide provides information on the support available in Colchester and Tendring to help you age well and remain healthy and independent for longer. The advice is aimed at people aged 65 years or older and anyone who supports them such as family, friends or carers.

While we can't control our age, we can slow down any decline in our health with smart choices along the way. From the foods we eat and how we exercise, to our friendships and retirement goals - it all has an effect on how quickly or slowly our bodies age. The good news is that it's never too late to get started! Some of the suggestions in this guide you might already have thought of, but you may find some new ideas along the way.

A good way to create new habits or try new things is to set simple goals. On every page you will find sections to help you set realistic actions and make changes so you can lead a healthier and happier life as you get older. At the end of this guide there is a list of organisations who can provide support for the ideas and suggestions given on the following pages.

How to age well

Get active: Ageing affects your balance, muscle strength and bones but daily exercise helps you to stay strong and healthy. It will lower your risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and even cancer. If that wasn't enough, staying active can boost your self-esteem, improve your sleep, and give you more energy.

The recommended activity level is 30 minutes five times a week - gardening, vigorous housework, cycling and daily walks all count. When sitting for long periods, get up and walk or stretch every 20 minutes. Experts also advise twice-weekly muscle strengthening exercises for the over 65's.

If that sounds like a lot, start small and as you get stronger you will be able to work up to those amounts. Why not attend a weekly strength and balance class or contact your local leisure centre or community centre to find out what's going on there.

Stay connected: Spending time with other people can improve your mental health and will help to prevent you



from feeling lonely or anxious. If you find that you are no longer able to do the things you used to or are unsure what activities you can get involved with locally, there is support to help you take up new hobbies and interests or find out about how you can get involved in volunteer work.

Give up smoking: Smoking is linked to a whole range of health problems, including heart disease, lung cancer, and bronchitis. The good news is that if you stop smoking, regardless of your age, your circulation, lung capacity and energy levels will improve.



Watch what you eat and drink: A balanced diet is crucial for good health, energy and preventing illness. An ideal diet should be low in saturated fat with lots of fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, oily fish, and small amounts of low-fat dairy and lean meat. Don't forget to top-up with lots of water to avoid dehydration, which can make you feel tired, confused and can even cause urinary tract infections. Tea, coffee and fruit juice will



also help you to stay hydrated but avoid sugary fizzy drinks. It's recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread across 3 days or more with at least two days per week booze-free. 14 units is approximately 6 medium (175ml) glasses of wine, or 6 pints of 4% beer. There's no completely safe level of drinking, but sticking within these guidelines lowers your risk of harming your health.

I will improve my health by:

Completed?



The basics of good health

Check vaccinations and routine screenings are up to date

- As we age, our immune system becomes less efficient at protecting us. A number of different vaccinations are available for older people. These are free on the NHS. The NHS app or your GP surgery can be used to check that vaccinations, routine screenings and health checks are all up to date.



Look after your teeth

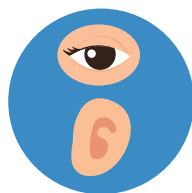
- Brush your teeth twice a day and floss daily. Flossing helps to prevent gum disease by removing pieces of food and plaque from between the teeth. If it's left to build up you might notice sore or bleeding gums, and gum disease can also be linked to diabetes, strokes, heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis. Have regular check-ups and if you wear dentures or have a bridge, ask your dentist to check that they fit properly.



Keep your bones strong - Aim for two to three servings of calcium rich food a day. Ask your pharmacist about vitamin D supplements and get 10 minutes in the sun every day from May to September.



Take care of eyes and ears - Have your sight and hearing tested regularly or if you notice a change. Eye tests are free if you're over 60. You can help keep your eyes healthy by not smoking, as smoking damages the eye making it more likely to develop age-related macular degeneration and cataracts. Protect them from the sun by wearing sunglasses.



Don't forget your feet - Wash your feet often and dry them well to prevent infections. When cutting your nails, trim them straight across, never at an angle or down the edge as this may cause ingrown nails. Keep your feet warm but avoid anything too tight. If your shoes fit well, they protect and support your feet and may improve your balance and stability.



Understand your medicines - You may be taking several different medicines, especially if you have a condition such as diabetes or asthma. It's important that your medicines and the doses are reviewed at least every year. Your GP surgery or pharmacist will do this for you, and they may recommend alternative medicines or change the doses.



I will take care of myself by:

Completed?

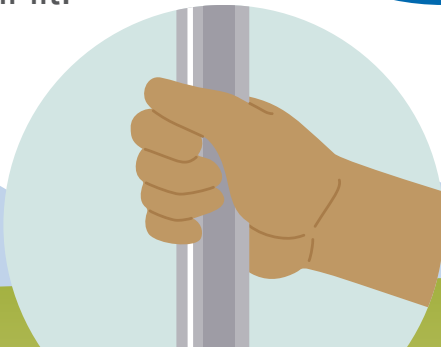


How to reduce your risk of falls and stay safe at home

Around one in three adults over 65 who live at home will have at least one fall a year but many of these accidents are preventable. Fall-proofing your home needn't be costly, it's mostly about spotting small risks that can be easily and quickly sorted out. Avoid unnecessary injuries and hospital stays by following these tips:

- Remove or tape down frayed carpet
- Replace worn out slippers
- Clear clutter, especially in passageways, bedrooms and around doorways.
- Consider handrails around the house including the stairs.
- Ensure the hallway and stairs are well lit.

Your worn slippers can be exchanged for new ones. Contact Community360 **01206 505250**



- Put a torch by the bed, keep landing/hall lights on at night, using energy saving light bulbs.
- A surprising number of people trip over their pets. Buy them a bright collar, and a bell to alert you to their presence.
- Practise how to get up from the floor if you do fall. It could turn out to be a life saver.
- Keep your phone charged, switched on and with you.
- Consider getting and wearing a personal alarm. Sensors and fall detectors are also available. Contact Essex County Council Care Technology on **0300 303 2682** for further details.
- For a free home visit, including fitting fire alarms, contact Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. They offer fire safety and security advice and support around health and how to reduce the risk of falls.



Top Tips

- ✓ Wear well-fitting low-heeled shoes and avoid wearing worn out or loose slippers or shoes.
- ✓ Investigate walking aids and other helpful equipment as appropriate (Age UK and Citizens Advice have information and financial help).
- ✓ Accept you may not be able to drink as much alcohol as you used to.
- ✓ Contact your GP surgery about persistent bladder or incontinence problems.

I will reduce my risk of falls by:

Completed?



If you need extra support

Slowing down or feeling more tired?
Or do you need extra help with shopping,
medications or finances?

GP Care Advisors can provide an assessment of all your needs. This will include a care planning conversation to ensure social care is in place - if appropriate - and that anyone who looks after you is identified and supported.

If required, a referral can also be made to the Frailty Clinic in Colchester or Tendring or to a strength and balance class to help improve your mobility. For access to a GP Care Advisor, please contact your local GP Surgery for a referral.

Community Agents Essex support people who are older, have learning disabilities or Autism and informal carers. They can visit an individual's home to provide support to develop independent living solutions, often from within their local community.

A **Social Prescribing Link Worker** can help you to find local support with your social, emotional and practical wellbeing by connecting you to voluntary and community services. Support can be provided for loneliness, improving lifestyle choices,

shopping, befriending and safety in the home. This service can be accessed through Community 360 (Colchester), Community Voluntary Services Tendring and your GP surgery.

Caring for others and yourself Lots of older people rely on care from a family member or friend. This might include help with eating, getting dressed or washed, or reminding how to do day-to-day things. Alternatively, you may be caring for someone else, and this can be tough. It may affect your physical or mental health and it is important you look after yourself.

Carers can ask Essex County Council for a carers assessment to find out if they are entitled to any support, including time off from caring. Many local organisations and carers groups can support you and provide the information you need, including any benefits you may be entitled to.

When you can't live independently anymore. There are many options when living independently has become difficult. Support can be provided with shopping or meals, care at home or if living at home is no longer an option then care homes could be considered. Essex County Council can provide information on the support that is available.

Cost of living support. We understand what a worrying time this is with rising utility, food and goods prices causing concern and putting pressure on people across Colchester and Tendring. Local support is available through grants or financial support, money saving tips, support schemes, food banks and transport to medical appointments. Contact Community 360 (Colchester), Community Voluntary Services Tendring or Age Well East to find out more.

How to keep money and information safe from scams. A scammer may try to approach you on your doorstep, by post, over the phone or online. They'll often pretend to be someone they're not or make misleading offers of services or investments. Further information can be found through many of the organisations in the Directory of Contacts, including Essex County Council and Age UK.

For extra support I will contact:

Completed?



How to stay safe throughout the year

Winter weather

There are practical things that you can do to prepare for winter weather, which may bring cold, ice, snow and high winds. Remember that cold weather can start in October.



- Icy pavements and roads can be very slippery. Take extra care if you go out and wear boots or shoes with a good grip on the soles. Rubber snow/ice grips that attach to outdoor shoes are very effective or you can use a stick for balance.
- Consider fitting a grab rail if you have steps at your front or back door.
- Have your heating system serviced before winter arrives.
- Keep some food supplies in a cupboard or freezer in case you can't go out for a few days.

- Ask your family, neighbours or friends if they could call or visit you more often if a period of cold weather stops you getting out and about.
- Keep cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house.
- Speak to your friends, family or your carer if you are feeling under the weather, down or need some practical help. They may be able to help you.
- Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast.
- Take up offers of vaccinations for COVID or flu.

Summertime

- The recommended daily fluid intake to function effectively and avoid dehydration is about 8 cups (2 litres). In the summer you should drink more fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated, dizzy and at risk of falling.



- Stay out of the full sun on particularly hot days and wear sun cream and a hat to avoid the risk of sun burn and sunstroke.
- Wear sun glasses to avoid damaging your eyes.
- Ensure you order repeat prescriptions in advance if you are planning to go away.

I will plan to:

Completed?



How to improve your mental health and wellbeing

Are you feeling low, anxious or lonely?

Here are some things you can do to help or improve your mental wellbeing. Connecting with others can make all the difference.



- Get involved with local community activities - singing, walking groups, book clubs, bingo etc.
- Help others - volunteering can be a great way to stay involved and meet new people.
- Invite a friend round for a cup of tea or keep in touch by phone.
- Try to do something every day - plan small things to look forward to.
- Learn to love computers - connect with others online and browse the web. Google Home Nests or Amazon Echo Show are a good way to video call friends and family. The Digital Access Support Team can help you gain skills and confidence to get online. Call Colchester **01206 282452** or Tendring **01255 686497** to arrange a free session.

Community 360 (Colchester) and Community Voluntary Services Tendring can help with any of the above activities as well as transport services to get you there. Age Well East can also connect you to others through local groups and offer mental wellbeing support.

If you are experiencing feelings such as anxiety or low mood that doesn't go away or you are finding it difficult to cope, support is available through Therapy for You **01206 334001**.

Concerned about memory loss?

The following problems may be symptoms of dementia, however, all of these symptoms can be caused by other conditions such as mild cognitive impairment, depression, an underactive thyroid, a vitamin B12 deficiency, or medication side effects. It's important to contact your GP surgery in case there's a cause that may be treatable.



- Poor short-term memory such as struggling to recall recent events or forget names of close friends and everyday objects

- Confused thought processes or lack of concentration such as putting your keys or wallet in the wrong place
- Loss of motivation to do things
- Poor communication and understanding such as losing the drift of what you are saying
- Inability to perform everyday tasks
- Changes in personality, mood, behaviour or social functioning

If you are concerned you can call Dementia Connect on **03331 503456** who can offer support, information and signpost you to relevant services. Other support services are at the back of this guide.

If I'm concerned I will:

Completed?



How to plan for the future

Have you considered how you would like to be looked after in the future?

It's never too soon to start conversations about the help and support you may need in the future with health or financial decisions. There are several options available and further information can be found from many of the organisations in the Directory of Contacts.

Wills: Even if you don't have much to leave, it is important that what you do have is left to those you care about. If you do not make a will, your spouse will be the main beneficiary unless stated otherwise. If you are not married to your partner they will not automatically be a beneficiary, so you need to make arrangements in advance. The absence of a will causes lengthy delays so organise things in advance.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal document by which you give someone else (the Attorney) the power to act on your behalf and in your name. It can be drawn up at any time while you have capacity to do this but it has no legal

standing until it is registered with the Office of the Public Guardian.

Living Wills usually takes the form of a written statement setting out what types of medical treatment the maker of the will does or does not want in specific circumstances should they be incapable of giving or refusing consent. It must be signed whilst the maker is mentally competent.

Advance care planning is very important and will help you make decisions about your health and care in case you become very ill. This can be recorded on the My Care Choices Register, an electronic record of a person's decision about the kind of care they wish to receive in the future if they were ill or coming to the end of their life.

Completing a ReSPECT form (Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment) will ensure your wishes are recorded if you are not able to make decisions in an emergency situation.



A **‘This is me’ passport** can be used to record details about a person living with dementia who can’t easily share information about themselves. This can help health and social care professionals better understand the person they are supporting and help them to deliver the appropriate care.

Make sure that a trusted person, such as the executor of your will, knows who you bank with and where any medical or life insurance policies are held.

I will make decisions about my future by:

Completed?



End of life support and what to do after someone dies

End of life support - During a terminal illness, or approaching the end of life, it may be a good idea to express future wishes and make plans in advance for the care needed in the future.

Planning ahead in this way is sometimes called 'advance care planning'. It involves thinking and talking about an individual's wishes for how they are cared for in the final months of life. Planning for this as early as possible enables care to be delivered in ways that respect the wishes of people and their families.

End of life care helps us to live as well as possible until death and to die with dignity. It also includes support for family or carers. Palliative care helps to manage pain and make things as comfortable as possible, enabling people to remain in their own home for as long as they wish. Many healthcare professionals can be involved in providing end of life care and most hospitals have special palliative care teams that

coordinate all these services. When end of life care begins depends on specific needs and will continue for as long as required. It may last a few days or for months or years. St Helena can offer support and advice to those at the end of their life and their family and loved ones.

What to do after someone dies - There are a number of practical things to be done following a death. www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies provides information on what you need to do. If you can, ask a family member or friend to help.

- A doctor will need to issue a death certificate.
- You should appoint a funeral director to make the arrangements. You may be able to claim help with funeral expenses.
- You must register the death within five days. You need to take the death certificate with you.
- Tell family members, friends and colleagues.
- There may be organisations to notify and the Government's 'Tell Us Once Service' can help with this.



Bereavement - People are affected by bereavement in many different ways and it can take time to adjust. However, you might need help if you are not coping or are feeling depressed. For some, the best way to cope is to discuss feelings with family or friends. If this doesn't work for you, you can always contact local bereavement services, such as those at St. Helena or Age Well East, who can offer friendly help and support.

If I need support I will:

Completed?



We hope you have found this guide useful. It will hopefully enable you to make decisions so that you can live healthily, happily and independently for longer.

Here is a list of organisations which can provide support and advice about the ideas and suggestions that have been mentioned in the previous pages.

Directory of Contacts

Active Essex: Find ways to increase activity
www.activeessex.org

Adult Social Care: Assess individuals care and support needs

T: 0345 603 7630

www.essex.gov.uk/topic/adult-social-care-and-health

E: socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk

Age UK: Financial and legal including planning for the future, health and wellbeing, care support, befriending, cost of living support.

T: 0800 678 1602

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/

Age Well East: Emotional support, befriending, community activities, dementia support, bereavement, welfare advice and cost of living support.

T: 0300 373 3333

www.agewelleast.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society: Support for daily living, carers, independent living, and financial and legal matters.

T: 0333 150 3456

www.alzheimers.org.uk

'This is me' passport

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-factsheets/this-is-me

Carers First: Offer support and advice for carers.

T: 0300 303 1555

www.carersfirst.org.uk

Citizens Advice: Benefits, financial, legal and health.

Colchester T: 0808 278 7853

Tendring T: 01255 377080

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Colchester City Council: Cost of living, benefits and housing support, community information.

T: 01206 282700

www.colchester.gov.uk

Colchester Leisure World: A wide range of physical activity including Gym, swim and classes.
colchesterleisureworld.co.uk

Life Enhancing Activity Programme (LEAP) designed to improve the health & wellbeing of people with specific health issues.

T: 01206 282045

www.colchesterleisureworld.co.uk/leap-exercise-referral-scheme

Community 360 Colchester: Social prescribing, community activities and information about local support and services.

www.community360.org.uk

T: 01206 505250

E: msp@community360.org.uk or visit the hub in Long Wyre St. Colchester.

Community Voluntary Services Tendring (CVST): Social prescribing, community activities and information about local support and services.

www.cvstendring.org.uk

T: 01255 425692

E: socialprescribing@cvstendring.org.uk

Crossroads: Provides regular short breaks to carers who would like some time to themselves.

T: 01255 860960

Dementia Intensive Support Team: In the event of a crisis, the team can be contacted to support individuals in the community. **111 (option 2)**

www.eput.nhs.uk/our-services/north-east-essex-dementia-frailty-services

Adult Social Care can assess individuals' care and support needs.

Dementia UK: Advice on living with dementia, legal and financial matters and family and carers support.

www.dementiauk.org

T: 0800 888 6678 E: helpline@dementiauk.org

Digital Access Support Team (DAST):

Gain basic skills and confidence to enable you to use technology.

Colchester T: 01206 282452

E: Digital.AccessSupport@colchester.gov.uk

Tendring T: 01255 686497

E: DigitalAccessSupport@tendringdc.gov.uk

ECL: Person-centred care for sight and hearing loss, learning disabilities, mobility, respite and home care.

www.ecl.org T: 0333 0135 438

Essex Carers Support: Offer carers support and a respite service.

T: 01255 474410

www.essexcarerssupport.org.uk

Essex Community Agents: Support for mobility issues and caring responsibilities, with health and practical living skills to maintain independent living.
www.communityagentsessex.org.uk

Essex County Council: Care Home information
www.essex.gov.uk/care-homes

Information on care at home

www.essex.gov.uk/get-help-at-home

Help with meal services and shopping

www.essex.gov.uk/help-with-meals-and-shopping

Carers support

www.essex.gov.uk/request-carers-assessment

Information on scams and how to find a trustworthy trader

www.essex.gov.uk/trading-standards-for-consumers

Essex County Council Care Technology:

Fall detectors and sensors, technical support for medication and dementia.

T: 0300 303 2682

E: provide.carecall@nhs.net

or contact Adult Social Care (details above).

Visit www.essex.gov.uk/get-equipment-to-stay-independent/care-technology to check eligibility for free equipment.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:

Free home safety check.

www.essex-fire.gov.uk/book **T: 0300 303 0088**

Essex Wellbeing Service: Help to quit smoking, social isolation support, weight management, or help with day-to-day needs.

www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk

T: 0300 303 9988

E: provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net

Government Services:

How to claim for carers allowance

www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

Information on how to make or register a Power of Attorney

www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney

Guidance on what to do following a death

www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies

Helpline: 24/7 personal monitoring and response service in North East Essex.

T: 01206 769779

Independent Age: Care and support, money and benefits, health and mobility.

T: 0800 319 6789

www.independentage.org

Mind, Mid and North East Essex: Mental health support whether you are stressed, depressed or in crisis.

www.mnessexmind.org

NHS: Tools and support to lose weight, get active, quit smoking or lift your mood.

www.nhs.uk/better-health

Resuscitation Council UK: Information on personalised plans (ReSPECT forms) for clinical care in emergency situations.

www.resus.org.uk/respect

Sport for Confidence: Physical activity and wellbeing programme through occupational therapy interventions, focusing on strength and balance and falls prevention.

E: info@sportforconfidence.com

www.sportforconfidence.com

St Helena: For End-of-life support, advice, and My Care Choice Register.

T: 01206 890360

For bereavement support **T:** 01206 984274

www.mycarechoices.online

www.sthelenas.org.uk

Tendring Careline: 24/7 personal alarm service for the Tendring area.

T: 01255 222022

Tendring Community Transport: Tendring Community Transport: Door-to-door wheelchair accessible transport. Also provides access to Colchester healthcare services and hospices. Many services are free with a bus pass.

**T: 01255 436962 E: tendring.ct@btconnect.com
www.dial-a-ride.org**

Tendring District Council: Cost of living, benefits and housing support, community information.

**T: 01255 686868
www.tendringdc.gov.uk**

Tendring Leisure Centres: A wide range of physical activity including Gym, swim and classes.
www.tendrangleisure.co.uk

Therapy for You: Mental health support and access to psychological therapies

**T: 01206 334001
www.therapyforyou.co.uk**

Tribe Project: Small local business offering personalised services to support people at home (personal care, meals, cleaning, shopping or running errands) and in the community (hobbies, therapies, learning new skills, companionship).

www.tribeproject.org



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