

AGING WELL

A Newsletter with Practical Wisdom, Compassionate Care, Empowered Aging

Welcome to the First Edition of the Mindful Aging Newsletter

Dear Readers,

Aging is a journey—one that brings wisdom, resilience, and new perspectives. But it also comes with unique challenges that deserve thoughtful attention and compassionate support. At Mindful Aging, we believe that aging is not a medical journey—it's an emotional, relational, and deeply personal one.

After decades of working as a physician with older adults, our founder, Dr. Surah Grumet, saw firsthand the beauty, challenges, and heartbreak that accompany the aging process. Those experiences became the heart of this platform.

Too often, individuals and families navigate aging in isolation, unsure of what's "normal" or where to turn to for support. Mindful Aging exists to change that—to offer guidance, community, and clarity. We share lessons learned over decades in the field, so others can feel less alone and more empowered, even in uncertain times.

Our mission is to make aging conversations more open, honest, and compassionate. We offer content, workshops, expert interviews, and tools that support not just the person aging, but also their families, caregivers and loved ones. This newsletter is your quarterly companion in that journey. Each edition will bring you curated insights from experts in aging—from occupational and physical therapists to financial advisors and more.

We'll explore essential topics such as:

- Local resources: discover community programs, libraries, and support services that enrich daily life and promote independence.
- Health & Wellness: Learn strategies to stay active, manage chronic conditions, and prevent falls.
- Polypharmacy Awareness: Understand the risks of taking multiple medications and how to advocate for safer, simpler treatment plans.
- Financial Well-being: Get practical advice on budgeting, retirement planning, and protecting your assets as you age.
- Expert Voices: Read articles from professionals who specialize in aging, offering guidance on everything from home modifications to cognitive health.

Whether you are caring for an aging parent, thinking about your own long-term plans, or simply looking to better understand the process of growing older—Mindful Aging is here for you. Together, we'll explore how knowing your values, setting healthy boundaries, and fostering emotional clarity can transform the way we age. We're here to walk with you—through the joyful moments, the hard decisions, and everything in between.

Thank you for joining us on this path. We're honored to be part of your aging journey.

With care,

Mindful Aging Team



COME WITH A QUESTION
ABOUT AGING, LEAVE
WITH A PLAN FOR LIVING

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Aging Well Local Corner

WAKE COUNTY LIBRARIES

Wake County Public Libraries (WCPL) offer a variety of services tailored to support seniors and older adults in the community. Here are some key programs and resources:

🧠 Memory Care Kits

WCPL provides Memory Care Kits designed to assist individuals experiencing memory loss and their caregivers. Each kit includes six themed books, activities, and materials aimed at stimulating conversation and engagement. Themes range from nature and animals to nostalgic topics like classic cars and music. Residents with a WCPL library card can borrow these kits for free.

📖 Adult Services & Programming

WCPL's Adult Services Librarians focus on creating programs and resources for adults, including seniors. These services encompass:

- Book Clubs and Reading Programs: Facilitated discussions and reading groups.
- Accessibility Resources: Materials and services tailored for individuals with disabilities.
- One-on-One Assistance: Personalized help with technology, research, and more.



🚐 Library on the Go

The Library on the Go initiative brings library services directly to the community through mobile units and pop-up libraries. This service is especially beneficial for seniors who may have mobility challenges or reside in areas without easy access to a library branch. [Wake](#)

💛 Additional Senior Support Services

Beyond library-specific offerings, Wake County provides broader support for seniors through its Senior and Adult Services department. Services include:

- Home Care and Adult Day Centers
- Senior Centers and Community Engagement Programs
- Home Improvements and Weatherization Assistance
- Information and Referral Services

These programs aim to help seniors maintain independence and quality of life.

For comprehensive support, [Resources for Seniors](#) is a local nonprofit offering services like home care, adult day care, and caregiver support to Wake County residents.

📞 Contact Information

- Wake County Public Libraries: Visit wake.gov/libraries or call 919-250-1200.
- Senior and Adult Services: Explore programs at wake.gov/seniorservices.
- Resources for Seniors: Learn more at resourcesforseniors.org or call 919-872-7933.

Thriving Through Life's Changes

HOW TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AGING

BY KAREN JOHNSON, OTR/L

As we grow older, life changes—injuries, illnesses, or natural aging—can impact how we move, think, and engage in daily routines. But healthy aging isn't just about preventing decline. It's about adapting with purpose, staying engaged, and promoting independence in everyday life.

Here's how thinking like an occupational therapist (OT) can help you or your loved ones thrive through life's transitions:

- Modify your home environment to reduce fall risks—add grab bars, improve lighting, and rearrange frequently used items for easier access.



- Use energy conservation strategies during everyday tasks, especially after illness or treatments like chemotherapy. Sit instead of standing, pace yourself, and prioritize essential activities.
- Establish daily routines that include consistent medication management, physical activity, and mental engagement. These habits support memory, attention, and overall well-being.
- Break down complex tasks into manageable steps to reduce feeling overwhelmed and build confidence.
- Staying socially connected and purposeful, whether through volunteer work, hobbies, or family role-engagement boosts mental and emotional health.

Adapting to change doesn't mean giving up independence. It means approaching life with creativity, flexibility, and intention.

Taking these steps can empower people to live fully—at any age, and through any challenge. With the right strategies and mindset, healthy aging is not just possible, it's powerful.

Karen Johnson, OTR/L, CBIS, CSRS |
Founder of Innovative OT NC

The Hidden Danger of Too Many Pills: A Caregiver's Guide

HERE'S HOW TO PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES.

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What Is Polypharmacy?

Polypharmacy—taking five or more medications regularly—affects millions of older adults. While some need multiple drugs, overprescribing occurs when medications are unnecessary, duplicative, or causing more harm than benefit.

The risks are serious: increased falls, confusion, heart problems, and even death. 750 older adults are hospitalized daily due to medication-related harm.

Sarah's Success Story

At 88, Sarah was on 18 medications. She'd fallen three times, fainted in the shower, and suffered chronic constipation. Her daughter feared the worst. Using the concepts of Deprescribing with the help of a Deprescribing Pharmacist, Sarah's medications dropped to 9. Results after six months:

- Zero falls
- No fainting episodes
- Normal bowel movements
- Mental clarity restored

How Caregivers Can Prevent Polypharmacy

1. Maintain Complete Lists - Include ALL medications, vitamins, and supplements. Bring to every appointment.
2. Ask Critical Questions - "Is this necessary?" "What does this treat?" "Could this interact with other drugs?" "What are the pro's and con's of keeping vs. stopping this medication?"



3. Schedule Regular Reviews - Annual medication assessments with pharmacists; reassess long-term prescriptions every 6-12 months.
4. Watch for Warning Signs - New confusion, falls, fatigue, or worsening conditions may signal medication problems. Any side effect or symptom should be discussed with a provider.
5. Coordinate Care - Ensure all providers know about all medications. Use one primary pharmacy.
6. Advocate for Deprescribing - Sometimes the best medicine is less medicine.

DeLon Canterbury, PharmD, BCGP
The Deprescribing Pharmacist
 CEO of www.geriatrix.org

Aging Well

HOW TECH IS POWERING THE NEW AGE OF REHABILITATION, LAURA BEAVER, OT/L

If you still picture rehab as a room full of stress balls and resistance bands, it is time to rethink the scene. Whether you are a caregiver, a healthcare provider, or someone navigating neurologic recovery firsthand, today's tools are changing the game. Technology is no longer a luxury. It is becoming a vital lifeline for patients, for families, and for the clinicians supporting them. Today's neuro rehabilitation is evolving fast, for example from wearable robotics and virtual reality to AI powered cognitive tools, the future of recovery is here, and it could not have arrived at a better time.

We are facing a healthcare landscape where neurologic diagnoses are increasing, while rehab staffing levels are decreasing. Therapists are stretched thin. Families are carrying more responsibility. Insurance often limits how long or how much care a person can receive. But technology is stepping in, not to replace human care, but to extend it, enhance it, and make it more accessible across the continuum.

Neuroplasticity Doesn't Expire

For decades, we believed that most neurologic recovery happened within the first six months after injury. But modern neuroscience has shown that the brain remains capable of change, neuroplasticity, well beyond that window. What matters most is consistent, meaningful input over time.

That is where innovation comes in. From home-based therapy platforms to smart devices that detect intention and assist with movement, these tools support engagement long after traditional therapy ends. Even implantable systems are being used to gently stimulate key nerves during therapy sessions. These small, internal devices deliver subtle signals that help the brain better respond to rehab and reinforce movement patterns. All of this adds up to something powerful. A way to keep people recovering, growing, and gaining function far beyond what was once thought possible.



Aging Well

HOW TECH IS POWERING THE NEW AGE OF REHABILITATION CONT'D

Tech That Adapts to You

Wearable technologies like soft robotic gloves are among the most exciting developments in neuro rehab. These lightweight tools assist with hand movement, helping people complete everyday tasks while also encouraging the brain to rewire itself. AI powered brain training platforms are also growing in popularity. These systems personalize cognitive exercises based on performance, adjusting in real time to challenge attention, memory, or language skills. They keep users engaged and improving. Don't Be Intimidated. This Tech is for You

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by terms like "robotics" or "neurotech," but the truth is, many of these tools are surprisingly user-friendly. Most are designed to be intuitive, are easy to set up, and even fun. Recovery does not have to feel clinical. When technology is interactive and rewarding, people stay motivated. And let us not forget, many of today's older adults are already tech savvy. They are using smartphones, smartwatches, fitness apps, and video chats. This generation is ready, and in many cases, eager for high tech solutions that help them live better.

Supporting the Support System

Recovery does not happen in isolation. Behind every person working to regain function is often a spouse, adult child, or care partner juggling appointments, encouragement, and exhaustion. Technology can ease that burden, too. Many modern rehab tools are designed to be used at home, on your own time, and without extensive setup. For families and clinicians alike, that means fewer gaps between sessions, more independence, and stronger outcomes over time.

Why It Matters Now

As a clinical specialist and occupational therapist, I have worked with providers and patients at every stage of recovery, from the hospital bedside to outpatient clinics to home environments. And I can say this with confidence. When people are given tools that help them stay involved in their own recovery, they do better. The future of neuro recovery is not limited to what happens in therapy twice a week. It is in the moments in between, when someone has the motivation and means to keep going, and technology that meets them where they are. The Bottom Line Rehabilitation is changing, and it is changing for the better. With the rise of robotics, virtual tools, brain-based tech, and even internal stimulators, we are creating more opportunities for people to regain function, independence, and hope. Whether you are guiding a loved one, supporting a patient, or going through it yourself, know this.

Laura Beaver, OT/L, CHT is a Clinical Specialist at bioliberty with over 25 years of experience in neurorehabilitation and upper extremity recovery. As a Certified Hand Therapist and occupational therapist, she integrates advanced technology and clinical expertise to support patient centered innovation in rehab. Connect with her on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/laura-beaver-60059721

photo from the website: [Bioliberty.com](https://www.bioliberty.com)



Aging Well

Financial Advice from an Expert's Desk

DON'T LOSE TRACK OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Consider this: About 1 in 7 people has unclaimed cash or property, totaling billions of dollars, according to the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators. How can you avoid losing track of valuable financial assets?

For starters, keep good records of your 401(k) and IRA accounts. And report a change of address and name changes to financial services providers and former employers. Also, try not to maintain multiple accounts in scattered locations.

But what can you do if you suspect you've already left some money behind?

If you think you've lost tabs on an IRA, you can check old tax returns and bank statements to help track your contributions and find your previous financial provider. If it's a 401(k), you can contact your old employer's plan administrator.

You can also check some websites run by governmental agencies. For one, the Department of Labor recently launched a retirement savings lost-and-found database at lostandfound.dol.gov that can help you find pension or 401(k) plans connected to your Social Security number.

But as you've heard, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" — which, in this case, means you'll help yourself greatly by tracking your accounts from beginning to end.

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