

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of August 10

If you've never heard of "bungalow leg" before, join the club. This strangely named condition is new to us as well. It refers to the gradual weakening of leg and lower body muscles in people who live in homes without stairs, and who don't get to climb stairs in other places.

Eventually, an older adult who doesn't work the necessary muscles for climbing stairs may find themselves unable to climb stairs they once took for granted. They may even trip over low curbs.

Our Leg Muscles Love Stairs

A 2018 Duke University Department of Medicine study found that stair-climbing came with many benefits:

- There is a significantly lower risk of mortality when climbing more than 55 flights per week;
- Active stair climbers are more fit and have a higher aerobic capacity;

- Even two flights of stairs climbed per day can lead to six pounds of weight loss over one year;
- There is a strong association between stair climbing and bone density in post-menopausal women;
- Climbing stairs can improve the amount of "good cholesterol" in the blood;
- Stair climbing increases leg power and may be an important priority in reducing the risk of injury from falls in the elderly; and
- Stair climbing can help you achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Climbing the stairs also involves the glutes, hamstrings, calves, as well as ankles that ensure feet land properly on each step. If you can climb stairs, you should. It's one of the healthiest activities there is at any age - and it's free.

Stairs Aren't For Everybody, Though

Single-story living may still be preferable for older adults with significant mobility and/or balance challenges, conditions that affect the muscular or skeletal system, cardiovascular system, or neurological system.

I'm In a Single-Story Home - Now What?

Besides finding stairs and hills to climb in your day-to-day activities, physiotherapists and trainers offer plenty of practical, free alternatives that can be done at home to reduce the likelihood of bungalow leg:

While you make your morning coffee or tea, march in place while lifting your knees as high as they can safely go. Use the kitchen counter for support if you need it.

When you get out of a chair, stand up and sit down three times to work your quads. Stronger quads are an underrated key to independence. We need our quads in good working order to be able to safely sit on and get up from a toilet. Being unable to do so without help raises serious questions about one's continued independence.

Toe and heel raises can help. Hold onto a sturdy chair or wall for balance. Raise your heels: Push up onto your toes as high as you can, hold for one second, and slowly lower back down. Next, raise your toes: Shift your weight back slightly, and lift your front toes off the ground to work the front of your shins. Aim for 10 to 15 slow movements per set, two or three times a day.

Older Adults Skills Fair – Thursday 8/13 at John Jay High School

Older adults (55+) who are looking for full- or part-time employment, or volunteering opportunities, County Executive Sue Serino's second free Older Adults Skills Fair is coming up this week!

It's taking place from 2-4pm on Thursday, August 13th at John Jay High School, 2012 NY 52 in Hopewell Junction. No advance guest registration is required.

This event will include opportunities to:

- Meet local employers offering flexible, part-time positions;
- Connect with nonprofit organizations;
- Socialization with fellow older adults; and
- Enjoy complimentary light refreshments.

Prospective event vendors have until August 8th to register (it's free) at www.dutchessny.gov/senior-skills, and can contact the Office of the County Executive at 845-486-2000 with questions.

Bessie Riley, Poughkeepsie Supercentenarian (1914-2026) – In Memoriam

[The obituary for lifelong Poughkeepsie resident Bessie Riley](#), who passed away in July at the age of 112. Bessie was the fourth Dutchess County resident to have reached the age of 110, and was the 15th oldest person in the United States at the time of her death. [Bessie was remembered recently by County Executive Sue Serino.](#)

August OFA Events

To register for any of the August events below, contact OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 unless noted otherwise.

(Wednesday) **12th – Navigating Medicare** at Starr Library, Rhinebeck, 4 pm

12th – Summer Picnic Series, Stitzel Field, Poughkeepsie, 11:30a-1p, for City of Poughkeepsie seniors

(Tuesday) **18th – Navigating Medicare** at Boardman Road Library, 141 Boardman Rd., Poughkeepsie, 3 pm – [click here to register](#), or call 845-485-3445 extension 3380

(Wednesday) **19th – Navigating Medicare** at Poughkeepsie Galleria, Poughkeepsie, 10am

19th – Summer Picnic Series, Freedom Park, 212 Skidmore Rd., LaGrange,

11:30a-1p (for Town of Beekman or LaGrange seniors)

(Wednesday) **26th – Summer Picnic Series**, Hopewell Rec Park, 392 NY 376,

Hopewell Junction, 11:30a-1p (for Town of East Fishkill seniors)

(Thursday) **27th – OFA Mobile Office Hours**, Amenia Library, 3309 NY 343,

Amenia, 12 noon-2p

Other news:

According to one recent study, [the maximum human lifespan is 194](#). Which means OFA summer picnic attendance would grow...a lot...among other things.

[Chronic conditions can get in the way of healthy aging](#).

Protein-rich foods are in the news lately, but...[is less protein in the diet a key to better aging?](#)

It's back-to-school season, which means that there are [back-to-school shopping scams](#).

[Wabbit season.](#) [Duck season.](#) Anybody else out there still indulge in their childhood pastimes?

This week's birthdays:

8/8: Guitarist/singer [The Edge](#) (Dave Evans of U2) (65)

8/9: Actor/producer [Sam Elliott](#) (82)

8/10: Flautist/singer/songwriter [Ian Anderson](#) (Jethro Tull) (79)

8/11: Singer/songwriter [Joe Jackson](#) (72)

8/12: Rapper/producer/actor [Sir Mix-a-Lot](#) (Anthony Ray) (63)

8/13: Tightrope-walker [Philippe Petit](#) (77)

8/14: Actor/comedian/writer/musician [Steve Martin](#) (81)

It's another one of those Bad Jokes:

I was wondering why the frisbee kept getting bigger, and then it hit me.