



The Health Benefits of Attending Church for Seniors

[Despite the fact](#) that one out of every four 65-year-olds will live past age 90 and one out of 10 will live surpass 95, seniors are dealing with mental and physical health issues such as depression from illness or loss of spouse, decreased mobility, and isolation. Studies indicate that [attending church](#) on a regular basis can decrease blood pressure, boost the immune system, and potentially tack on two or three more years to that already-impressive 90-plus lifespan—and that's not all. Let's take a look at some of the benefits seniors gain from going to church.

Functional Movement

Providing there are no health issues, seniors 65 and older should engage in a [minimum of 150 minutes](#) of moderate exercise each week, not including two-plus days of strength training. This can be a challenge if depression and/or mobility issues are in the mix. While it can't compare to a brisk stroll from a cardiovascular standpoint, attending church on a weekly basis forces

functional movement just by leaving the home. If a senior starts to feel better about themselves, they're more apt to continue their physical fitness journey via other activities.

Being Present

Be it a previous addiction, current mental health issues, or fear of what the future holds, church can help seniors be present in the moment. According to [DrugRehab.org](https://www.drugrehab.org), "It can be difficult to make ourselves focus on the here and now, especially if we're going through a transition as life-changing as addiction recovery. But taking even a few minutes a day to be mindful of all we have in the present moment—and especially all we have to be grateful for—can help us feel more at peace with ourselves, our surroundings, and our circumstances." While many believe that seniors don't have addiction issues, the reality is that drug and alcohol abuse in the elderly is a growing problem in the States—widowers over the age of 75 have the highest rate of alcoholism.

Sense of Purpose

Between an empty house void of kids and retirement, seniors can feel as though they lost their sense of purpose in life. The church experience often involves activities outside of the service, including volunteer and charity work. Having renewed purpose can help fill this void while building self-confidence to do other things in life. [Experts suggest](#) spending some time revisiting activities that bring pleasure to see if you can turn them into a bigger-picture goal like a side business.

Increased Social Skills

[Studies indicate](#) that more than 40 percent of seniors experience loneliness. This is extremely important to address because lonely individuals are [more susceptible](#) to cancer, infection, heart disease, and dementia—loneliness can increase the risk of dementia by 64 percent. Being alone can also raise blood pressure to the point where the stress hormone cortisol is raised. Both of these actions make the heart work harder. Sleep patterns are often disrupted which negatively affects the body and the mind from a restorative and psychological standpoint. All of these symptoms can prompt further social withdrawal. Attending church can open up the doors to social interaction and mental stability, and seniors can develop friendships that extend beyond the house of worship.

Gaining health benefits may not be the main reason people attend church, but there's no denying that it can give seniors an extra mental and physical boost. Church offers a sense of community while providing a judgement-free safe zone for sharing triumphs and concerns alike, which is great for seniors.

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