Seven low-cost ways to enrich life in retirement

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Retirement can be a wonderful time to explore new interests and stay mentally and physically active. However, with the cost of living continuing to rise, many may be forced to cut back on some leisure activities.



Flexible friends: A yoga class is a great way to keep fit and socialise

A new report from Scottish Widows highlights this growing concern, revealing that nearly two in five people (39%) are at risk of being unable to meet even basic needs in retirement – up from 35% in 2023. The findings are based on research conducted in partnership with Frontier Economics, using data from a YouGov survey of over 5,100 UK adults in January and February.

In a time when pension savings often struggle to keep up with inflation, Age UK has come up with seven affordable ways to enhance your retirement lifestyle – supporting both your mental wellbeing and physical health without breaking the bank.

1. Join a local walking group

“Walking groups and walking sports like football and tennis are excellent ways to stay active,” says Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK. “Activities that get you outside are best for mental health as nature can help decrease your anxiety levels and can help lessen stress.

“Physical activities can improve cardiovascular health, balance, and flexibility. These activities provide social interaction, which can reduce feelings of isolation. Many local Age UKs offer groups like these.”

2. Try some new arts and crafts

“Engaging in creative pursuits such as book clubs, painting, drawing, crafts, knitting, or photography stimulates the brain and enhances fine motor skills,” says Caroline.

3. Attend coffee mornings

Bond with like-minded individuals over a cup of coffee. “Regular social gatherings like coffee mornings or friendship clubs provide a platform to build new relationships,” says Caroline. “Social engagement can help prevent depression and cognitive decline.”

4. Sign up for strength and movement classes

Find your inner yogi at a local yoga class. “Gentle strengthening exercises like Tai Chi, yoga, and seated exercises improve flexibility, balance, and strength,” explains Caroline. “They are highly beneficial for older adults as they help maintain muscle mass, improve bone density, and enhance overall physical function,

preventing falls

5. Join a community garden

Joining a community garden is a great way to get outdoors and meet new people – plus it also provides a good workout! “Volunteering at a community garden gives access to fresh, healthy food, improved mental and physical health, increased social interaction, and environmental benefits,” says Caroline.

“Gardening tasks like digging, planting, and weeding are gentle forms of exercise that can improve strength, flexibility, and balance.”

6. Engage in daily brain games and puzzles

“Activities like crosswords, Sudoku, or memory games keep the mind sharp,” says Caroline. “They also offer a fun and rewarding way to challenge oneself.”

7. Visit your local museums and galleries

“Find out whether there are any free local museums and galleries to visit and go and explore local history,” recommends Caroline. “For more information or to find activities in your area, you can contact your local Age UK directly.”