

# The Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington's Caregiver Corner

## Enjoying the Outdoors

Spring has sprung! The weather is finally nice. Now is the time to venture outside and enjoy the great outdoors. Getting outdoors provides great benefits for your loved one, who has been cooped up inside for months. Sunshine generates Vitamin D, which is necessary for brain, bone and muscle function. Being outside also provides your loved one with important social interaction, be it with friends, children or animals. Inactivity is one of the greatest causes of disease and disability in older adults; being active outdoors will provide tremendous physical and psychological benefits for your loved one.

The benefits of getting outdoors are abundant. However, there are often risks involved. There's cracked pavement, lack of available seating, parking, and public restrooms and the fear of crime, among other risk factors. Take precautions, but don't let these risk factors deter your loved one from enjoying the outdoors. Here are a few activities that your loved one can do to stay active outside.

**Birdwatching**—many communities have birdwatching groups, which will provide your loved one with socialization. It also provides a routine for your loved one, forcing them to get outside.

**Hiking or Walking**—if your loved one is mobile, this is a great physical activity that can be adjusted per skill and ability level. Take a hike on an easy, flat path or try a more challenging terrain if your loved one is able.

**Fishing**—even if your loved one is wheelchair bound, they can fish. Take them to a pier to cast a line, or if they're able, go out on the water and see if you get any bites.

**Picnic**—a great excuse to get your loved one outside. They can eat, socialize and take in the fresh air.

There are countless safe and fun ways in which your loved one can get outside and enjoy the outdoors. Take advantage of the beautiful spring weather while it lasts to spend time outdoors with your loved one.

Resources: *elder-one-stop.com* & *agingcare.com*

Contact the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington at 360-694-8144 or [ClarkADRC@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:ClarkADRC@dshs.wa.gov) to learn more about supports available to family caregivers. Article content is provided by Active Daily Living.