

# Incorporating Leisure Into Therapy



The engagement of older adults in leisure has been associated with improved cognitive, physical, and mental health, contributing to overall productive aging and patient satisfaction. Therapists play an important role in facilitating participation in leisure to improve quality of life after an injury or illness.

## Take time to get to know your residents

At the time of evaluation, discuss hobbies that the resident has or would enjoy participating in. Use an interest checklist to initiate discussion and identify resident-specific leisure preferences:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing cards/board games  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking/baking   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church activities          | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/books     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles           | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting/drawing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Movies/television | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking/model building | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |

## Incorporate resident-centered interests into therapy goals and interventions

- Create goals that bridge identified functional deficits with leisure interests. Some examples of this could include:
  - *A goal specific to fine motor coordination for the resident who enjoys sewing.*
  - *A goal specific to activity tolerance and balance for the resident who enjoys taking their dog for a walk.*
  - *A goal specific to verbal expression and articulation for the resident who enjoys coffee dates with their church group.*
- Tailor therapeutic interventions to include participation in the identified interest. Some examples of this could include:
  - *Setting up a putt-putt golf course during therapy to address higher level balance, coordination, proprioception, and cognition, for the resident who enjoys golf.*
  - *Baking an apple pie to address sequencing, safety awareness, balance, and activity tolerance, for the resident who enjoys baking.*
  - *Using music from the person's favorite genre to implement use of memory strategies, for the resident who enjoys music.*
  - *Creating a home exercise program that incorporates steps of a dance routine to facilitate movement of affected muscle groups, for the resident who enjoys dance.*
- Teach the resident compensatory strategies to participate in identified leisure interests, when necessary.
- Adapt the leisure activity to allow for resident participation, when necessary.

**Collaborate with the key players of your facility to allow for continued participation in healthy leisure outside of therapy sessions.** Discuss learned interests, provide caregiver training, and share ideas for outings, events, guest speakers, and weekly activities within the facility.