

## Adapting Home and Life to Retirement

### ✓ Adapt your home early, but progressively.

The key is to plan without replacing abilities you still have. Initial adaptations should support existing function, not substitute for it. **Act when tasks start feeling harder, not after independence is already lost.**

Simple changes to consider:

- **Good lighting, clear walkways**, and **secure flooring** to prevent falls
- **Grab rails** at steps and entrances; a **second bannister** on the stairs
- **Non-slip mats, grab rails**, and a **shower stool** in the bathroom
- **Raise chair height** with furniture raisers, or choose a well-supported armchair
- Use a **perching stool** in the kitchen to reduce strain on knees and ankles
- Try **gadgets** like kettle tippers, jar openers, and long-handled reachers
- **Reorganise** your home so essentials are within easy reach

### ✓ Stay connected.

Loneliness is one of the greatest risks to health in older age; it raises the risk of stroke and heart attack and makes pain feel worse. **Join community groups, patient organisation events, or online meet-ups.** When mobility is limited, video calls and online classes can be a lifeline. **Patient organisations** are especially valuable for connecting with others who truly understand your experiences.

### ✓ Stay active in a way that works for you.

Find activities you enjoy, as it makes all the difference in staying motivated. **Any activity counts:** housework, gardening, sit-to-stand exercises, or carrying shopping all contribute to strength and fitness. Walking, cycling, swimming, and tai chi are also great options. Exercising with others, especially people facing similar challenges, builds confidence and motivation. A **physiotherapist** can help you get started safely.

### ✓ Build a balanced daily routine.

**Plan your week;** it makes days feel more purposeful and reduces anxiety. **Keep your brain engaged** through hobbies, creative activities, or volunteering roles that give you a sense of purpose.

### ✓ Have a retirement plan.

Retirement can be good or bad: **the key is having a plan and a sense of purpose.** Those who replace work with planned activity, social connection, and meaningful roles tend to thrive.

