

Golden Years Fall 2011

SPECIAL SECTION 2011



TECH SAVVY

Why now is a good time to improve your computer skills

Kristen Castillo
Creators.com

Skype, Twitter, Google and Photoshop -- you've probably heard these terms, but you may not know a lot about them.

"Seniors are beginning to get that 'left behind' feeling," says Jerry Taylor of SeniorTech, a company that offers personalized in-home computer lessons for seniors and retirees. "For example, every day they watch a TV show which tells them, 'For more information, go to www.something.com.' They're frustrated because there's usually no phone number given."

*Getting Started

Whether you're an avid computer user or a novice, you can enhance your tech skills.

David Casuto, founder of Senior Surf Computer Education, which offers private tutoring as well as computer classes for beginning, intermediate and advanced learners, says his students are eager to learn, especially in groups.

"From my experience, most seniors want to be involved with others," he explains. "It gives them motivation (and) accountability, and it's more fun. People are learning from others."

Senior Surf even partners with a local youth development group where teens and seniors work alongside each other sharing computer technology.

In Jerry Taylor's one-on-one tutoring sessions, most of his students are 55 or older. Some are even in their 90s. No matter what the client's age, there's one thing Taylor won't do.

"I never touch their keyboard or mouse," he says. "I insist they do everything -- no matter how long it takes."



*Lessons That Work

Many senior centers, community colleges and community groups offer computer classes for seniors. SeniorNet is a computer resource for seniors that partners with computer "learning centers" throughout the country. Prices for many of these classes range from \$25 to \$40 per student.

You can study many computer topics including email, blogging, graphic design, photo sharing, desktop publishing, researching on the Web and fun with Internet games.

*Getting Social

From navigating social media sites, such as Twitter, to video chatting with their grandchildren via Skype, many seniors want to know how to communicate in high-tech ways.

"In the past, I've taught social media classes like Facebook," says Casuto, noting many seniors want to learn programs to help them stay connected with family and friends. "They're getting in touch with their kids, grandkids and sharing information about their day. People are embracing it with a lot of enthusiasm."

According to The Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, social networking among Internet users over age 65 has grown 150 percent in the past two years, while Internet users ages 50 to 64 have doubled their social networking in the same time period.

Some seniors want to use their computer skills to support their small businesses and social interests.

~CONTENTS~

- Don't Take No For an Answer
- Cooking for One
- Yoga for Seniors
- When Can You Retire?
- Tech Savvy
- Single in the Golden Years
- Long-Term Care Insurance
- 'Seniorpreneurs'
- The Eyes Have It
- Teach the Grandkids
- Fix It
- Hearing Aids
- Snowbirds
- Think Pink with Walnuts
- Alzheimer's Disease

Sharon Naylor
Creators.com

Grandparents have so much to share with their grandchildren, from little ones to teens. They play a very important role in their grandkids' lives, even if they live far away and only see the kids once or twice a year. "Grandparents come in a huge range of shapes, ages and life experiences, and yet in the media, grandparents are still constantly portrayed as gray-bunned knitting obsessives or meek, old slipper wearers, content to swing back and forth in rocking chairs," says Marris and Bob Whittaker, founders of the modern, savvy grandparent tips website VirtualGranny.com. It is a site where real grandparents post their stories of fun activities they've shared with their grandkids.

Sue Atkins, author of "Grandparenting for Dummies," says, "Grandparents today may be in their 40s and 50s! You don't have to wear purple. You keep growing and learning and being a wonderful role model for your grandkids."

Atkins says that grandparents provide a priceless benefit to the lives of grandkids. "In today's frenetic world ... grandparents have more space to listen, talk, read with children and take them out. They're building memories that last a lifetime for (their) grandchildren."

If your visits have fallen into a rut, though, with the kids no longer interested in going to the playground or watching movies with you, it's time to introduce a new activity that can thrill all of you: providing the kids with the opportunity to learn about something you enjoy. Many grandparents love to introduce kids to the so-called "lost arts" that they enjoyed when they were young. Granted, when you were young, there was electricity, and you probably had Barbie dolls instead of paper dolls. But there may be a craft you enjoyed sharing with your own parents that can become an enjoyable afternoon's craft with your grandkids. "My granddaughter took to knitting so quickly! She said that some of her favorite young celebrities knit, and she always wanted to learn how," says grandmother Nancy Thomassen. Now she and her granddaughter have a monthly date at the local knitting shop to pick out new yarn

together.

Cooking is a budget-friendly lesson to share with kids. If your grandchildren think that all pizza comes delivered in a box, why not teach them the art of making pizza dough from scratch, rolling it out, adding toppings and baking it on a pizza stone? Or make a cake from scratch together, as a surprise for their parents. Grandchildren will always remember that (set it!) you (end it!) taught them how to make homemade pizza, and they'll carry these smart skills with them into their future, becoming self-



TEACH THE GRANDKIDS

Creating lasting memories with your grandchildren



YOGA FOR SENIORS

Finding inner and outer peace

DiAnne Crown
Creators.com

Talk to frequent yoga practitioners and you'll soon wonder why everyone doesn't do yoga, including yourself. Yoga enthusiasts are a passionate bunch. Their sentiments about the exercises range from "It's a workout, but it's so relaxing" to "I can leave work really tired, but then go to a yoga class and I come out feeling energized."

John Record, a retired assistant medical school dean, put it this way, "I saw it as a physical activity with an emphasis on flexibility that would translate into my golf game. Where yoga has really taken me is to live with inner peace."

This feeling isn't unusual, according to Justina Schacht, owner of Namaste Yoga Center. "The word yoga means union. What we practice is uniting body, breath and mind in each moment. The practice is finding balance because it's the mind that wanders away."

The majority of Schacht's yoga students are seniors. "For them," Schacht continues, "there is a physical

benefit (in practicing yoga): help with maintaining range of motion in joints; the benefit of improving the breath; breathing diaphragmatically -- deeply -- to use the entire lung capacity, even in times of stress; and the benefit of quieting and stilling the mind. What comes with that is peacefulness and acceptance."

Schacht believes people of all ages and stages can do yoga, even seniors who are just getting started. The important thing is to find a guide who is able to help improve your physical habits, both in doing the exercises and in daily life. "You should feel comfortable, as a beginner, going in anywhere to get the support of the guide." But if you want a class designed for beginners or one that accommodates special needs, those are available, too.

"There are beginning classes, chair yoga classes, as well as adaptive classes for people who can't get up and down off of the floor or need help learning how to do so safely. Bolsters, blocks and pillows can be used for support. And it's so liberating when people find they (have mobility) ... because that's the biggest fear, isn't it?" Schacht says, "that they'll get down on the floor

and not be able to get back up. But our oldest student was 98 years old."

Seniors, like most people, Schacht says, need to start gradually, changing positions to accommodate initial limitations if necessary, then building up to some of the more challenging postures and exercises. Keep in mind, she adds that it's not a group experience; it's an individual experience within a group. Everyone doesn't have to be at the same level to take a class. "Everyone has different levels of flexibility and different muscle and bone capabilities. It's not a competitive sport."

"Yoga is a subtle science. You won't feel the burn or worn out when you leave, but over time the body becomes more flexible and stronger. Over a couple of months, you'll look back and say, 'My gosh! Two months ago I couldn't do this.'"

Yoga also teaches systematic relaxation, training people to reduce unconscious, often habitual tension, Schacht says.

In "The New Yoga for People Over 50, A Comprehensive Guide for Midlife and Older Beginners," author Suza Francina calls the practice of



SINGLE IN THE GOLDEN YEARS

Take your single status out for a spin

Ginny Frizzi
Creators.com

As with many things in life, being single in your golden years is, to a large extent, what you make of it.

Jennifer Little of Parents Teach Kids is 67 and has been single for 35 years of her adult life. "All I could think of were the lyrics to the mid-'60s song by The Mamas and the Papas. 'Go where you want to go; do what you want to do.' That about sums it up, because it is my life and there is no one else to consider," she says.

Marlene Caroselli, a former trainer, has definite ideas on how to live a happy and fulfilling life as a senior single. "I've been single all of my life. Now, as I approach my septuagenarian decade, I'm happier than ever with my status," she says.

Caroselli's suggestions include widening your circle of friends, increasing the number of things that interest you, narrowing time spent on meaningless activities, and finding a cause and supporting it. Also, she says to live by the motto: "If you do nothing else today, do something good for your body."

Caroselli feels strongly about seniors eliminating toxic people from their lives. "There are always people from whom I can learn, but there are always self-absorbed people who are negative. It's the 'me-me-me' syndrome, which no one needs to hear all the time," she observes.

Little has a similar recommendation. "I searched for seniors groups or singles and found most to be less active than I am. I have a few friends, but our schedules don't always match up, so I go to lectures at the college when they are available to the public. I joined a computer club for seniors originally to get help and now to give help," she says.

Caroselli walks whenever she can within a three-mile radius; has become creative with money, including bargain shopping; attends monthly free senior movies; and borrows DVDs from the library.

Another idea is to use your talents and experience to earn money. Whether you need extra income or just want to earn some additional money, it is always rewarding when someone is willing to pay for your good or services.

There are countless opportunities for

THE EYES HAVE IT

Tips on taking care of your vision and seeing better

Sharon Naylor
Creators.com

Being unable to read small print or find a button on the remote can be a real headache, and vision problems can (SET ITAL) lead (END ITAL) to headaches. But a number of simple remedies can help you avoid the hassle of eyesight issues.

According to Livestrong.com, about 20 percent of Americans age 65 or older have problems with their eyes -- problems that often worsen with age. Of course, the American Association of Optometrists recommends that you get your eyes checked at least every two years if you are younger than 70 and annually thereafter, and if you have diabetes or other eye illnesses, you may need to be checked more often.

For the average senior, reduced vision is just a part of aging and poses a minor annoyance when a newspaper or book needs to be held farther and farther from the face in order to read. That can lead to eye, arm and neck strain during a long reading session. And if you're among the millions of seniors reading books on e-readers, you may be experiencing the kind of eye strain that strikes computer users of all ages.

Luckily for your vision, there are a number of smart products on the market that are designed to help you see better and longer, allowing you to spend more time doing the activities you enjoy.

--Get glasses or lenses. First, see your optometrist to make sure your eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions are perfect for your vision as it is right now. If it's been a while since your last checkup, you might need a different prescription to clarify your vision.

--Get rid of glare. If you spend a lot of time in front of a computer, or if you use an e-reader even a moderate amount of the time, affix an inexpensive anti-glare screen or film onto each of your electronic gadgets. These state-of-the-art anti-glare layers reduce eyestrain almost immediately, and many are created from materials that resist fingerprints and smudges, also protecting your clear vision.

--Wear computer glasses. Ask your optometrist to fit you for special

glasses designed just for use while working on your computer, playing games or, again, using an e-reader. These glasses move with you as you switch from computer to e-reader to cellphone, helping you see better throughout your busy day.

--Get a large-button remote control. Every button is larger -- and every number and command icon oversized -- to allow you to see what you need to push as you're watching television, recording movies and playing DVDs. You'll find these new universal remotes at electronics stores.

--Get a large-button phone. Your at-home phone can make dialing easier when you swap your small-button phone for an enlarged-button phone.

--Read large-print books. Buy or borrow books printed in oversize fonts, which sometimes double the size of words. With a simple click on your e-reader or computer, you can view books, magazines and websites in larger font as well. "I didn't even know I could do that," says grandmother Denise Helmsley. "But my son saw me reading a book on my Kindle one day and showed me how to triple the size of the print. I'm now enjoying reading so much more!"

--Get large-print playing cards. If you enjoy a good game of bridge or poker, you can now play with cards that have 1-inch numbers and less credit card-sized rectangular magnifier with an LED bulb to make reading even easier.

--Improve your lighting. One great way to reduce eye strain and help you see and read better is to allow more natural light into your environment. Open curtains or pull the cord to raise blinds. Place a brighter light next to your chair for evening reading. And if you're used to watching TV in the dark, try leaving a light on in the room to lessen the burden on your eyes.

--Rest your eyes. Don't read or work on the computer for too long without taking a break, say most optometrists. Look away from the far

