

Appendix A - Aging in Place

What is Aging in Place?

Aging in place is the ability to live in your home for as long and as comfortable as possible. This ability to stay in your home may be extended through adapting, modifying, and taking preventative measures within your home.

Studies have shown that living well and staying active increases our ability to stay in our own home or preferred physical environment. While living well and staying active are important, it is also recommended that you assess the environment around you to determine how safe you are. Be on the lookout for what can be done in order for you and your family to stay safe in your chosen environment.

Planning to Stay Home?

Have you thought about where you want to be living in five years? Do you want to live in your house for the rest of your life? What changes do you need to make in order to stay at home? Are you already having trouble moving around your house? These are questions many individuals have thought about or will start thinking about as they grow older.

The purpose of this appendix is to provide you with information on staying well and how to adapt to life changes on the farm in order to enhance your quality of life as you age. This may allow you to continue to live at home as you grow older. We hope you find valuable information in the following pages.

More information on adjusting your home is available in Appendix B.

Living Well

One aspect of aging in place is learning to live well. Living well is so much more than your physical health, the way you eat, or how good your habits are. Living well includes not only your physical health but also your mental health and spirituality. Evidence suggests that having a safe home, along with being well, will allow you to age in your natural context for a longer period of time.

Wellness is broken into seven areas to help you better understand living well. These areas include physical, occupational, social, emotional, environmental, spiritual, and intellectual wellness. When planning to live alone, the need arises to increase all areas of wellness in order to live independently. For an older adult, improving your seven wellness areas could result in an increased quality of life.

Seven Areas of Wellness

- 1. Physical** — How well you care for your body through your diet and exercise.
- 2. Occupational** — The satisfaction or fulfillment you receive from your career contributing to your ability to give positively to what you do.
- 3. Social** — How you communicate, relate, and connect with other people in your community or your ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with your family, friends and others.
- 4. Emotional** — How you cope with challenges or obstacles in your life and how you accept your own emotions.



5. **Environmental** — How you recognize the responsibility you hold for the air, water, and land surrounding you.
6. **Spiritual** — Your ability to achieve a sense of peace and harmony to understand the questions you have about the meaning of life.
7. **Intellectual** — Your desire to continue to learn and experience new things; your ability to keep your mind active, keeping it open to explore the world around you, to question things and think critically, and to grow your sense of humor.

Staying Active

If you want to live well, staying active may be your best option. Studies indicate that adults who are more active throughout the day are more likely to live longer than adults who are less active during the day. Active participation, therefore, may result in healthy behaviors leading to a greater possibility that you will be able to stay in your home longer—and any activity counts!

How Do I Stay Active?

Studies have shown that activities in which you exert any amount of energy may help you prolong life. These activities even include daily chores like vacuuming, gardening, and making the bed.

Making Changes Before Changes Are Needed

You may or may not be experiencing difficulties in or around your farm. If you are experiencing difficulties, then you are ready to make changes around your farm. However, if you are not currently experiencing difficulties, you may be thinking, “Why should I fix what isn’t broken?” Making changes before changes are needed means helping to prevent or stop something unwanted from happening before it is too late.

Applying prevention methods or strategies in your everyday life at home can decrease your risk of unnecessary injury or falls, allowing you to continue to age in place. Currently, older people leave their home environment to receive care due to the natural effects of aging or due to a fall. This may be because their home environment doesn’t support their natural course of aging. Research has indicated that once an adult leaves his or her home for healthcare, one-third is discharged to nursing home care because they cannot live independently in their homes. Length of stay in a nursing home varies, with 25 percent remaining for three months or less and 50 percent living there for at least one year before discharge. Many choose to live with family or other types of assisted living.

Whatever your personal situation, aging in place is often a feasible strategy when planning and activities are done sooner than later.