



10 Reasons a Retirement Community May Be the Best Move

Written by Brenda Becker on September 16, 2011

Aging-in-place, the term often used to describe what an older person does when he continues to live in his home for as long as possible, has its advantages and disadvantages. While we are usually most comfortable staying in familiar surroundings, sometimes a change is good and/or necessary.

Retirement communities, whether they are rental communities or entrance-fee based Continuing Care Retirement Communities, offer many benefits that can challenge the appeal of remaining at home. Here are just 10 reasons to consider moving to a retirement community.

1. **Social opportunities** – Isolation is a common complaint and concern for those remaining in their homes alone. In a retirement community, residents can choose to spend time alone or they can immerse themselves in community life. Many residents discover new hobbies and interests or they finally have the opportunity to reengage past hobbies. Intellectual stimulation comes from social programs; community resources like libraries, media centers and computer labs; and new dinner companions.
2. **Prepared meals** – Cooking for one or two can become a chore, especially after many years of preparing meals. Most retirement communities include at least one meal per day in the monthly service fee. Although many residents still make trips to the grocery store for breakfast or lunch items, there is never a worry about having enough healthy food available. Many communities also offer consultations with a dietician who works with the kitchen to ensure every meal is suitable for the residents.
3. **Minimum, if any, home maintenance** – Imagine never having to clean out the gutters, edge the lawn, rake the leaves, fix a clogged toilet, replace the roof, etc. These chores can be replaced by pleasurable activities like gardening (for fun) and woodworking.



4. **Access to on-site healthcare** – Depending on the community, healthcare is either included in the monthly fee or paid for on a fee-for-service basis. Either way, it is very convenient to have a clinic, assisted living, rehab services, and skilled nursing available in close proximity. Not only is this a comfort to the resident who requires the services, it is a blessing for the spouse who no longer drives and would otherwise find visiting a challenge.
5. **Focus on wellness and fitness** – Most communities now offer fitness centers and exercise classes. Indoor pools and whirlpools are also commonly available.
6. **Access to transportation** – Trips to area grocery stores and shopping centers are typically scheduled on a weekly basis. Rides to medical appointments can also be easily arranged either for an extra fee or as part of the monthly service fee.
7. **Emergency support** – Emergency pull cords, daily resident checks and trained personnel are just a few of the ways retirement communities support their residents' emergency needs.
8. **Safety** – Communities go to great lengths to keep residents safe from harm. Whether it's handicap accessible accommodations, 24/7 security, gated entrances or other safety features, one typically finds more safeguards in place here than the average home.
9. **Downsizing when and how you wish** – By moving to a smaller home, people must sort through a lifetime of "stuff." Having the opportunity to distribute family heirlooms, favorite zany momentos or comfy furniture can result in meaningful exchanges between both the giver and the recipient. Giving treasured items to family members and friends now, rather through an estate, becomes a cherished memory.
10. **Peace of mind** – Finally, an intangible that should not be minimized is the peace of mind that comes to both residents and their adult children when the move is complete. Knowing that supports are now in place, if and when they are needed, allows the family to move forward and focus on positive, less worrisome, topics of conversation.

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