

# THE HEART AND SCIENCE BEHIND *Interactive Caregiving*™



Comfort  
Keepers.



The Comfort Keepers® approach to in-home care is centered around a concept called Interactive Caregiving™. Study after study demonstrates how the principles behind this active approach to in-home care can help seniors maintain their independence, enhance their wellbeing, maintain their mental and emotional vitality, and help them enjoy a better quality of life at home.

## STAYING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Physical activity keeps seniors active and healthy, contributing to a better state of wellbeing.

- The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute reports that dancing can lower blood pressure, strengthen bones, lower risk of heart disease and help manage weight. As a social activity, dancing also stimulates the mind and reduces the risk of dementia, according to a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.
- Exercise makes seniors stronger and less likely to fall, says the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. A study published in 2002 in the *British Medical Journal* found that exercise is more effective than home hazard modifications and vision correction in preventing seniors' at-home falls.
- Along with keeping seniors healthier, exercise helps reduce the severity of illness. A Denmark study published in the October 21, 2008, edition of *Neurology* says that stroke patients who were the most physically active before their illness were two and half times more likely to have a less severe stroke than the least active patients – and had a better chance for long-term recovery.
- Researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign reported in a 2005 study that seniors who are physically active in leisure, occupational or home activities, such as house cleaning and gardening, report a greater feeling of self-esteem and quality of life.



*Our approach to in-home care is called Interactive Caregiving. It is integral to how we care for seniors and other adults so they can live the highest possible quality of life in the comfort of their own homes. Research indicates that keeping seniors mentally, physically, emotionally and socially engaged helps them to enjoy a higher quality of life, retain better cognitive function, stay healthier and live independently longer.*

## KEEPING SENIORS SOCIALLY ENGAGED

Social activity keeps people connected with friends and involved in events and interests.

- A 1999 study published in the *British Medical Journal* involving more than 2,700 seniors, showed that social and productive activities, like gardening, shopping and preparing meals, were just as beneficial to the subjects' health and quality of life as physical fitness activities. It also indicated that the less physically active a senior was, the greater the health benefit he reaped from being socially engaged.
- A Harvard School of Public Health study, reported in the July 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, found that the most socially active seniors had the slowest rate of memory decline from over a six-year period. Memory loss among the most socially engaged seniors was less than half that of the least engaged.

## HELPING STIMULATE THE MIND

Mental stimulation ensures minds are active and vital, contributing to better mental and emotional functioning.

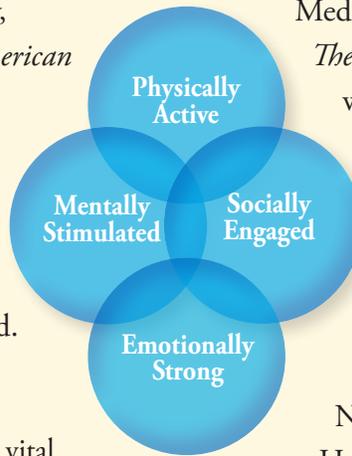
- A 2003 study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that elderly people who did crossword puzzles four times a week had a risk of dementia 47% lower than those who did the puzzles once a week.
- The Memory and Aging Project at Rush University Medical Center – a study published in 2007 in *Neurology*, the journal of the American Academy of Neurology – found that a cognitively-active senior was 2.6 times less likely to develop dementia than a cognitively-inactive senior.

*We invite you to learn more about how the Comfort Keepers® approach to Interactive Caregiving can enhance the quality of life for a senior in your life. Visit us online at [www.ComfortKeepers.com](http://www.ComfortKeepers.com) or contact your local Comfort Keepers office.*

## PROMOTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Emotional vitality helps seniors maintain a positive outlook on life and optimistic view to the future.

- Studying a group of 884 older adults, University of Michigan psychologists found that the seniors who scored higher on perceived control of important aspects of their lives – community involvement, hobbies or family connections, for instance – were more likely to be alive at the study's six- and seven-year follow-ups.
- A study by the Washington University School of Medicine reported in the August 2001 edition of *The Annals of Behavioral Medicine* that seniors who exercised scored higher on an emotional health scale. And even though nearly 65 percent of the study's 1,733 participants had arthritis, overall they reported no increase in pain from the exercise.
  - Exercise has been recognized for preventing falls. And the Australian National University Centre for Mental Health Research (CMHR) found that those in a 787-member study group who scored higher in emotional well being were less likely to fall. The risk rose for those who experienced increased depressive symptoms or lower morale as the study progressed.



**INTERACTIVE  
CAREGIVING™**

by COMFORT KEEPERS®