

Caregiving from Afar

Caring for aging loved ones is never easy, and it gets even more difficult when you're helping from afar. During this pandemic, such long-distance arrangements have become common.

The *Wall Street Journal* offers several planning strategies to help with remote caregiving. They include:

Communication and technology – Technology often help seniors stay at home and remain independent longer. Even if there's no need for “caring” technology now, put such devices — smartphones and tablets, for example — in place to get your family member familiar with navigating them.

Even better, the introduction of technology is a gateway to online entertainment, books, and games, all of which can reduce loneliness and keep seniors engaged.

Medical alert systems – Some kind of medical alert system may give you and your loved one peace of mind. Options range from basic alert devices to complex sensors and GPS systems. Pick the level that's right for your circumstances.

Amazon's Care Hub, a free feature in the Alexa app, for example, lets you remotely check in on parents or loved ones.

Transportation – Explore transportation options, whether they're Uber and Lyft, rideshare programs, or van service that are available in your parents' hometown.

In-home care – Finding the proper in-home care has always been a complicated business, and it's gotten more challenging because of the pandemic. According to the WSJ article, once someone has trouble with two or more daily activities — bathing and dressing, for example — it's a sign that a higher level of care is warranted.

Start looking at local aging agency resources and get referrals on care providers from doctors, friends, and neighbors. Do your research now — before you're in a pinch — so you understand the options and have a tentative plan lined up.

How Walkable is Your City? Do an Audit to Find Out

You already know about the benefits of walking — including better heart and mental health — for seniors.

According to AARP, people who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely than residents of areas without sidewalks to be active at least 39 minutes a day.

Living in walkable communities also allows people to age in place, particularly when they no longer drive.

But look around. How walkable is your city or town? And how well will it contribute to your ability to continue living there as you age?

If you're a baby boomer, now is the time to assess your community's walkability and take steps to improve it so that when you need a walkable neighborhood, the appropriate elements will be in place.

AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit (<https://bit.ly/2OxFYQi>) shows you how to conduct a community walk audit with friends, family, neighbors, and community groups.

The kit walks you through the audit (<https://bit.ly/3aokPAC>), which takes about an hour, and asks you to identify roads and intersections that are dangerous for pedestrians but that can and should be safely walkable and crossable. The sections are:

- Crossing Streets and Intersections
- Sidewalks
- Driver Behavior
- Safety
- Comfort and Appeal
- Overall Ratings and Observations

For each, it tells you what to look for to make an assessment asks you to rate each section.

The guide also talks about how to contact city officials to share findings and advocate for change and improvements.

To make your case for greater walkability, one compelling statistic worth sharing with city officials and community groups comes from CEOs for Cities. It found that a one-point Walk Score (<https://bit.ly/3akSlry>) increase raised the value of homes by as much as \$3,000.

Relocation Incentives Can Help You Run Away from Home

For many, the pandemic has been a wakeup call about where and how they're living.

Those who have only been able to fantasize about moving now see that starting anew somewhere else is a possibility because of telecommuting.

A recent Upwork study found that major cities are expected to see the biggest out migration and that 20.6% of those planning to move are currently based in a major city.

Many cities, hungry for new residents, have rolled out the welcome mat by providing relocation incentives to those willing to take the leap and move.

The incentives vary by place. Some offer cash, assistance with moving costs, and others provide free land to build a house. Another city throws in a bike to help newcomers explore the area.

Here are a dozen places offering relocation incentives.

1. Shoals Area, Alabama (<https://bit.ly/3q6uL7n>)
2. Northwest Arkansas (<https://bit.ly/2MSL0q2>)
3. Tucson, Ariz. (<https://bit.ly/2NfAjxB>)
4. Savannah, Ga. (<https://bit.ly/3aP6DzF>)
5. Manilla, Iowa (<https://bit.ly/3aJA7Pq>)
6. Newton, Iowa (<https://bit.ly/3jyvX0C>)
7. Lincoln, Kansas (<https://bit.ly/2NflmeU>)
8. Topeka, Kansas (<https://bit.ly/3rGOcUr>)
9. Harmony, Minn. (<https://bit.ly/3p4P8jS>)
10. Natchez, Miss. (<https://bit.ly/370980V>)
11. Curtis, Neb. (<https://bit.ly/3paEB6V>)
12. Tulsa, Ok. <https://tulsaremote.com/>