



## Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults

Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

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### How to Build Resilience in Your Life

There's more to aging well than diet and exercise. As a society, we're VERY focused

on the physical aspects of successful aging, like exercise, nutritious diets, and a good night's sleep. While these are important aspects of healthy aging, there are other key ingredients for aging well. One of these is RESILIENCE.

What is resilience?

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress,” or “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.

Everyone has the capacity to build resilience, and older adults prove time and time again that psychological resilience increases as we age. Research shows that adults aged 85 and older have the same or greater capacity for resilience as those who are younger.

Benefits of Resilience in Older Adulthood

When older adults exhibit high levels of resilience, they display remarkable adaptability to life's changes and an enhanced capacity to cope with health challenges. Whether it's navigating the emotional landscape of retirement or confronting physical limitations, resilience empowers people to find new meaning and continue to thrive. And research shows that resilience is not just beneficial for those in good health. Even among older adults with chronic illnesses, a resilient disposition can lead to improved quality of life, better mental health, and an array of positive outcomes.

It's time we move away from an image of frailty, decline, and mental and physical limitations, to one of resilience even in the context of illness and loss.

## How to cultivate resilience

Cultivating resilience is not just about enduring the storms but also about thriving in their aftermath. It's akin to a tree deepening its roots to withstand storms. It's a journey of transformation, where every step, no matter how small, leads to a more robust, fulfilled version of ourselves.

I invite you to look beyond the conventional emphasis on physical health and embrace the transformative power of resilience in older adulthood. Resilience is more than a mere coping mechanism; it is a beacon of hope, a source of renewed strength, and a pathway to a life replete with satisfaction, well-being, and meaningful connections.

Let's celebrate aging as a vibrant chapter of life, where resilience shines brightly, and every day is a chance to enrich our journey with joy and purpose.

Content from an article by Dr. Regina Koepf, Clinical Geropsychologist and Founder of the Center for Mental Health & Aging.

## **6 Strategies to Build Resilience**

1. **Maintain Strong Relationships and Social Support:** Imagine this as the warmth of a close-knit community on a cold night. For example, regularly schedule family dinners or outings with friends, or join a social group or online community with similar interests.
2. **Become Active in the Community:** Active community involvement strengthens personal resilience. Volunteering at a local food pantry or joining a community garden can be excellent ways to engage.
3. **Maintain Hopefulness:** This is the light that guides us through darkness. Setting small, achievable goals each day can help maintain a sense of hope and purpose.
4. **Develop Strong Coping Skills:** These are
5. **the tools in our resilience toolkit.** Learn stress management techniques, like deep breathing exercises, meditation, and positive reflection on the past.
6. **Cultivate Optimism:** See the glass half full, even when it's challenging. Keeping a gratitude journal to regularly remind yourself of the positive aspects of life can foster optimism.
7. **Embrace Positive Thinking and Emotions:** This is like choosing to paint your world in bright colors. Practicing mindfulness and focusing on positive moments throughout the day can help in nurturing positive thinking and emotions.

# Peanut Butter Caramel Corn

Perfect for the holidays, this popcorn really delivers flavor and fun.

## Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- ½ cup un-popped popcorn kernels
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2/3 cup light-colored corn syrup
- 2 ½ tablespoons butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## Directions:

1. Line a jellyroll pan with parchment paper, coat paper with cooking spray.
2. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add popcorn; cover and cook 4 minutes, shaking pan frequently. When popping slows, remove pan from heat. Let stand until the popping stops. Uncover; add almonds.
3. Combine sugar, syrup, butter, and salt in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Add peanut butter and vanilla; stir until smooth. Drizzle over popcorn; toss well. Spread mixture out onto prepared pan.
4. Bake at 250° for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Cool completely.

# Fall Prevention Exercise: Toe Stand

Position yourself behind a chair with your feet shoulder width apart.

1. Stand on tiptoes as high as possible.
2. Hold position for one second.
3. Slowly lower heels to the floor.
4. Complete one set of 10 – 15 repetitions
6. Rest for 15 seconds, then repeat.

## Resources

Center for Mental Health and Aging <https://www.mentalhealthandaging.com/>

How to Build Resilience in Older Adults <https://www.mentalhealthandaging.com/how-to-build-resilience-in-older-adults/>

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