

PROconcept

Providing advice for care and nursing homes



FOCUS

*Actively
shaping life*

LIVING SPACES

How do we want to live?

How we as humans mould, organise and change our living spaces.



How do we structure our lives and daily routines in old age?



FOCUS
Actively shaping life
LIVING SPACES

Moulding, organising and changing

This is one of the basic traits of humanity. In our everyday lives, we encounter all kinds of living spaces that we help to shape, whether actively or passively: our own homes, our workplaces with all their associated processes and hierarchies, the fitness studios where we work out and perhaps even the care homes that look after our loved ones. Day-to-day life is complex and intense. Sometimes, it can even be debilitating. And yet, our ambition must be to adopt a proactive and deliberate approach so that we can get the best from it: both for the benefit of others and for ourselves. That is why we have decided to ask ourselves the following in this issue: how can we organise work so that people are efficient and satisfied in their jobs? How do we create space for ourselves so that we can remain creative and focused while still being well balanced? And how do we actually want to live in old age when it becomes impossible for us to continue living in our own four walls? With some good ideas and the right attitude, we can achieve a lot. And even the tiniest of details, when reimagined, can make a massive difference.

Andreas Barduna
Head of Professional Sales, Service, Marketing

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This is where I want to grow old, isn't it?

Our home is one of the main anchor points in life. During the week, we spend half the day there on average and at the weekend significantly longer. Our home is our "castle", as the saying goes, but what happens if we are forced to vacate it in old age?

Home sweet home. That is our first thought when we shut the door of our house behind us after a long and tiring day. Once safe within the confines of our own four walls, we are able to relax and go at our own pace. This also has a lot to do with the fact that we are surrounded by familiar things and everything is arranged just how we like it. There is nothing random about anything; it all has meaning. The photos on the wall remind us of family holidays. The desk in the home office is an heirloom from grandad. Over there is the potted plant that has already managed to survive three house moves. Inside the fridge, there is a favourite bottle of white wine left over from a meal with friends. And the Sunday walk to the baker's has become a much loved part of the weekly routine. Home is bound up with our identity. It is here that we feel safe and secure.

How we became settlers

Around 12,000 years ago, the hunter-gatherers who used to share their food and consume it straight away began to settle as farmers who stored up provisions and switched their focus to owning property. This was a gradual process that took several thousand years.

According to current knowledge, this shift originated in the Middle East. Archaeological discoveries reveal that humans first settled in the area known as the Fertile Crescent. They began spending longer in the same place, forming larger groups, cultivating crops and breeding goats and sheep. The fertile soil was an important factor when it came to choosing their living environment. They were very particular about what you might call the "local amenities", making sure that they had everything they needed for their survival close by. And once people stopped having to roam around, they were able to start accumulating belongings, i.e. individual property. Human sedentism is to be equated with the advent of civilisation with all its positive and

negative facets. Owning a permanent refuge has become an established way of life and is part of human evolution.

Housing concepts for the elderly are important

Let us now return to the matter at hand: life within the four walls of our home, which becomes more and more challenging as we get older. Within this context, the state of our health and the supply of our daily needs take on an increasingly important role. Particularly as our mobility decreases, other aspects assume greater significance: the distance to the nearest bus stop, supermarket and doctor's practice. The space we inhabit and our radius of movement generally become smaller and smaller all the time – until, for some of us, they are restricted to life in a care home. Consequently, the question "How do we want to live in old age?" is of crucial importance. It affects many different aspects of our society's infrastructure. In this respect, care facilities can create important momentum and go a long way towards ensuring that people still have a sense of "home" in old age. Just a thought while on the subject: within our

society, individuals are possibly more "me-focused" than ever before. The working world may be dominated by the concept of "new work" with a view to giving employees as much creative wiggle room as possible, but how does that change life for the oldest within our society? There is unlikely to be one big solution that can act as a silver bullet. However, you are each bound to have your own ideas for concepts that all have one thing in common: providing the elderly with some wiggle room. And that is partly about preparing the ground for our own future, because – ultimately – we are all going to be old one day. //

Personal belongings are important artefacts linked to a person's identity.





THE EXPERT
Professor Niclas Schaper holds the chair in Occupational and Organisational Psychology at Paderborn University. Within the context of his work, he is in regular contact with managers and employees and, among other things, is interested in how a person's mental state is affected by the way in which work is organised.

EFFECTIVE WORK ORGANISATION

“The main thing employees want is to be **personally effective.**”

Motivating people, fostering their development and “taking them with you” (which is such a neat little phrase, isn't it?) is a daily challenge for managers. According to Professor Niclas Schaper from Paderborn University employees can be helped to more easily master the increasing complexity of workplace demands by taking a look at how work is organised and structured.

Professor Schaper, what are the telltale signs of a workplace that is in desperate need of better organisation? What do I need to be on the look-out for as a manager?

When employees say that they are stressed and under a lot of pressure, complain that they are no longer able to keep up or are no longer able to bounce back/are no longer able to relax outside of work, then you are seeing some very clear warning signals. A typical indicator is absenteeism, i.e. when people start calling in sick. The underlying cause is often psychological stress. A high employee turnover rate is another sign that staff are not able to cope with the prevailing working conditions. These are clear alarm signals that have to be taken seriously.

You carry out employee surveys at care facilities and are using them to gain some insights. How would you assess the current situation there?

From our surveys, we frequently discover that it is not just the specific work itself that causes stress. There are often other factors at play that unsettle staff or alienate them from their employers, such as mergers or restructuring measures. Often people are worried about losing their jobs. As a manager, you have to take that seriously and deal with it sympathetically.

And what about the specific work situation within this sector? To what extent does work organisation play a role here?

“
Inner motivation is one of the keys to organisation.”

From an occupational psychology perspective, this really is a very tricky field. In many places, nurses and carers face enormous pressure at work. This is often due to the fact that they have to carry out additional tasks, such as completing painstaking care documentation, while simultaneously having to cope with high levels of staff sickness and the general turnover of staff. On top of that, when you consider the amount of effort they have to put in and how important their role is to society, the work is not very well paid. Moreover, people living in care are not ordinary residents. Each of them has their own individual needs. This makes the work extremely complex, as well as both physically and mentally demanding. This can really create a huge amount of pressure.

In light of these circumstances, do I actually have any chance of reaching out to my employees?

Fortunately, the answer to that is yes. In the area that I oversee, a dissertation is currently being written that uses a model to map out the situation faced by nursing staff employed at hospitals or by mobile nursing services. The specific question being posed by this research is: how do nursing staff deal with stress and strain and what kinds of factors can cushion these effects?

What are the findings of this academic work?

That you cannot underestimate the commitment of each member of staff. A large part of this is down to intrinsic motivation and a feeling of being competent to carry out day-to-day tasks. That is to say: if I feel that I am being personally effective within the context of my work, then I can even compensate for difficult working conditions or cope with them better, so to speak. Such employees usually feel as though they are adequately qualified, find meaning in their work and, in turn, develop strong self-confidence.

Are there any other findings from this academic work?

The dissertation also reveals that there are two categories of workplace demands. Firstly, there are those that represent a challenge, e.g. those with an element of work pressure or complexity. And secondly, there are those that are clearly experienced as a strain, such as

”Good workplace organisation can have a positive economic impact.”



constantly being disturbed and prevented from getting on with the actual job, e.g. by activities that have nothing to do with it. One of the key issues here is having too much red tape. If I, as a manager, can identify what is making staff stressed and overburdened and can find some solutions, I will then be able to create a functional and motivating work organisation framework that encourages and enables staff to be effective.

That sounds like a desirable situation, because the staff will then presumably be able to take responsibility and be ready to take decisions independently. How can I encourage that as a manager?

As a manager I have to ensure that work is structured in such way that employees have enough leeway to act autonomously and make decisions for themselves. In addition, I should continuously provide my staff with an adequate amount of feedback on their work. Communication and social support are vital. Once these are in place, people will find a certain amount of job satisfaction. They will regard themselves as capable of tackling the daily challenges and will develop a commitment to the organisation as a whole, including its aims and values. If this results in work tasks or routines being structured more efficiently or in a more flexible response to workplace demands, it can even have an economic impact as well. All in all, a thoroughly positive dynamic.

What is the situation like in other sectors, such as for a team working at an industrial laundry? Actually, the points I have outlined can be applied to virtually any occupational sector. Ultimately, it always comes down to organising the work in such a way that it is challenging but, insofar as possible, does not cause continuous stress and overload. Employees still need some leeway even in occupations that are supposedly very straightforward. A certain amount of variety and the opportunity to get involved in the organisational aspects help employees to see their work as a positive challenge and gain a sense of “being useful” and “having a job that matters”.

How can I achieve that as a manager?

Informal learning plays an important role in this regard as a means by which employees

can acquire additional skills and knowledge/work-related qualifications. There should be different methods of interaction so that staff can optimise their own work routines, whether that be receiving feedback from colleagues or directly from line managers or multimedia offerings that help staff to develop more effective skills and knowledge. Digitalisation, in particular, offers numerous possibilities for getting employees on board as you seek to develop the area of work organisation. A good example of this are the RFID chips used by industrial laundries. Staff can play their part in ensuring that technology makes processes safer, better and more efficient – including for themselves. At the same time, they have a chance to influence the situation so that the meaningful and enjoyable parts of the job remain. //

THE RESEARCH

Occupational and organisational psychology

Occupational psychology is concerned with the behaviour and experiences of people in the workplace and with structuring work so that it provides them with motivation and is conducive to their development. In turn, organisational psychology deals with the interplay between individuals and organisations, and how people behave within a group. One of the key aims of this discipline is to analyse problematic workplaces and organisational situations that are in need of improvement, to make recommendations for optimising work routines while also providing support in getting these established and, in so doing, to optimise economic performance. Our interviewee Professor Schaper also specialises in aspects of personnel development and empowerment. He is also interested in all kinds of issues connected with the digitalisation of work and the topics of modern leadership and management culture.

PRACTICAL TIPS



CREATING A CAREFULLY STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!

Having to say goodbye to familiar surroundings is a serious wrench for people moving into care. Just a few little steps can make this process much smoother for them – for increased quality of life.

It is the small things in life that turn our immediate surroundings into a home and via our senses that we get a sense of security. It could be a picture on the wall, a favourite blanket, some books, a perfectly ordinary object such as a toothbrush mug or the familiar view from the window. The impact that this sensory perception has on a person’s current mental state and the role it plays in the quality

of the living environment are the subject of research within the relatively new field of environmental psychology. Those who are forced to leave their houses and move into a residential care facility get a sense of orientation and of home from familiar everyday objects. These provide a way for relatives and facilities to take some of the stress out of the move while also sending a strong signal that the person is highly valued. //

THAT’S HOW YOU DO IT!

Moving into a care home or similar facility poses all kinds of challenges for those involved, and not just organisational ones. By gearing the settling-in process as closely as possible to the needs of residents, facilities can take concerted action to help residents truly feel at home in their new environment.

Trial residence period

Are prospective residents able to try out the accommodation for themselves by experiencing it first-hand, so to speak? Is it possible to get to know them in advance, e.g. while they are still at the rehabilitation centre or hospital?

Recreating a piece of home

Jointly clarify in advance the extent to which new residents can bring their own furniture, personal belongings or pets with them into your facility.

Provide a structured start

The moving-in day is always central to the settling-in process. A key worker should provide the new arrival with information, support and help to allay their fears.

Keep interacting

Converse regularly with the new resident and keep checking in with them by asking questions. In this way, you will be able to identify any critical points while communicating to the residents that they are being noticed and taken seriously.



QUALITY OF LIFE IN OLD AGE

Anyone who thinks that the elderly face nothing but restrictions is way off the mark. There is a secret to feeling good in old age. A residential model in the Sauerland area of Germany unlocks it for us.



Matthias Frevel, who was born in the Sauerland town of Schmallenberg, knows the background of everyone living in his homes. This is no empty claim. It is part of his concept: “Let me tell you about one particular experience that illustrates how we operate here”, he begins. “One of our residents used to be a farmer and he had advanced dementia. At a specific time of day, this man would become really agitated and aggressive. This presented us with considerable challenges. But after a little while we began to realise what was triggering this behaviour: this man had spent his entire life working on a farm and his daily work routine had become deeply engrained within him. His internal clock was telling him that it was time to go and look after the animals. And so we arranged for him to visit our stables every day, which was something very familiar to him. And from that day on, his agitation and aggression vanished.” When Matthias Frevel relates this anecdote, he gets so excited that you would think it had happened only yesterday. Prior to that point, the resident had been viewed as a particularly problematic case. The way he was treated at Frevel’s residential centre changed everything.

Meeting the elderly on equal terms

To understand how important these personal stories are to Frevel, you need look no further than the pictures and photographic murals adorning his homes. One shows him sitting with the aforementioned farmer in a horse-drawn cart. Frevel has a passion for connecting with the people within his care. He is the third generation



It is about interacting naturally and tapping into the familiar. Therefore, pets are part of the concept.

FACTS AND FIGURES



99 residents live at the facilities, 40 of them at the "Seniorenwohnen im Park" complex.



10 kitchens are shared between the assisted living groups. On top of those, there is a commercial kitchen.



40,000 square metres of space, including the adjoining paddock, are available to the residents.



18 farm animals are kept at the small petting farm, including two alpacas, eleven horses and five goats.

of his family to manage the Haus Monika care centre. In 2006, he opened a residential scheme for the elderly surrounded by greenery that is called "Seniorenwohnen im Park". His residential model for the elderly has since won multiple awards. But what is his secret? "We meet our residents at the level where they feel secure and at ease. To my mind, the wrong approach would be to say "We no longer regard this person as capable of anything". Our attitude is: let's identify all the things the person can still do. We want to provide encouragement and support so that they can carry on doing them."

A deliberate step back in time

It is precisely this spirit that you encounter when you take a look inside at the Haus Monika households. It is lunchtime and the first thing you notice is the harmonious and convivial atmosphere. That not only goes for the interactions between the people who are seated together at the large laid table but also applies to the living area itself. In the corner, there is a stove next to a rustic couch. At first glance, the kitchen and furniture also appear to be from a bygone era. One of the female residents is standing right by the cooker together with head chef Alexander Braun and a carer. They are

making blueberry pancakes. The elderly resident flips the pancake with a well-practised hand. She smiles with satisfaction. The room is filled with the wafting aroma of freshly cooked pancakes. Frevel explains that every detail is part of the concept: "The entire setting here has been staged to create a sense of the familiar for the residents: the warmth from the stove, a meal that everyone knows. It is a bit like returning to the good old days of family life. The emotional life of the elderly is firmly rooted in the past. But that is where they are most sure of themselves." That is why Frevel creates a setting where residents can be in control of their own lives, e.g. by submitting lunch suggestions or "dream food" requests. Mostly, these are old recipes such as meat loaf or clabbered milk with cinnamon. And if they want to, the members of the assisted living group can even do the cooking themselves. Frevel's approach is backed up by science: psychologists have been looking into why most elderly people often have trouble getting to grips with the present but are able to recall earlier experiences effortlessly and with crystal clear clarity. The researchers attribute this phenomenon to a function of the brain: over time, the short-term memory fades. However, at the same time, the long-term memory becomes more active. The ability to remember is somehow linked to a person's own identity. And the many restrictions that old age brings have a detrimental effect in this regard. The hypothesis is that the mind accesses positive experiences from childhood and young adulthood and brings them to the fore, interspersing them with the present to compensate for the restrictions of old age. Therefore, it is a mechanism for maintaining mental stability.

No reason to run and hide

In addition to the Haus Monika centre, Matthias Frevel also manages "Seniorenwohnen im Park", a residential complex for people living with dementia. For Frevel, the residential scheme is a labour of love. The residents are all travellers who are sojourning at different levels of individual consciousness.



The elderly residents are constantly offered the chance to get involved in the everyday running of the household, e.g. by suggesting a recipe or actually doing the cooking themselves. The creative freedom is good for the elderly residents. Frevel and his team meet the residents at a level where they know their way around and feel secure.

"A simple pancake appeals to the senses. That is how you connect with elderly residents."



“Patients are never anything more than a challenge and definitely not problems.”

THE CONCEPT

What is the essence of the model you have developed?

The concept revolves around households. Between eight and ten people live together in each residential unit. Everyone has their own room and each assisted living group has its own communal kitchen. We currently have ten households, which means there are also ten kitchens plus one commercial kitchen.

What does that actually mean in practice?

At our facilities, residents do not have to eat alone in their rooms. Instead, they are seated comfortably around the table with their housemates just like when they used to eat with their families. At lunchtime, each assisted living group has the opportunity to prepare one or more components of the meal themselves. There's no hospital food here. Our concept is even environmentally friendly and sustainable in that we use regional ingredients. And as for the fruit and vegetables, they come straight from our own garden. The programme is rounded off by common activities such as marmalade making – just like in the good old days.

What other aspects were important to you?

When I started developing the model, I realised straight away that I wanted to avoid building anything that looked like a hospital. People are supposed to feel at home here. Visitors should also feel at ease and be free to move around.

Is that why you added this little farmyard?

Now, you might well smile, but I am convinced that it works: the grandchildren and great-grandchildren love coming here. They actively ask their parents: “Please can we visit grandma or grandad?” And do you know what happens then? Our residents come out onto their balconies, watch the children petting the animals and wave at them. At that moment they inhabit the very role they are intended to fill: that of the adoring grandparents. I am sure you understand what I am getting at: it's all about emotions!

Why are emotions so important?

Because that is how we humans tick. Our memories, senses and emotions are vitally important – particularly in old age. That is why our residents are also allowed to bring their pets when they move in with us. Because what would happen if we were to sever this stable emotional connection? It would have a major impact on

MATTHIAS FREVEL IS THE MANAGER OF TWO RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES. HIS WIFE PETRA IS IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS.

these people mentally. In such cases, people living with dementia might even start looking for their pets and wandering off.

That takes us nicely on to the “Seniorenwohnen im Park” complex. Is it true that your residents who are living with dementia are given no more than five types of medication? Why is that so important?

Because we want our residents to be aware and receptive. Of course, good medical support is crucial. Working in cooperation with a reputable medical practitioner, we endeavour to get the accompanying symptoms of dementia under control without having to use 20 different types of medication. For this reason, I have provided my staff with special training. We call our approach the hermeneutic case forum. All the staff on a shift meet together and describe their impressions and observations of the resident in order to identify the individual's needs and the things that trigger their behaviour. The solutions are highly specific to each individual but they work. Among our residents, there are some who would find themselves being sedated if they were living elsewhere.

It's fair to say that your work is not confined to your own four walls ...

The work of our professional nursing team extends beyond our own region, e.g. by helping to develop expert standards as part of the German Network for Quality Development in Nursing (DNQP = Deutsches Netzwerk für Qualitätsentwicklung in der Pflege). We are also very well connected within the region. My wife is President of the German Alzheimer Association (Alzheimer Gesellschaft HSK) and is an active member of the Hochsauerlandkreis district dementia network, via which we provide facts and information by delivering public events and talks. Our cooperation with schools is particularly important to us in this regard. The local primary school pupils have been regularly visiting us for approximately 20 years to offer a reading service. We prepare them for these visits in advance because it is important for youngsters to learn about the implications of old age and dementia. They read classic poems, fairy tales and ballads aloud to our residents, who are often able to recite them word for word. That awakens their “awareness of self”. And ultimately, that is what it's all about.



When you hear the example of the farmer who was missing his cows, it makes a real impression. But so does the sight of people living together as a community at Frevel's residential complex. The residents can move around freely and there are assisted living groups at this site as well. On this particular afternoon, everyone has gathered together and the owner of the local coffee roastery is roasting some coffee on an old-fashioned stove – just like in bygone days. It is barely apparent that the people sitting opposite are living with dementia. One lady is currently only answering in Romanian. And another elderly woman is talking about her latest art exhibition opening. But they are still engaged and outward facing. “The point”, says Frevel, “is that all our residents are alert. No one here is drifting into a semi-conscious state. That is our aim.” But achieving it calls for creativity. The coffee roasting is a good example of this. The residents can enjoy the warmth from the stove and the aroma of the coffee. Some even take hold of the old coffee grinder and use it to grind a few beans. “These are activities that animate our residents and which come as easily to them as folding laundry or even peeling potatoes. And no, nobody cuts themselves because this is second nature to them. At the same time – and this is a very important point – we never ask too much of anyone here.”

Matthias Frevel and his team have achieved something quite remarkable with



Initiatives such as a joint coffee roasting session go down very well with the elderly residents who are living with dementia. Some of them even get bravely stuck in by taking hold of the old coffee grinder that has been made available and using it to grind a few beans. They still remember it from the “good old days”. For this reason, it does not ask too much of them, either. The next part of the session is spent drinking coffee and has become a much loved ritual. Part of the concept is to stimulate the senses of the residents – e.g. with the warmth from the fire, the aroma of coffee and apple cake made to grandma's recipe.



their model, which is all about trust and having faith in people. As far as he is concerned, it is a matter of seeing things from the perspective of those who are affected: “We have real wood floors here. That is so that the residents do not get cold feet, either literally or figuratively. After all, those living with dementia are completely reliant on their senses. How would they respond if they found themselves standing on imitation wood flooring? They'd think to themselves: “That feels cold. Something's not right. I'm out of here!” To avoid this, we give our residents a sense of security, provide them with a reason to stay put.” What could be a more positive and honourable sentiment for the final chapter of life? //



Take a breather

SOME SENSIBLE WAYS OF CLEARING YOUR HEAD

Around 10 % of Germans regularly suffer from disturbed sleep. Nursing staff are particularly affected by the problem, which creates a huge strain. By ensuring deliberate breaks, power naps and good time management, you can achieve a huge amount, not only for your employees but also for your own benefit.

1 // Introduce power napping

The figures compiled by the “Deutschland schläft gesund” healthy sleep initiative are alarming. When asked about their sleeping habits, 64 % of the nurses surveyed said that they were suffering from poor sleep. When you consider that irregular working hours and high stress levels cause real problems for our circadian rhythms, it is little wonder. The consequences of this are serious: a lack of sleep not only reduces a person’s concentration and ability to respond; it also weakens the immune system. And these are all factors that nursing staff, with their heavy responsibilities, can do without – not to mention the risk of high sickness absence rates among the staff affected. You see, those who continually fail to get enough sleep are also more likely to develop serious chronic conditions, such as diabetes or cardiovascular diseases. Is there anything that can help? Well, yes there is a matter of fact. Your staff can start by taking 5 to 20 minutes out of their working day for a short snooze.

This is called a power nap because it will recharge their batteries for the next 3 to 4 hours. The same goes for you as a manager and the practice can – of course – also be adopted by other sectors. Here are five tips to help you: 1. Explicitly encourage your staff to recharge their batteries by taking a power nap once a day. Please also feel free to lead by example. 2. With this in mind, you could perhaps set up a suitable rest area within the staffroom/break room in consultation with your staff. 3. Try to organise the shift plan around staff preferences. Each member of staff will generally have their own needs and tendencies in this regard. One person might find it easier to deal with short gaps between shifts than another person who prefers to have a longer break in between. 4. Urge your staff to take the proper breaks during a night shift. 5. Make sure that your team is ready and able to tackle its tasks and keep the workload realistic to avoid stress and overload. Incidentally: a set of carefully selected physical exercises can

also help revitalise body and mind by providing people with a breath of fresh air, so to speak. Instructions for all kinds of short exercises can be found on the Internet by searching for “office workout”, but please check their suitability first.

2 // Optimise your time management

Everyone has the same number of hours in a day, but rarely before has there been such pressure on people to get the most out of those 24 hours in both their private and their professional lives. And that is why the shelves of our bookshops are stacked with so many time management guides. Essentially, these aim to provide strategies for organising your work and yourself in the optimum manner, such as correctly estimating the length of tasks, prioritising tasks, planning your day and actively scheduling periods of recreation and rest. The skills required also include establishing boundaries by saying no when necessary. The following tips are just a small but important snapshot of the many measures available. 1. Learn how to prioritise tasks. Not everything that is urgent is important. 2. Analyse your personal work routines and build in some buffer time (for unforeseen events). 3. Pay attention to your circadian rhythm and any phases when you are particularly productive. 4. Group together similar tasks and tackle them in one go. 5. Avoid disruptions/interruptions. Provided that work and breaks are organised in a sensible way, this short list of rules can go a long way towards countering everyday stress or eliminating it altogether. //

“Rest gives relish to labour.”

Plutarch

EXERCISES FOR A QUICK WORKOUT



Exercise 1

KEEP ROLLING THOSE SHOULDERS

Let your arms hang loose at your sides. Roll your shoulders backwards making the biggest possible circles you can manage. Repeat 10 times. Take a short break, loosen up and then do the exercise again.



Exercise 2

HANG LOOSE

Bend forwards, allowing your torso and arms to hang down in a relaxed manner. Maintain this position for as long as comfortable.



Exercise 3

REACH FOR THE STARS

Keeping your torso upright, reach up towards the ceiling with one arm and then the other; try to stretch further and further each time; do not allow your torso to sway; repeat the stretching movement 20 times.

CUP WITH A CONICAL INTERIOR

MAKING IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO DRINK

Many elderly people suffer from dehydration. They may not feel very thirsty, or may have difficulty swallowing or tilting their head while drinking. In turn, this often creates avoidance behaviour. However, this problem can be easily overcome by giving them a cup with a conically designed interior. The conical design makes it easier for elderly people to drink what is inside. They no longer have to tilt their head back to empty the cup, which means that there is less risk of them choking or of the drink going down the wrong way. As an additional incentive for your elderly residents to take in fluids, it is a good idea to vary the drinks throughout the day by offering unsweetened tea or heavily diluted fruit juice in addition to tap water.

As an additional incentive for your elderly residents to take in fluids, it is a good idea to vary the drinks throughout the day by offering unsweetened tea or heavily diluted fruit juice in addition to tap water.



EAST GERMAN TOWNS AND CITIES ARE LEADING THE WAY

THE NICEST PLACES TO GROW OLD

According to a study by German broadcaster ZDF, the German location that offers the best quality of life for the elderly is Jena. The eastern German city managed to impress ZDF with its many recreational areas and very good health care facilities. Meanwhile, Suhl – the German town with the oldest population at an average age of 50.5 – had to make do with second place. This was followed by Hochtaunuskreis – the highest-ranking administrative district from the western side of the country. In order to conduct their study, the researchers carefully examined a total of 401 administrative districts, towns and cities based on 20 different categories. The key focal points were health and social care, living and leisure, security and infrastructure, and economy and demographics. The place that ranked bottom of the study was the Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm district in Rhineland-Palatinate.



TOP 5

LIFETIME DREAMS OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE

What kinds of things do Germans aim for in life? And how good are they at achieving these aims? “GEO” magazine conducted a survey to find out.



1 A HAPPY LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

81% of Germans want to have a happy long-term relationship. For 54% of them, this dream has already become a reality.

2 FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

This dream, shared by 77% of the respondents, occupies spot number 2. However, only 36% of those surveyed are truly financially independent.

3 CHILDREN

Half of all Germans (51%) dream of starting a family. But this dream only comes true for a third of them (32%).

4 LOTS OF TRAVEL

40% of Germans want to travel. But only 22% are happy with their current quota of travel.

5 CAREER SUCCESS AND RECOGNITION

More than a third (37%) want success and validation in the context of their job. Just under a quarter (23%) have already seen this wish fulfilled.



Tiny house

TINY HOUSE, BIG BENEFITS

Minimalist living is all the rage. The trend that started in the USA is now sweeping across Europe. Tiny houses are popping up across the entire German-speaking world, sometimes in clusters. One particularly interesting housing scheme is the one that has been built at the headquarters of the Dominikus-Ringeisen-Werk foundation in the Bavarian municipality of Ursberg in Swabia. The scheme consists of seven tiny houses, which provide accommodation for people with either a mental disability or a mental illness. Each house has a living space of 35 square metres and contains everything the person needs to lead an independent life: a fully equipped kitchen, a living room, a bedroom and

a separate bathroom. The residents are also able to call on a support worker if they need help with their everyday tasks. The tiny house scheme in Ursberg is the only pilot project of its kind in Germany within the context of supported living services. For a monthly rent of around €400, which includes heating and electricity, eligible people can enjoy a place of their own. The same kind of scheme that is working so effectively for the ill and disabled in Ursberg is also proving of interest to the elderly. In the Australian state of Victoria lives an elderly lady whose barrier-free tiny house is a dream come true. The thing about tiny houses is that, as well as being small, they are also much easier to maintain.



CHILDREN'S -SENIOR PLAYGROUND

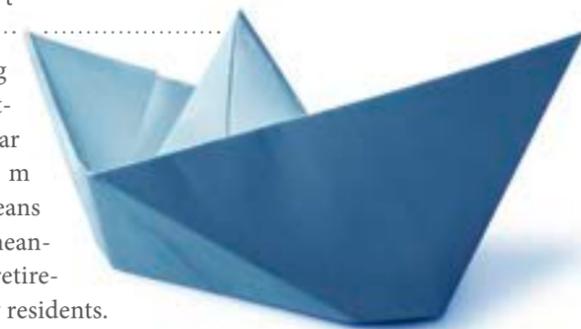
We usually associate playgrounds with children. However, playgrounds for senior citizens have been around in China for a very long time. You will not find any sandpits or slides there, but you will find some outdoor gym equipment for a light cardio workout or strength training session. Numerous European cities have already started creating their own versions of the Chinese outdoor gyms. There are more than 400 of them in the Spanish province of Málaga alone. There are also lots of German towns and cities where senior citizens can work out on outdoor sports equipment.

A DREAM SHIP FOR THE ELDERLY

When a room in a retirement home becomes a holiday resort

Spend your twilight years on a river cruise ship discovering various corners of Europe – this is the dream that German start-up “TED cruises” wants to bring to life for the elderly in the near future. The company is currently seeking residents for its 105 m steamer, the FT Calea. FT stands for “Flusstraum”, which means “river dream” – Calea is based on the Hawaiian name Kalea meaning “joy and happiness” And that is precisely what the floating retirement home will soon be offering to between 50 and 100 elderly residents.

Comprehensive service will be included as part of the package. In addition, residents will have the opportunity to get actively involved: from deciding how they want their cabin furnished to the route they want the ship to follow. Across the year as a whole, the ship will spend a total of approximately 150 days moored at its home port of Cologne/Bonn. It will spend the rest of the year travelling around Europe. The FT Calea is due to set sail for the first time in late summer 2020, although this could well be later.





GREETINGS FROM THE KITCHEN

The Haus Monika care centre in Schmallenberg regularly organises cooking sessions for its residents. And the more traditional the recipes, the more popular they are. For example, it only takes a moment to mix some batter together, pour it into a pan and make some really easy blueberry pancakes that create a familiar and appetising aroma for the residents to savour. This is the ideal way to get the residents donning their cooking aprons again. When this happens, everyone thinks that the food tastes twice as good, as you will discover for yourself by following this recipe from Alexander Braun, head chef at Haus Monika.

You will need (for 10 people)

12 eggs, 100 g sugar, 800 g wheat flour, 760 ml milk, 50 g vanilla paste, 150 g blueberries, 50 g marzipan, 20 g runny honey, 20 g almond oil, 20 g browned butter

Method:

Mix all the ingredients together and sieve them, apart from the blueberries and butter. Then add the blueberries. Alexander uses a special kind of smoked lard for frying at Haus Monika. As an alternative, you are recommended to use clarified butter. Cook the pancakes one by one in the pan until golden brown.

Leave the pancakes to dry on kitchen roll and then serve sprinkled with icing sugar.