



## Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults

Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

August 2024

### Occupational Wellness

**One Women's experience finding fulfillment after leaving the workplace.**

#### **Interview with Evelyn Coleman**

Occupational wellness refers to the personal satisfaction and fulfillment that comes from one's work. People who are no longer in the workforce, like retirees, still need a sense of purpose that comes from exercising unique skills and talents. Finding a calling in life is important to wellness and can take many forms during a lifetime. Contributing to and participating in something that is personally meaningful throughout life is a key to occupational wellness.

Evelyn retired in 2012 from her work with the City of Richmond. She was surprised that retirement was not all that she thought it would be.

"I thought I would like it, but I actually got bored and needed to look for something to do."

Evelyn is an active person who likes working with her hands, exercising, and going to plays. To keep herself busy, she looked into volunteering.

"I thought that volunteering would give me some ideas about what I wanted to do and what I would enjoy."

A neighbor was working with Senior Connections, and invited her to start volunteering with them.

"I love working with kids, and Senior Connections had opportunities for retirees in their Foster Grandparent program. It keeps me creative, as I think of crafts to do with the kids. I don't think that I would have made it if I had not gotten involved with this program."

Evelyn also loves working with food. When she became aware of local farm that is a non-profit food justice organization that uses volunteers, she e-mailed them. They asked her to come by the next day.

"I work at the farm two Saturdays a month. It gives me a lot of exercise working in the garden, bending and pulling up vegetables. These people really put a lot into the food that they grow, and I have a hand in growing it. It really helps me with getting exercise, and they give you great fresh vegetables to take home. They have the best tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers! They make their own compost and don't use chemicals. I have learned a lot about gardening and it's fun!"

Evelyn has this advice for those entering retirement:

“If you are not rich to go traveling abroad, rather than just sitting at home and feeling useless, get out and volunteer. Think of something that you enjoy doing, and there is almost always a place doing that which will take volunteers. You don’t have to be sitting at home doing nothing.”

## Vocational Wellness

Vocational and occupational wellness are often used interchangeably. Vocation comes from the latin word, vocare, which means ‘to call’. To find your calling in the retirement years, consider the following:

- Consider your unique skills and talents. How could they be used?
- What new skills are you interested in learning that can be used to serve others?
- Think about new things that you are interested in learning, and new hobbies you could engage in with others.
- Look for volunteer opportunities that can use your talents, or through which you could learn skills.
- Consider becoming a mentor. This can be formally such as serving as a troop leader with Trail Life USA, or informally in your community.

## Super-Simple Zucchini Chocolate Cake

Hard to believe that zucchini could taste so good, this cake has no added oil. You need to try it to believe how good it is.

Source: [www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/prairie-fare-do-you-have-zucchini-coming-out-of-your-ears](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/prairie-fare/prairie-fare-do-you-have-zucchini-coming-out-of-your-ears)

### Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 2 c. grated zucchini, packed in cup
- 1 chocolate cake mix (about 16 ounces)

### Instructions:

1. Wash hands, produce, and equipment thoroughly.
2. Preheat oven to 350 F.
3. Mix eggs, water, and grated zucchini with a mixer.
4. Add dry chocolate cake mix (do not add oil or additional water). Mix well.
5. Place in a greased and floured Bundt pan or divide between two loaf pans.
6. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.
7. Allow to cool. Remove from pan, sprinkle powdered sugar over the top using a flour sifter, slice, and serve.

# Exercise: Wall Hip Adduction Stretch

Let's keep those hips healthy with a nice hip stretch!

1. Stand with your side facing the wall, an arm's length away.
2. Cross the outside leg behind the other leg and towards the wall.
3. Bend the forward knee slightly and lean your trunk toward the wall until you feel a stretch on the outside of your hip.
4. Hold for 10-30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the other side and as many times as needed.

## Resources

AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program: [americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program](https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps-seniors/americorps-seniors-foster-grandparent-program)

Shalom Farms: [shalomfarms.org](https://shalomfarms.org)

Where You Live Matters: [wherelivematters.org/resources/what-is-occupational-wellness-for-seniors](https://wherelivematters.org/resources/what-is-occupational-wellness-for-seniors)

Trail Life USA: [traillifeusa.com](https://traillifeusa.com)

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