

AGING IN ATLANTA

PRESENTED BY



JOIN US AS WE EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY BEYOND 55



Napoleon Foster, a Forsyth County resident, ran A Minor Touch handyman services for more than a decade. COURTESY

BABY BOOM BUSINESSES

Handyman thrived via word of mouth

He went into field after retirement from Xerox in 2010.

By Elizabeth Crumbly
For the AJC

During a call with Napoleon Foster, 72, one gets the feeling it's possible to slow down and examine whatever's going on at the moment. His measured words bring him across as someone who's here to help – to unravel life's tangles and hand them back in neat, ordered bundles. And that's basically what he did for years as owner of A Minor Touch handyman service, arriving in clients' homes to handle the types of relatively small tasks that are often just big enough to cause confusion and, often-times, procrastination. Although COVID-19 forced him to shut down, the Forsyth County resident is still in the business of helping people. He's gone back to the small-but-necessary tasks for friends and family that led him to launch his service, and he's active in his community with volunteer activities that include working with the Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce on diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Beginning of a business

Before his 2010 retirement from Xerox Corp., he was already doing small odd jobs for acquaintances. His community welcomed his decision to offer his services in an official capacity. Many customers were seniors who Foster feels didn't need to be involved with ladders or other threats to their balance. They needed significant things done around the house, but the tasks didn't require a licensed craftsman. "Just changing a light fixture in the home or changing the light itself ... changing the batteries in a smoke detector, those are the type of things that I would do," Foster told the AJC recently. "After I retired, I decided to open

Foster continued on S2

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Black-owned businesses blossom



Above: True Laundry co-founders Abdur-Rahim Shaheed (left), Malik Saleem and Ali B. Muhammad. The College Park-based company's flagship product is a concentrated detergent now available in stores in 25 states.

Right: Carlita White's jewelry includes bold pieces that utilize natural elements. COURTESY PHOTOS



Many local Black business owners are older adults trailblazing in a second career or in a long-term entrepreneurial endeavor.

By Elizabeth Crumbly
For the AJC

According to at least one expert, there's another golden age on the horizon for Black-owned businesses with the right support and collaboration. And Atlanta seems positioned to be on the cusp of such a revival.

According to a report earlier this year from Lending Tree, the Atlanta metro area boasts the highest rate nationally of Black-owned businesses at 7.4%. Given that distinction and the fact that August is National Black Business Month, now is the time to recognize the achievements and innovation of Atlanta's Black business owners, a significant portion of whom are older adults trailblazing in a second career or hovering at the pinnacle of a long-term entrepreneurial endeavor.

"The way I see it, this is a time for celebration, reflection and action," Leon Prieto, Ph.D., a professor in the College of Business at Clayton State University, told the AJC. "(August is) a time to really celebrate the achievements of these Black entrepreneurs and businesses and to really fully recognize the contributions to the economy and society."

The past and future

It's necessary to examine the past in order to understand the possibilities for the future of Black-owned businesses, according to Prieto, who co-authored a book, "African American Management History: Insights on Gaining a Cooperative Advantage." He has written on the subject in an MIT Sloan Management Review article.

The original golden age of Black-owned businesses, he said, stretched from 1900 to 1930 – these enterprises thrived despite the especially fierce racial oppression that raged during that period.

"So, during that time in American history, in spite of segregation and Jim Crow (laws), there were a number of Black businesses that were very successful due to the advantage that many of those businesses possessed," he said.

Those advantages, including engage-

Business continued on S2

SAVINGS

\$1M not magic number to save for retirement

'Plan for expenses through age 100,' one adviser says.

By Arielle Robinson
For the AJC

How much money do you think you need to save for retirement?

According to a survey from Northwestern Mutual, many adults believe they must save about \$1.27 million to retire cozily. Adults in their 50s expect to need \$1.56 million saved, those in their 60s expect to need about \$968,000 saved for retirement,

while adults in their 70s believe they need to have around \$936,000 saved.

The reality is more complicated than this, though.

"You don't want to plan for the average life expectancy. You want to plan conservatively and plan for expenses through

age 100," Vanguard wealth adviser executive Matt Fleming told MarketWatch.

Fleming also said adults should plan to save 75% to 85% of their income before their retirement.

But many Americans stop very short of what

they believe they need to save.

On average, adults in their 50s save \$110,900, those in their 60s save \$112,500, and adults in their 70s \$113,900, according to the survey.

So then how do you

Retirement continued on S2

WE TREAT PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

- Sharp or throbbing pain • Tingling • Numbness
- Muscle cramping/twitching • Hot and/or cold sensations

Schedule your appointment today at 1-877-301-3441

Atlanta: 3193 Howell Mill Road • Suite 214

Decatur: 315 West Ponce de Leon Ave • Suite 380

Johns Creek: 10700 Medlock Bridge Rd • Suite 207

Gainesville: 2565 Thompson Bridge Rd • Suite 112

Covered by Medicare / Most insurance plans

www.RealWaveCenters.com



AGING IN ATLANTA

Business

continued from S1

ment in community, dialogue and consensus among community members could go a long way today in launching Black-owned businesses into their next golden age. Support for business owners via venture capital funds for expansion is also key, he said.

Financial support and mentorship
Tracey Grace, 52, is president and CEO of Sandy Springs-based IBEX IT Business Experts. She’s experienced the type of support Prieto mentioned and is now doing her part in paying it forward.

Her own entrepreneurial endeavors began in health information technology 11 years ago with support from programs through financial institutions like Capital One. Now she’s helping other organizations meet their sustainability goals, and she’s mentoring business owners locally.

Grace initially built IBEX through federal government contracting, and the company more recently launched Certifiably Diverse, a software development product that helps organizations work with diverse suppliers. Organizations using Certifiably Diverse are often working to meet their environmental, social and governance goals, which they model on United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs standards, Grace said. Partnerships with diverse suppliers – businesses furnishing materials or goods under the ownership of typically underrepresented demographics – she said, help fulfill ESG goals.

Grace is active locally with the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Com-



Carlita White, 76, of Castleberry Hill grew her company from a hobby after retiring from government. COURTESY

merce. She’s won its Small Business of the Year award, is on its board of directors and mentors younger entrepreneurs. Support for organizations looking to grow, she contended, can come through smaller partnerships for business owners who haven’t yet broken into collaborations with large corporate entities.

“It is very difficult for small businesses to get corporate business,” she said. “A lot of people have dreams that they’re just going to jump up and get an engagement with, like, a Coca-Cola or something, but, really, what I recommend for smaller businesses that are looking to get corporate businesses at large, Fortune 500-type companies is through partnering.”

Stepping forward in areas of specialization through subcontracting initially can allow businesses to work their way

up to those larger partnerships, she said, and small business owners can find opportunities to receive mentoring this way, too.

Building a legacy of quality

Like Grace, the founders of another locally based company stepped forward into innovation just over a decade ago.

On a Tuesday afternoon video call, the founders of College Park-based True Laundry were seated together to discuss the growth of their detergent business. Over the course of the conversation, Malik Saleem, 64, Ali B. Muhammad, 79, and Abdur-Rahim Shaheed, 74, displayed the brightly packaged True products for the camera. There’s the flagship high-efficiency detergent, its free and clear iteration for sensitive skin, a vegan fabric softener and a biodegradable dryer sheet (it’s great



Leon Prieto, Ph.D., a business professor at Clayton State University, contends that the next golden age for Black-owned businesses could be within reach. CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY

for cleaning bathtubs, too, for those wondering).

The trio began the company with a vision of providing consumers with an effective product that would save them money, Muhammad said. The detergent’s concentrated makeup has delivered that value by allowing users to use smaller amounts, allowing supplies to last much longer than typical formulas.

True Laundry detergents are now available in 25 states, Shaheed said, and the company has international aspirations. According to its website, thetrueproducts.com, Georgians can purchase the products in dozens of locations across the state from local retailers. For Muhammad, the development and growth of the brand have revolved largely around caring for others.

“We love serving people. We’re excited people have been buying this product for the last 10 years,” he said.

In creating a legacy for a Black-owned business, the founders knew they wanted True to proliferate. That idea meant putting together a foundation

“The way I see it, this is a time for celebration, reflection and action. (August is) a time to really celebrate the achievements of these Black entrepreneurs and businesses and to really fully recognize the contributions to the economy and society.”

Leon Prieto, Ph.D., Professor in the College of Business at Clayton State University

future generations can build on.

“We wanted to create a business that would go on,” Shaheed said.

And they’ve focused on perhaps the most straightforward of business goals: quality.

“We have to produce quality products,” Saleem said. “Our community appreciates when we put quality first.

Public support

Carlita White, 76, of Castleberry Hill grew her Carlita White Jewelry company from a hobby after retiring from a 40-year federal government career.

She moved to Atlanta two years ago and found a community ready to help her prosper. She’s worked with the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs, which supports Black-owned businesses through education, mentoring and networking.

“Never have I found so many organizations dedicated to helping Black businesses flourish,” she said. “There’s always challenges starting over, especially in your 70s, learning the different requirements for doing business and finding your market.”

Her custom creations help their owners stand out in the workplace or in social circles. The jew-

elry is often bold, featuring natural ornamentation: bright pink slices of agate, chunks of ocean jasper, and multicolored mother of pearl. Her clients are women from all backgrounds, she said, who “love to show up differently.”

Public attention especially in the past few years, White said, has also helped Black-owned businesses thrive.

“Not only did sales increase in my community, I met some incredible people doing incredible things and also found some amazing companies I can support,” she said.

Her advice to the public in supporting Black-owned businesses: show kindness and respect, and spread the word.

“My advice to consumers is to show more grace to Black entrepreneurs,” she said. “A lot of us are new at this and don’t know or have the resources for everything. Make your suggestions for improvements kindly, and please don’t approach expecting a discount. There’s a lot of hard work and plenty of expenses to run even the smallest business. If you have a great product or great experience, please share it with the business owner and promote it with others.”

Retirement

continued from S1

go about saving for retirement when there is such a large discrepancy between what you think you need saved and what you may actually have saved?

“Look at potential sources of income – 401(k), IRAs, pensions, savings and Social Security – and additional income streams like rental properties, annuities or inheritance. It’s also important to check insurance policies,” according to GoBankingRates.

Northwestern Mutual certified financial planner and wealth management adviser Alap Patel told CNBC that you should consider your approximate annual income and budget, instead of simply identifying a large end goal for retirement savings.

For example, if you multiply your estimated annual budget, such as \$100,000, by a factor of 25, the result will yield a generic lump sum that could cover you in retirement. That number would be \$2.5 million in this case, Patel said.

Cutting down on your costs and creating goals for how much money you want to put aside across the coming months can also help you get into a saving mindset.

Costs you may want to consider in your retirement years when saving and planning also include vacations; time spent with children and grandchildren; and health care plans like Medicare, according to MarketWatch.

Foster

continued from S1

this handyman service to provide just a little small service for customers that really don’t need a contractor to come in and do stuff ... things that a senior citizen may need to have done.”

Most of the time, Foster worked solo

“If I did take on some project that I needed to have another helping hand, I had a friend I could call on that could go help me, but that was very rare,” he said.

Local networking helped him build the business quickly, and he began servicing north Fulton, south Forsyth and Gwinnett counties, with occasional forays into Cobb and DeKalb counties and Atlanta. Chamber membership, he said, was a key part of that fast expansion.

“It started out small, of course, but by me being a member of the chamber of commerce ... I was able to expand my business contacts,” he said. “It caused my business to blossom, I would say.”

People hired Foster for jobs they weren’t sure how to get started or didn’t have the right tools for, and then they passed his name on to others. Foster also established an online presence, which helped A Minor Touch take off.

“It only took a few months to get started off the ground that way because of the contacts you make. When you go out and do one project for a customer, then they would tell their friends and other people there that I came and did the work for them, and they were pleased with what I did,” Foster said. “So, therefore, it was somewhat word of mouth being passed along, and at the

“It only took a few months to get started off the ground that way because of the contacts you make. When you go out and do one project for a customer, then they would tell their friends and other people there that I came and did the work for them and they were pleased with what I did.”

Napoleon Foster

same time, I did create my website and was able to get some business that way.”

Doing it right

There was no shortage of work, and Foster was able to make referrals when jobs fell outside his area of expertise or were beyond the scope he wanted to take on.

“You can become very overloaded with work, but because of me only doing

small projects, when I would get a call for something that required skill levels outside of what I wanted to do or knew how to do, then I would just immediately tell them that no, that’s not what’s in my services that I provide,” he said. “But I also knew of other people, other companies, that could possibly take that on, so I would pass that information on to them, so they would contact the cus-

tomers and complete the jobs that I could not do.”

At this point, he plans to continue unofficially assisting those in his circle. While he’s not in the business per se right now, he does have some tips for others looking to tap into their potential as entrepreneurs.

“The only advice that I have for them is to get yourself involved with someone that can help you with the business or the legal part of it. In my case, I had an attorney that helped me establish my business, along with a CPA because I wanted to do the business right,” he said. “I wanted to do it correctly. I didn’t want to go out and go to people’s homes and not have the proper insurance that I needed in order to do that. So that’s my advice for anyone that wants to start a business is to seek out professional help from those standpoints.”

FASHION

What nail colors flatter older hands? Experts weigh in

Speak to your nail technician to see available choices.

By Arielle Robinson
For the AJC

The way you wear your nails makes a statement.

Maybe you like to wear brightly colored, lengthy, acrylic nails to show off your vibrant personality.

Or perhaps you prefer darker colors and shorter nails to demonstrate your sleekness and sophistication.

There are several ways that older adults can rock a nail style.

If you prefer a more youthful look that may make your skin glow, go

for brighter nail polish colors that will pop out, such as Revlon Red, or more neutral tones like terra cotta, according to Southern Living. The magazine also recommends nude tones and sheer polishes.

Those who really want to stand out can choose hot pinks, neons or even a light coral if you are not a huge fan of the brighter colors but still want to glow, according to Best Life.

“Bright, even neon colors, make your hands look so much more youthful and even give the appearance of a warm sun-kissed glow to the skin,” Juli Russell, DIY nail expert for Sally Beauty, told the website.

You can never go wrong with the French manicure, a classic, either.

It is important to consider what color and look fit best with your skin tone as well.

“If you have a lighter skin tone, the color would differ depending on how fair your skin is, but corals, greens, and red would be good for older hands because it draws attention to the nails,” according to Orly.

According to Orly, older adults with darker skin may look best in orange, gold and gray shades.

Beauty experts recommend staying away from several colors.

Dark colors – especially

black – should generally be avoided, according to both Southern Living and Orly. Black, deep navy blue and darker shades of purple, for example, may draw attention to dark spots, lines and wrinkles.

This does not mean that you can’t wear dark colors at all, though. According to Orly, the darkest color you should choose is the dark gray-blue shade. This allows you to wear a colder color that still ensures your skin pops. And for darker skin tones, StyleCraze suggests going trendy with cocoa, cappuccino or dark shades.

“Steer clear from sheer colors or hues that match your skin too closely, as this will give the dreaded

‘mannequin hands’ look,” Russell told BestLife.

Don’t be afraid to switch up the shape of your nails, too!

When at the nail salon, you may opt for almond or oval-shaped nails.

“These two shapes are more youthful and lengthen the appearance of the fingers,” Russell said to BestLife.

Additional options include the sharp, stiletto shape and the flat-topped ballerina shape.

These are not the only options, though. Speak with your nail technician to see what choices are available to you – perhaps you will discover something that you never knew you loved.

AGING IN ATLANTA

RECREATION

USTA Senior Leagues offer competition, fun

Matches often on clay courts instead of concrete courts.

By Severo Avila
For the AJC

Margie Patton cradled her baby grandson, Leo, gently in her arms on a sunny Tuesday afternoon. Just hours before, the 55-year-old had been huffing and puffing and slug-ging tennis balls across a net trying to get the best of her opponents.

Patton and thousands of older adults in and around metro Atlanta find competition and camaraderie on the courts as part of the United States Tennis Association's Senior Leagues. USTA offers league matches as well as state and sectional championships at 18+, 40+, 55+ and 65+.

On Tuesdays, Patton is on the court for her senior day league, and she's back hitting balls and running around the tennis court on Thursday nights for her 55-and-Over league.

"I really enjoy the competition at my level," said Patton, who has been playing tennis since she was 35. "The senior leagues offer me the chance to play against people at my level, people with comparable abilities."

But if you think tennis at this age is any less competitive, you'd be wrong. Patton and her teammates are in it to win it. They just got back from a state



Kelly Roberts (far right) attends a recent state tennis tournament for one of her USTA senior mixed league teams. Roberts said the state tournaments are one of the great aspects of the senior leagues, since she and her friends get to road-trip and have a fun weekend of tennis.

championship tournament in Columbus, playing against other seniors from across Georgia. The team was a tiebreak away from the semifinals.

"It was hot," Patton said. "But we had a good time, and the tennis was really good."

League play takes place in and around Atlanta. But if you advance to the state championships, you have to travel to places like Columbus or Macon or Rome for the weekend.

For some, like Patton and her girlfriends, it's a hilarious road trip with some tennis thrown in.

"Those trips are really, really fun," Patton said. "It's not often that we all get to hang out together for a whole weekend. We're all the same age, and we're out of town together. It's a road trip. You stay in a hotel together, you eat out,

have a couple drinks. It's so much fun."

Another grandmother who transitions easily from snuggling a baby to blasting serves and over-heads is Kelly Roberts. Like Patton, 53-year-old Roberts might be found enjoying her new baby granddaughter one day, and the next day hitting drop shots and slices at a court in Canton or Cartersville.

She plays against other players in her age range and enjoys how competitive tennis is.

"The players on my teams and who we play against range from 40 to 70," Roberts said. "I've played out of Canton and Cartersville, and we play against lots of teams in the metro Atlanta area especially when we travel to state tournaments."

One thing she appreciates about the senior



Kelly Roberts (second from left) poses with members of one of her USTA senior league teams. Many of the women in the leagues have become lifelong friends and rejoin the same teams season after season. COURTESY PHOTOS

leagues is that often matches are played on clay courts as opposed to the more common hard-concrete courts.

"The clay is a lot softer and easier on your body, your joints, especially your knees," she said. "I wish all the senior league matches were on clay."

Roberts likes the level of competition in the senior leagues and said in many cases the tennis is tougher when it's against players who have decades of experience under their belt.

She's been playing with many of the same women for more than 20 years, always joining the same

teams season after season and developing a bond that goes beyond an ordinary friendship.

"Tennis at the senior level enriches me," she said. "It's not just the exercise and cardio, which are obviously great at my age. But the social aspect is important to me. You get to travel. It's hard for you to get all your friends in one place. But I get that at least once a week for a scheduled league match, and I look forward to that."

USTA offers senior leagues at a variety of skill levels, from novice players to seasoned experts. And there are hundreds

of senior teams to join in metro Atlanta.

"I'd encourage anyone who thinks they might enjoy tennis at this age to give it a try," Roberts said. "You don't have to be a pro. You don't have to be an amazing tennis player. Find a team at whatever level you are comfortable playing, and you'll have the time of your life. It's given me so much. I'd love for other people to find that enjoyment as well."

For additional information about the USTA's senior leagues, visit online at georgia.usta.com/leagues/adult_55_over_and_65_over_leagues.

RETIREMENT

Need financial adviser? These 5 tips can help

It's not too late to set your finances up for long-term success.

By Karon Warren
For the AJC

Whether you have a lot of financial assets or not, it's important to plan ahead for your retirement and to make sure what assets you do have are protected for your heirs. Regardless of your age, it's not too late to set your finances up for long-term success. Working with a financial adviser could provide some guidance. Here are some tips on finding the right financial adviser for your needs.

Wealth isn't a requirement

Remember you don't need a lot of investments or wealth to benefit from the advice of a financial adviser. It's important to find someone who can help you take steps to plan for your current financial situation going into the future.

"The main purpose of using a financial adviser is when you're trying to see if you're doing things right to meet your long-term financial goals," consumer advocate Clark Howard of Atlanta said. "They're talking to you about your future. Is your will up to date? Is your planning done well from a tax standpoint? What are you doing in case you are

in the 70% that ends up needing assisted living? With real financial planning, it's not really about what investment you're in. Where the real importance comes with a financial planner is the estate and tax planning and goal-setting."

Determine your goals

Know what type of financial adviser you want to work with to achieve your financial goals.

"The field is vast, but I think you can break it down into two main categories: those who work on commission, and those who don't," said Atlanta-based Wes Moss, a certified financial planner, managing partner and chief investment strategist at Capital Investment Advisors.

"You can find great advisers in both categories, but I think finding a fee-only financial adviser (typically at a Registered Investment Advisory Firm, or RIA) is a great first step. At an RIA, you can find someone who can objectively discuss what path could make the most sense to meet your specific needs, wants and goals."

Get referrals

Seek referrals for a financial adviser from those you trust.

"You might start by asking a trusted adviser, such as an attorney or tax adviser, for names of potential wealth man-

agement firms to interview," said Adrian Cronje, CEO of Balentine, a wealth management firm in Atlanta. "Word of mouth through friends and acquaintances and a review of listings in credible publications like Barron's can also help you create a pool of advisors to look at, and from there you can do some homework."

Another good starting point is searching the Certified Financial Planner Board or the Garrett Planning Network.

Learn the costs

Know how much financial advisers charge. Many financial advisers base their rates on commissions or fees, but Howard recommends choosing a fee-only fiduciary adviser.

"The typical fee-only financial adviser costs about 1% of your assets under management," he said. "You can also hire hybrid financial advisers from companies like Vanguard, Fidelity and Schwab. These costs can range from 0.30% to 0.90%."

Pick someone who'll make you a priority

Choose a financial adviser who makes you feel comfortable and puts your interests first.

"Find someone that can make the process simple," Moss said. "You and your adviser should have a very clear plan that you can both stick to. You and your adviser should have an agreed-upon investment philosophy that guides you based on your goals and how you handle investment risk. Advisers are at their best when you work together as a team with them, focused on a clear and common goal that fulfills your financial and life goals."

WORKPLACE

Whatever your age, update resume for more impact in today's workforce

By Lesly Gregory
For the AJC

Not everyone who stays in the workforce past age 55 remains in the same job.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor force is continuing to age, with the 55+ segment growing three times faster than the overall rate.

So, whether staying in a current job or looking for a new role as you age, it's always a good idea to maintain an accurate, up-to-date resume by taking into account the latest trends.

"It's not about what you've done, but how well you've done it. It's about demonstrating a continued pattern of excellence, regardless of age," Emily Kapit, MS, MRW, ACRW, CPRW, owner and head career strategist at Refresh Your Step, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Today, resumes promote your "record of achievement," according to Kapit,

rather than a simple list of where you worked and what you did.

This changes the very way resumes are written if you want to catch the eye of hiring managers.

"With a focus on achievements and results, it's best to use action verbs for your work experience, including financial achievements, with actual numbered results, when you can," Anne West, freelance resume writer in partnership with Atlanta Resume Services, told the AJC.

It's also necessary to customize your resume, showing off past accomplishments that best fit the role you're applying for. This means you may end up with several up-to-date versions.

"The smart job seeker will adjust their resume as needed to show how their experience and skills bring value to that specific role," said West.

To enhance each version

and specifically focus on relevant items in your background, Kapit suggests adding excerpts from testimonials or reviews.

"Doing this defends your own statements, adding credibility right from the start," said Kapit.

As you focus on your accomplishments, though, and tailor your resume to the next job, it's important to remember certain bits of information are essential.

According to West, this means your education, professional development and technology-related skills always belong. No dates are necessary. What you accomplished matters more than when it happened.

Beyond your work history, there's also an expectation you'll include a personal statement on your resume. This teaser helps identify what you bring to the table.

"This statement is so critical," said West.

NEVER A FEE FOR OUR SERVICES!

LOOK! MEDICARE HAS RULES

MOVING? RETIRED? TURNING 65?

MEDICAID? STATUS CHANGE NURSING HOME ADMITTANCE? ...and the list goes on!

Do YOU qualify for a special enrollment period?

Is your current Medicare plan still the best choice for you NOW?

CALL TODAY 770-373-7541

There is never a fee for services. The Bonnie Dobbs Agency is an independent agency not affiliated with the United States government, any state government, or the federal Medicare program.

bonniedobbsagency insurance and other red tape

AGING IN ATLANTA



New dates can cause you to get flustered and order way too much or too little. ADOBESTOCK

THE DATING GAME

Dating isn't an excuse to ditch healthy eating

It's smart to plan ahead so you can keep good habits.

By Rose Kennedy
For the AJC

Food is an inherent part of dating when you're over 50 and single, especially if you're systematically going on multiple first dates set up via a dating app – or you have the old-school “dinner and a movie” mindset. But where does that leave your careful menu plan and other food-related health progress? Whether you're entering a phase with lots of coffee shop meet-ups or are just reaching the point in a new relationship where every outing is a chance to celebrate with the cocktails, fried foods and lavish desserts we're all trying to eat in moderation, it's a good idea to plan ahead so you can maintain healthy habits.

“Can you be committed to dating and finding a new relationship while also staying committed to your own well-being? It's easy to disregard one or the other when we're extremely focused and excited about whatever is the ‘new shiny,’” Atlanta-based certified eating psychology counselor Margaret Schwenke told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

“When you're in the flush of a new relationship, it might be easy to skip meals because you're so preoccupied with those butterflies,” said Schwenke, who is also a certified holistic health counselor and the founder of Authentic Nourishment, where she focuses primarily on women's group work.

“Or, to the contrary, you might feel pressure to go with the flow not to be seen as difficult when ordering at a restaurant or eating a meal together while the relationship is still new.”

If you're a guy dating a woman – or women – you may be battling another behavior pattern. A study from Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab published in Evolutionary Psychological Science showed that men show off to the opposite sex by eating larger quantities of food in the company of women – especially pizza.

“The findings suggest that men tend to overeat to show off,” lead study author Kevin Kniffin said on the Cornell blog. “Instead of a feat of strength, it's a feat of eating.”

To counteract any of those tendencies, try these tips for healthful eating on dates:

Google your options ahead of time

Be sure to check the menu beforehand for any eatery where you'll be meeting even on the most casual date. And decide what you'll order there before you leave the house. New dates, in particular, can cause you to get flustered and order

way too much or too little as you try to go along to get along or fit in with a date you haven't met before.

Eat reasonably in time leading up to date

Skimping on food to fit into a special outfit or in an attempt to “bank calories” for indulgent date foods can instead cause you to overeat.

“The best strategy for special occasion meals is to continue to eat a reasonable, healthy diet in the days leading to the event,” psychiatrist Jennifer L. Derenne told WebMD. “Once there, order foods that you enjoy – including dessert!”

Don't show up with an appetite

“We usually look forward to eating out, so naturally, we don't want to spoil our appetites before eating out at a nice place that is probably expensive,” psychology professor and relationship expert Lawrence Josephs wrote on Psychology Today.

“That is a strategic error. You shouldn't show up hungry. It's better to eat some fruit before eating out. ... You'll be more likely to stick to the tasting menu rather than binge.”

If you're on a weight loss program that restricts high-carbohydrate or high-fat foods, “you are at high risk of binging once you get a taste of your favorite fattening foods,” said Josephs, who is also the author of “Food Fantasies: Overcoming the Diet Lies We Tell Ourselves.” “Your self-control won't be good if you are hungry.”

Drink lots of water

Along with saving money, drinking water will “slow you down from eating your food too fast, which will help you enjoy the food more, and it will allow your brain to get the message from your stomach that you're full so you don't overeat before your plate is already empty,” said clean eating blogger Lacey Baier.

“You can ask for a slice of lemon if plain water is too boring. To ease into just having water, you can also wait to order a different beverage until after you've finished your first glass of water.”

Leave hungry

It may fight instincts developed over a lifetime, but you should feel OK if your healthy approach means you leave the date while you're still hungry, but after you “at least had a taste of all of your favorite fattening foods. When you get home, just have some more fruit and vegetables or plain nonfat yogurt, so you don't have to go to bed hungry,” Josephs said.

“The point of eating out with your partner is to deepen your romantic connection ... not to take a romantic evening out as a pretext for binge eating fattening foods.”

HOMES

Age-in-place updates can be stylish

Interior designers say safety upgrades can also look good.

By Mark Woolsey
For the AJC

Whether they're updating quarters they've occupied for decades or moving into a new space entirely, older adults are looking for stylish innovations that also improve safety and maneuverability.

Jo Rabaut, owner and principal of Rabaut Design Associates in Atlanta, indicates it's an age group that's been underserved.

“I think one of the problems is that there haven't been enough (designers) paying attention to the needs of older people. But they like good designs, too,” she said.

She said she's working with an increasing number of retirees and older adults on ambitious projects.

With that in mind, here are five stylish and safety upgrades that she and others are talking about.

The living room

Tatiannah Clarke of Onyx and Annah Interiors suggests upgrading that area with a mix of traditional and modern pieces while keeping that area inviting and not too “industrial.” She said classic pieces like sideboards and coffee tables – but nothing too ornate – can be paired with more modern pieces with clean lines, not an overabundance of curves.

From a safety standpoint, she favors making sure couches and chairs are the right height to minimize problems with getting up and down. Putting safety guards on sharp furniture corners can lessen the risk of falling or being poked, which can cause an injury. Wayne Austin of Bonsai Architectural Designs suggests Oriental rugs over hardwood floors as more stylish – but make sure protection against slipping is in place.

Rabaut said instead of chair rails being flush with the walls, they can be projected outward to some degree, giving older adults another thing to grab on to and steady themselves.

Upgrading shower and tubs in bathroom

Designers say a walk-in shower that works well is one that eliminates curbs, lessens the danger of tripping and is angled so that water doesn't emerge onto the bathroom floor. Rabaut emphasizes installing grab bars and shower seats while a renovation is ongoing to look more inte-



Onyx and Annah Interiors suggests living room upgrades that mix traditional and modern.



Couches and chairs that are the right height can minimize problems with getting up and down. COURTESY PHOTOS



A kitchen design by Rabaut Design Associates.

grated as opposed to tacking them on later. A stone or tile configuration looks good, she and others say.

Getting a better grip on the shower/tub bottom can also work to prevent falls. A pebbled bottom to a shower floor imparts a

rustic look while spotlighting increased safety.

It only makes sense to give that area focus, said one longtime local designer.

“Two rooms in a home add value to a house: the bathroom and a kitchen,”

said Austin. “The more you can do to those rooms, the more you add value.”

Lighting

Lighting may also be due for a safety and comfort-related upgrade. Rabaut said she works with three levels of lighting: ceiling height, eye level and lower-down task lighting, which can make such things as chopping vegetables with knives easier – not to mention safer.

Use a dimmer system, she said, and put it on a rocker off-on switch. She said that's an easier proposition for older adults who have arthritis and don't want to grab or pinch.

Accessibility

In the same vein, designers say, older adults with hand or strength issues should consider touchless faucets. When it comes to knobs and cabinet pulls, rounder and larger knobs can minimize pinching and gripping problems. And U-shaped pulls can help as well – the kind that can be snagged with a cane. Designers say utilizing brushed nickel or polished chrome can make them look spiffier as well.

Blinds and curtains

Clarke suggests having blinds and curtains remote-controlled by a device such as a smartphone. And if you're replacing older blinds, she suggests a more modern design that rolls out and rolls up flat. Austin said plantation shutters are popular right now.

Bottom line, said Austin, “the more pleasant you can make the interior of a house, the more likely a person is going to want to stay there.”

HEALTH

What to do if psoriasis strikes later in life

‘This is a lifelong condition,’ says one Atlantan who has it.

By Andrea Clement
For the AJC

Atlantan Alisha Bridges was diagnosed with psoriasis at age 7. It took her more than two decades to find a treatment that was consistently effective for her.

One of the many challenges of the condition is the visible appearance of the flares: red, itchy, flaky skin on the scalp, knees, elbows and just about anywhere on the body.

However, the impact of psoriasis goes beyond skin deep.

Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition that, while often diagnosed between ages 20-30, may also onset later in life, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Addi-

tionally, even if you have been living with psoriasis since youth, you may experience a worsening of symptoms later in life, during psoriasis's second peak, which is prominent within the age range of 50-60.

An inflammatory skin disorder that is thought to be driven by an overactive immune system, psoriasis is one of the most common immune-mediated diseases affecting adults in the U.S. People living with this chronic condition have skin cells that turn over much more quickly – within a few days rather than one month – and, instead of shedding, the skin cells pile up on the surface of the skin, according to Dr. Loyd Godwin, founder of Dermatology Physicians of Connecticut and a medical adviser to the Global Healthy Living Foundation's HEROES program.

“Due to the chronic nature of psoriasis and increasing life expectancy,

psoriasis significantly affects older adults, and the symptoms often present with more severity. As a result, psoriasis can impact quality of life and cause psychological distress, particularly in older patient populations,” Godwin said.

“I battled with many self-esteem issues,” Bridges said of living with psoriasis since childhood. “This condition can even give rise to other health concerns, such as heart disease and depression. I want people to understand the difficulties of living with a visible condition, especially when navigating a world that does not always accept or understand diseases.”

“Discovering an effective treatment does not guarantee freedom from psoriasis indefinitely,” Bridges said. “Medications can lose their efficacy, and psoriasis can resurface with renewed intensity. It's important to recognize that this is a life-

long condition, presenting ongoing challenges that persist unless a cure is eventually found.”

“There are many different treatments for psoriasis, ranging from topical, to steroids, to full-body biologic treatments,” Godwin said. “Each patient should be assessed to determine what might be the best approach for them.”

There are also different types and severities of psoriasis. About 80% of all cases are plaque psoriasis, the most common type of condition across all age groups.

“For some people, psoriasis is mild and can be well-managed with topical treatments, but for others, the condition can have a profound impact on your daily life and long-term health,” Godwin said. “About 30% of people with psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis, an inflammatory form of arthritis.”

AGING IN ATLANTA

ACTIVE AGING

A low-impact option for older adults: Group cycling classes

Fun all around, these spinning classes are also calorie-burning.

By Elizabeth Crumbly
For the AJC

Group cycling, known to many as spinning, provides a communal exercise experience many older adults like due to its built-in low-impact appeal. And participants enjoy the ability to customize their experiences on stationary bikes through speed and incline changes.

Camaraderie and burning calories

Cheryl Medlock, 74, took spin classes at least three times a week at Vibe Ride in Midtown until COVID-19 forced her to pause.

“It’s a hoot, so I did it straight seven years up until COVID,” she told the AJC.

She began the classes because she was at the fitness studio anyway helping out her daughter, Courtney Anderson, co-founder and co-owner.

“I’m a cleaning freak, as my friends say, so she asked me to come to Atlanta to help her with her business, so that’s how I got started cycling,” Medlock explained. “I had to be there every morning at 5 a.m. for the 6 o’clock class because I checked people in.”

She decided to try the classes herself.

“I don’t need to just stand here,” she recalled thinking. “So that’s how I got started. It wasn’t something that was on my bucket list.”

Although she didn’t necessarily set out to become attached to the activity, the welcome and acceptance she received from the other participants pulled her in.

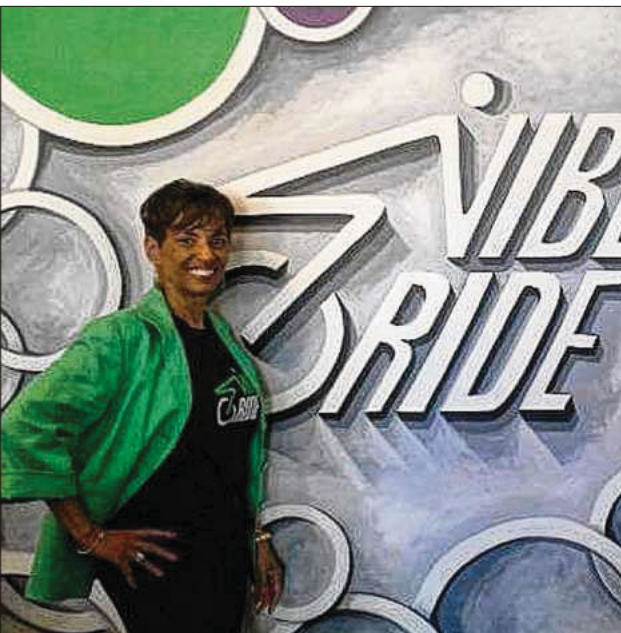
“The kids there ... like, everybody calls me Mama Cheryl,” she said. “There’s a camaraderie there. They just encourage you. I don’t care what your body shape is. They all encourage each other.”

Medlock said she found spinning to be a great calorie-burning workout and observed others using it to achieve weight loss goals. She said she knows several people who have lost over 100 pounds while taking spin classes.

“We just ooh and ahh after every 5 pounds is gone, so the camaraderie there and the motivation and the kindness is what I’ve missed,” she said. “They have screens, and it lets you know how many



One group cycle class at a metro Atlanta YMCA can have 20 or so participants.



Cheryl Medlock took spin classes at least three times a week at Vibe Ride in Midtown until COVID-19 forced her to pause.



Participants take part in a group cycle class at a metro Atlanta YMCA. COURTESY PHOTOS

calories you’re burning. So you can motivate yourself by going faster or moving, and they do different dances, so you can decide how fast you want to go.”

Medlock was already active when she began spinning – she walks and works with weights. And although she said she doesn’t have issues with her joints, she noticed it’s a good option for those who do.

“It’s phenomenal for cardio because it’s easy on your knees,” she said.

“People who have problems with their hips and their knees find it much easier.”

And the benefits didn’t stop there. Medlock said she noticed spinning increased her body strength and balance. She’s been able to catch herself if she trips on the stairs, and she attributes that ability to walking and spinning.

Although COVID-19 changed her involvement in spinning, she said she hopes to get back to the activity soon.

‘On top of my game’

Like Medlock, Marilea Taglia of Sandy Springs also sees the low-impact benefits of a group cycle. She was a regular runner until she needed to transition to an activity that would be easier on her joints. She’d been participating in group cycle classes during bad weather days already, so moving into a regular schedule with them was a natural choice. She works out regularly at a YMCA of Metro Atlanta location in Buckhead in an early morning class.

Her instructor, she said, keeps things entertaining for the usual 20 or so participants.

“She makes it fun, and she makes us want to come at 5:30 a.m., which is a feat,” Taglia said.

Classes often include components that ensure attendees are focused and involved. The fun has included a crack-of-dawn birthday party, themed playlists, a guest DJ spot for a classmate, and a class designed around a “The Price Is Right” theme.

Taglia feels the benefits of a regular group cycle have affected her entire physical and mental well-being.

“I’m never sick,” she said. “When I did get COVID, it was very mild. I just feel like I’ve got so much more energy, even though my alarm goes off at 4:50 in the morning, I get a lot done, and mentally, as well. I really believe that as long as you’re active, even if it’s just an hour a day, it keeps your blood flowing through all your vital organs, especially your brain, and that’s very important.”

Taglia said she feels this increase in well-being has allowed her to excel mentally in her job as an insurance agent.

“I just feel like I’m on top of my game,” she said.

FUN AT 55 | FOOD, FUN AND THE ARTS

Activities to celebrate August

By Lesly Gregory | For the AJC

August in Atlanta really does mean those dog days of summer start barking. You’ve been busy, running around with grandkids and enjoying all those special sun-filled activities. Whether you’re looking to take it down a notch in August or keep right on going, there’s food to try, the arts to enjoy and so much fun waiting for you around the city.

THE FOOD

AgLanta Eats Festival

Walk through the Botanical Garden and sample the eats at this hyperlocal food festival. AgLanta Eats features local chefs cooking with ingredients from farms across metro Atlanta. You’ll find a variety of fresh and delectable bites to sample. A beverage assortment accompanies these tastings as well as live music to enjoy

5-8 p.m. Monday, Aug. 21. Tickets are \$30 -\$175. Atlanta Botanical Garden, 1345 Piedmont Ave NE, Atlanta. 404-876-5859. atlantabg.org/calendar/aglanta-eats

Georgia Vegfest

Now in its 12th year, Georgia Vegfest kicks off with an education day Saturday, moving on to the festival all day Sunday. Throughout the two days, this family-friendly event includes vendors and activities centered on a plant-based diet, presenting foodie-friendly options that are fresh and new. Even if you’ve got picky eaters, the Kids Fun Zone will keep grandchildren occupied with face painting, games, coloring and more as you learn more about this lifestyle option.

11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26, and Sunday, Aug. 27. General admission is free, although a \$5 donation is requested. VIP admission is \$25, and VIP Plus is \$35. Children and those over 65 are free. Atlanta Expo Center North, 3650 Jonesboro Road SE, Atlanta. georgiavegfest.com

THE FUN

Piedmont Park Arts Festival

Considered one of the top arts festivals in the country, this event emphasizes the visual arts and family fun. With up to 250 painters, photographers, sculptors, jewelers, crafters, antique vendors and more, you can find artist demonstrations among the handmade items to buy. There are also live music, festival foods and drinks, and a children’s play area.

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19, and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 20. Free admission. Piedmont Park, 1215 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta. piedmontparkartsfestival.com



PGA Tour Championship

Watch a little professional golf right here in Atlanta. The PGA Tour Championship is the culminating event of the PGA Tour Playoffs for the FedEx Cup. Only the top 30 golfers, based on points, qualify each year. Come and be a spectator for the best of the best in golfing. Players are still being finalized, but expect to see a few well-known favorites in the mix.

Times vary based on tee times and the players you want to watch. Wednesday, Aug. 23-Sunday, Aug. 27. Daily grounds tickets are \$35+, ULTRA club tickets are \$175+. East Lake Golf Club, 2575 Alston Drive SE, Atlanta. 404-373-5722. eastlakegolfclub.com/tour-championship

The Yacht Rock Revue

Having performed with well-known yacht rock artists already, this group of musicians headlines sold-out shows across the country. As they play distinct tunes you know, as well as ones they’ve written themselves, the soft, laid-back melodies from the ’70s and ’80s will fill the night. This particular show allows you to bring coolers and carry-ins, so you can pack a snack, and your favorite drinks, to enjoy during the concert.

8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26. Tickets start at \$80. Cadence Bank Amphitheatre at Chastain Park, 4469 Stella Drive, Atlanta. chastainparkamp.com/events/yacht-rock-revue-5

HEALTH

Should you drink more water if over 50?

Older adults at more dehydration risk due to changes in body.

By Arielle Robinson
For the AJC

Among the seemingly endless options of tasty beverages that permeate our society, one could argue that water still reigns supreme. Not only can it go with every meal, but it can nourish the body.

People ages 50 and up especially need this nourishment, as they are at an elevated risk of dehydration due to changes in the body.

“As we age, our kidneys become less efficient at conserving water, and our body’s ability to regulate fluid and electrolyte balance may also decline,” New York Urol-

ogy founder and urologist Dr. David Shusterman told Parade.

The doctor explained that people 50 and over might tend to have medical illnesses or be prescribed medications that may potentially increase the risk of the body losing too much water.

“For example, diuretics, laxatives and some blood pressure medications can increase urine output and cause dehydration,” Shusterman added.

According to Everyday Health, common oral medications Type 2 diabetes patients may use, such as Invokana, Farxiga and metformin, might lead to dehydration.

Also, compared to younger people’s bodies, older people’s bodies can not regulate their temperatures as well, accord-

ing to the National Council on Aging. Sweating can more easily lead to dehydration for older people.

Recognizing the signs of dehydration is always helpful.

According to WebMD, those signs can include dizziness, few to no tears, dark urine, confusion, infrequent urination and extreme thirst.

It is important for everyone – but especially seniors – to stay hydrated throughout the day to lead healthier lives.

According to WebMD’s Healthy Aging Guide, older adults ought to drink six to eight glasses of water a day. A National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute study equated six glasses to 1.5 liters. Parade recommended consuming around 1.5 to 3.5 liters of water per day.

This number may seem

high to people who are not used to regularly drinking water. But do not be too alarmed: There are several ways to ensure you obtain the hydration you need throughout the day.

Speaking to Parade, Shusterman recommended always carrying a water bottle, while Aleece Fosnight, a medical adviser at Aeroflow Urology, suggested downloading an app through your phone that reminds you to drink water.

Eating foods with lots of water in them, remembering to drink water at set times of the day to build up a routine and adding fresh fruit to your water to give it some flavor are additional ways to make drinking water more appealing, according to the National Council on Aging.



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

AGING IN ATLANTA



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is committed to facilitating conversations on the topics important to aging well in Atlanta and providing you resources to live your best life!

Our events feature local experts speaking on topics that matter most to you:

- ✓ Fun events and attractions around town
- ✓ Protecting your assets and estate planning
- ✓ Aging well in place
- ✓ Managing prescriptions
- ✓ Immunizations

UPCOMING LIVE EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 14
City Springs | Sandy Springs, GA

November 9
Gwinnett Technical College | Lawrenceville, GA

Learn more today! Visit www.AJC.com/aging



Interested in sponsorship or speaking opportunities with Aging in Atlanta? Contact advertising@ajc.com.