

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2025

Happy New Year!

The start of a new year brings renewed hope and motivation to make this year the best that it can be. As you look back on 2024 we hope that you celebrate your accomplishments, acknowledge any obstacles that you had to overcome, and know that your experiences in 2024 do not define you but instead improve your ability to do things that you love.

As we age, it becomes even more important to take care of our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This New Year take a moment to reflect on and make a commitment to yourself to improve your overall health. Whatever the commitment or goal that you make for yourself this year, only you can achieve them, and only you can gauge your success.

Having someone to hold you accountable can be helpful, by providing encouragement to make changes like exercising more and sitting less, learning a new skill or engaging in a new hobby to help you live your life to its fullest potential. Having tools and structure can give you something to focus on and to monitor as you make progress. Keep in mind small changes can go a long way and celebrate small wins as you achieve them this year. Most importantly remember to prioritize self-care, be patient with yourself, stay positive and have fun!

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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EXPLORING MOBILITY AIDS

Mobility aids are designed to help those with some mobility or movement issues to become more independent and have more freedom. Whether it be a cane, Urban Poles, or any type of walker, mobility aids can help make life better when they are used properly. Take a moment to review below what each style or mobility aid is recommended for, safety tips for maintenance, and proper sizing.

Maintenance

- Brakes, wheels and frame should be checked regularly or when the user reports an issue
- Height of the frame should be checked periodically due to changes in balance, strength, and posture
- Ensure that grip handles are in good shape on walkers, canes and/or Urban Poles
- Inspect the tip of your cane and/or Urban Poles to ensure adequate stability and traction

Finding the Appropriate Mobility Aid

- Book an appointment with an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist registered with the Ontario Assistive Devices Program (ADP)
- Find a business registered with the ADP to sell you the mobility aid

Canes

- Used for mild balance problems
- Typically supports up to 25% of your weight
- Improves your stability by increase your base of support



Standard Walker

- Provides the most stability
- Requires upper body strength and endurance to lift the walker
- Popular with those who had recent joint replacements/injuries or a recent surgery and can provide support for any weightbearing precautions

Two Wheeled Walkers

- Ideal for those who find a standard walker too strenuous to use and still need more stability but not constant weight-bearing support
- Less support due to the two front wheels, but more support than a 4 or 3 wheeled walker



Rollator Walker

- Provides some stability
- For those who need mild assistance
- Populations that should use a rollator walker: those who have some balance issues, a history of falls, lower extremity weakness or poor endurance
- Benefits of a rollator walker include: hand brakes, a seat and backrest, a storage basket, easily mobile – only need to push (instead of lift and move), they can be used for longer journeys and allows you to rest as needed

Urban Poles & Activator Poles

- Recommended for a walking accessory or occasional support – not recommended as a long-term mobility aid such as a cane or walker
- Designed to increase balance, stability, and posture and to take pressure off of the back and lower joints – proves to be beneficial for rehabilitation programs, older adults, pre or post-hip and/or knee surgery, stroke, chronic pain, and spinal conditions



DID YOU KNOW?

January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month!

What is Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease is a chronic neurodegenerative disease that destroys brain cells, causing thinking ability and memory to decline over time. Alzheimer's disease is a form of dementia, it is not a normal part of aging, and is irreversible.

How is it diagnosed?

- An initial assessment by your family doctor is the first step towards determining whether or not you have dementia and/or Alzheimer's
- No single test can tell if a person has dementia and/or Alzheimer's. The diagnosis is made through an assessment that eliminates other possible causes. Until there is a conclusive test, doctors may continue to use the words "probable dementia" or "probable Alzheimer's disease". A family doctor or a specialist can make the diagnosis, but it may take time. The doctor may or may not refer you to other healthcare professionals.

Signs & Symptoms

- Memory changes
- Difficulty doing familiar tasks
- Changes in language or communication
- Disorientation in time and space
- Impaired judgment
- Problems with abstract thinking
- Misplacing things
- Changes in mood, personality and behavior
- Loss in initiative
- Challenges in understanding visual and spatial information

Treatment

- There is currently no cure for dementia and/or Alzheimer's, but treatments can help manage cognitive problems and changes in mood and behavior. There are currently four medications approved by Health Canada, that can help manage symptoms.

Exercise & Alzheimer's Disease

- Be active! Your physical fitness helps your brain fitness. Physical activity and exercise can help you feel better, reduce stress, and maintain health. It helps to prevent muscle weakness, and health complications associated with inactivity.
- Physical activity also promotes a normal day-and-night routine and may help to improve mood. The type of activity that works best will depend on individual fitness levels, present activity levels, and overall health.

Where you can turn to for support?

- Alzheimer's Society CK – 519-352-1043
- Alzheimer's Society WE – 519-974-2220
- Alzheimer's Society SL – 519-332-4444

Source: <https://alzheimer.ca/en>

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE Alzheimer's Society of Chatham-Kent



We are excited to announce the partnership with the Alzheimer's Society of Chatham-Kent.

Currently there are over 597,000 Canadians living with dementia. The Alzheimer's Society of Chatham-Kent assist over 1,000 clients and care partners affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias each year. If you or someone you love is facing uncertainty of dementia, contact the Alzheimer's Society of Chatham-Kent. You do not need a referral from a Primary Care Provider.

Programs and Services Offered:

- Cognitive Assessments
- Counselling
- In-Home Respite Care
- Support Groups
- Day Programs (in Chatham & Wallaceburg)
- Education
- And More

Our partner at the Alzheimer's Society have these helpful tips to reduce your risk of dementia and/or Alzheimer's:

- Be physically active
- Challenge your brain
- Be socially active
- Follow a healthy diet you enjoy
- Make conscious and safe choices

Source: <https://alzheimer.ca/chathamkent/en>

GOAL SETTING

The new year can act as a fresh start and time for reflection and goal setting. If we consider the 24-hour Movement Guidelines, are there areas you can improve on? (E.g. Are you reaching that 150 minutes of physical activity per week? How much sedentary time are you participating in each day? How is your sleep?, etc.) Implementing behaviour change can be daunting but if you bring awareness to the process of change, you can identify where you are at and work towards lasting, meaningful change.

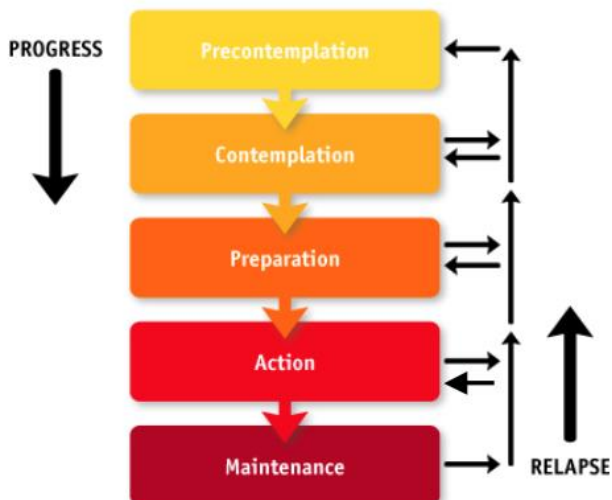
Transtheoretical Model for Behaviour Change

This model was first introduced in 1983 as a result from smoking cessation studies. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) illustrates how behaviour changes overtime through six stages:

- 1) **Precontemplation** – individuals are unaware of the need to change behaviour and have no intention of changing
- 2) **Contemplation** – individuals recognize the importance of behaviour change and are committed to taking action to change a behaviour in the next six months
- 3) **Preparation** – individuals are planning to change behaviour and are committed to following through
- 4) **Action** – individuals are implementing their plan and making behaviour modifications, typically for less than six months
- 5) **Maintenance** – individuals' changed behaviours become established in their daily life, typically for more than six months
- 6) **Termination** – individuals are 100% self-efficacious in engaging in the new behaviours and have no temptation to relapse

It's never too late to make a change. Set a goal, plan, and make it happen! You can do it!

Source: https://canada.humankinetics.com/blogs/excerpt/the-transtheoretical-model-and-sport-psychology?srsltid=AfmBOoqzbn_7xXQIJ9AHM0MQmPrVapFYU7i0R7Xy_0UQrLiamYLnWW1F



REFLECTION

Reflecting on the previous year can be a valuable starting point for setting meaningful goals for the new year ahead. Please respond to the following prompts:

List **FIVE** good things that happened to you in the past year.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List **THREE** challenges you have overcome during the past year.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down the memories that have sparked joy this past year.

GOALS FOR 2025

Whether it is in the area of fitness, travel, healthy eating, improving sleep, social events, etc. it is important to **set goals that are meaningful** to you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



**REMINDER
NO CLASSES**

Monday, February 17, 2025

DUE TO FAMILY DAY