



# Torch News

Senior Week March 18 - 24



## NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES WEEK

### What is National Senior Week

- National Senior Games Week promotes awareness of local, state and national Senior Games organizations and their positive impacts on participants and communities. This celebration advocates for support of Senior Games organizations and encourages people aged 50+ to get active and involved in sports for their health and well-being.
- Senior Games offer the camaraderie and challenge of competitive sports to older adults and promote health, well-being and active aging among participants.
- It's never too late to get active and try something new. Many Senior Games participants didn't start competing in sports till their 50s, 60s, 70s or beyond.

### How to get involved for Senior Week

- Share this newsletter with other seniors.
- Check Delaware Senior Olympics Facebook page during senior week for tips and details, <https://www.facebook.com/dsogames>
- Check National Senior Games Facebook page during senior week for tips and details, <https://www.facebook.com/SeniorGames1>
- Go to National Senior games week website to learn more, <https://nsga.com/NSGWeek/>



## NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES WEEK

### **General Senior Games Facts**

- Senior Games are Olympic-style multi-sport competitions for adults ages 50-100+ that occur at the local, state and national level across the United States and in Canada.
- Over 100,000 older adults from every state and international countries participate in Senior Games each year.
- State Senior Games are independently organized and offer a variety of sports, from track and field to shuffleboard and swimming and many more.
- Senior Games events create tens of millions of dollars in economic impact each year while inspiring healthy lifestyles across generations.
- The National Senior Games Association is the national umbrella organization for Senior Games, with over 50 Member Organizations representing nearly every state and Canada.
- The National Senior Games Association hosts the biennial National Senior Games, which brings together over 11,000 athletes ages 50+ to compete in more than 20 sports. For most sports, participants must qualify at a State Senior Games in the year prior to the National Senior Games.
- The first Senior Games event, called the “Senior Olympics,” was held in Los Angeles, California, in 1969, and the movement soon spread to other states. The first National Senior Games, a championship event, took place in 1987 and is still held biennially today.

# Benefits of Physical Activity and Sports

- Regular physical activity is associated with a host of health benefits. According to the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#), these include:
  - Lower risk of eight types of cancer.
  - Lower risk of all-cause mortality.
  - Lower risk of cardiovascular disease (including heart disease and stroke).
  - Lower risk of hypertension and type 2 diabetes.
  - Lower risk of falls and fall-related injuries for older adults.
  - Reduced risk of dementia (including Alzheimer's disease).
  - Reduced anxiety and reduced risk of depression.
  - Improved sleep, physical function and quality of life.
  - Slowed or reduced weight gain, weight loss and prevention of weight regain following initial weight loss.
  - Improved bone health.
- Sports are a fun way to stay physically active and boost mental health. [Research shows](#) participation in sports is related to improved psychological well-being, reduced levels of depression, anxiety and stress, and improved social outcomes such as a sense of belonging.

## Benefits of Senior Games to Communities

- Senior Games positively impact local communities by promoting physical activity, which according to the CDC, “saves lives and dollars.” ([CDC](#))
  - Inactivity contributes to 1 in 10 premature deaths.
  - About 110,000 deaths could be prevented if US adults increased moderate-to-vigorous physical activity by even 10 minutes per day.
  - Inadequate levels of physical activity are associated with \$117 billion in annual healthcare costs.
- Intergenerational connections are a hallmark of Senior Games. Children and grandchildren get involved by cheering their family members on at competitions, providing coaching support and volunteering at games. Parents often inspire their children to compete when they age in, resulting in multiple generations of the same family playing together!
- Senior Games events create economic impact at the local, state and national level through spending by participants and their supporters on restaurants, lodging and more. Games also produce social impact through volunteerism and community programs.

## Cardiovascular Health

A [recent study](#) found;

- Male Senior Athletes have a [34-38%](#) lower prevalence of cardiovascular disease.
- Female Senior Athletes have a [41-57%](#) lower prevalence of cardiovascular disease.
- Senior athletes have [73-77%](#) lower prevalence of diabetes.

Senior Athletes are significantly more active than typical older adults.

- Exercise days/week = 4.64
- Cardio minutes/week = 335
- Strength minutes/week = 66

The Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) helps to [identify health and risk factors](#) to keep Senior Athletes in the game!

## Strength

- Grip strength of Senior Athletes is more similar to adults [at least two decades younger](#).
- Senior Athletes also function as if they were [two decades younger](#) on timed chair stands.
- Senior Track and field athletes have the greatest [leg power](#).

- Senior archers demonstrate unexpected physical skills such as the [highest typical walking](#) speed of all athletes.
- Senior athlete [swimmers](#) and [cyclists](#) appear more at risk for low bone density than other senior athletes.

# SAFE

SENIOR ATHLETE FITNESS EXAM

- Senior Athletes show lower levels of [depression, anxiety and stress](#) than typical older adults.
- The SAFE has determined variables that predict success in [cyclists](#) and [swimmers](#).

## Balance

- Senior Athletes have a significantly [lower rate of falls](#) at just over 10%.
- More challenging tests are used to accurately predict falls in this population.
- Balance training is an important aspect of sport performance and safety!

## Flexibility

- Flexibility in Senior Athletes varies [by sport](#):
- Triathletes had the best shoulder flexibility,
- Race walkers had superior hip flexibility, and
- Volleyball players demonstrated the most calf flexibility.

## Mobility

- Usual walking speed in senior athletes is more similar to that of adults in their 30's.
- Walking speeds help to identify senior athletes who have [two or more](#) chronic health conditions.
- Fast and typical walking speeds [vary](#) by sport and training approach.

*The SAFE at a Glance, 2022*