Independent Living Checklist

Choosing where to live as a senior is a big decision. Different independent living and retirement communities come with different lifestyles and day-to-day experiences. Any choice you make that will heavily influence what your life looks like for years to come must be made carefully.

To help you consider all the factors that matter most when making your decision, our independent living checklist covers the basics. Print it out before heading to visit each retirement community you have your eye on, so you're able to make the best decision for you. It's worth it.

Community Location

• Is the retirement community located close to any of your loved ones?
• Is it close to a community with cultural activities you enjoy?
• Is it located on or close to any natural beauty, so you can enjoy time outside?
• Is it located somewhere where you can easily get around via the means of transportation you prefer (e.g. easy access to public transportation, in a walkable part of town, or close to the main highways)?
• How far away is the closest medical facility?
• How far away are places you'll need to regularly visit, like grocery stores and pharmacies?

Independent Living Lifestyle

• Do they offer the amenities you'll need to stay active and healthy, like an exercise room, pool, or hiking trails?
• Be sure to check out the activity schedule. Are there activities scheduled you'd be likely to participate in?
• Talk to some of the residents about their experiences. Do their descriptions of living there make it sound like a good fit to you?
Independent Living Lifestyle (continued)

- Do the people you see around the retirement community on your visit look happy?
- Make sure to eat a meal while you're there. Is the food good? Is it reasonably healthy? Will they make meals that fit your dietary requirements?
- Are pets allowed?
- Are there plenty of spaces at the community devoted to socializing with other residents?
- Do they offer any transportation options?
- Do they have basic safety measures in place?
- Are the grounds easy to navigate and get around on?

Retirement Community Staff

- Are they forthcoming with the answers to any questions you have?
- Do they smile?
- Do they seem familiar with the basic health care needs of someone your age?
- Are you satisfied with how you see them treat other residents?
- Are there medical staff on site, or some who come to visit regularly?

Retirement Community Housing

- What types of apartments and housing options are available?
- Do they have housing options that fit your needs in terms of space, kitchen options, accessibility, etc.?
- Are the rooms clean and odorless?
- Are there patios or balconies available?
- Do the rooms have enough windows to let in natural light?
- Does the housing include appliances like a washer/dryer and dishwasher?
- Does housing include heating and A/C?
Independent Living Costs

- What is the different pricing for different housing options?
- Is the retirement community all-inclusive?
- What services are included in the cost?
- What are the billing and payment policies?
- Do they have any subsidized living options?
- Does the cost compare favorably to other retirement communities and housing options in the area?