

Low-Tech Ways to Stay in Touch with Senior Friends and Family

Check out these creative tips for staying connected with older adults through calls, letters and cards.

For many older adults, using advanced technology to connect is not preferred or not even an option. Some reasons for this include having limited or no internet access, not owning devices like smartphones, computers or tablets, and finding it difficult to navigate technology, including having a hard time troubleshooting when there are problems.

If you have an elder in your life, or anyone who doesn't like high-tech communication, connecting "the old-fashioned way" can be fun and rewarding. Check out the creative ideas below for staying in touch with low-technology.

Phone Calls

- **Set up a regular time for a call.** Agreeing on a time, whether it's once a week or once a day, will help ensure the connection is made. Plus, it's something to look forward to!
- **Help them get comfortable with their phone.** Some seniors use cell phones only for calls and may appreciate refreshers on making and answering calls.

Letters

Forget social media, emails and texting! Letters are how most older adults grew up sending messages.

- **Let them know you'll be writing so they know to look for your letters.** If the older adult goes outside to get their mail, make sure you know they have a way to do this safely.
- **Set a goal for how often you will write.** Then let the older adult know when they can expect your letters.
- **Think about who's writing to whom.** Are you and the older adult going to be pen pals? Would you like them to write you back, or do you anticipate sending only your letters? If you want it to be an exchange, find out if they are interested in that too.

- **Ask about readability.** Some older people need or prefer large print, and either hand-printed or typed letters. If you do not have access to a printer, try your best to use large, clear handwriting.
- **If you or an older adult you know are looking for a pen pal other than each other, look online for pen pal-matching platforms.** Check out our [From Pen Pal to Forever Friend](#) activity for tips on writing to a pen pal.

Cards

You don't need a special occasion to make someone's day special. Bring joy to the ordinary by sending a card celebrating some of these creative days:

- **Season changes:** Celebrate the season changes by sending cards each season.
- **Appreciation days:** Whether it is National Donut Day or Squirrel Appreciation Day, there's always something to celebrate!
- **Days in history:** Send cards to celebrate historical days.
- **Milestones:** You can share cards that celebrate milestones of other friends or members of the family. Share cards that celebrate anniversaries, graduations, pregnancies, births, birthdays, ceremonies, holidays and more.
- **Fun holidays:** There are many interesting and quirky holidays that can be celebrated such as April Fool's Day, Earth Day or Groundhog Day.
- **Thinking of you:** There's something very special about being reminded you're on someone's mind.

Additional Resources:

If you or a senior you know would like to use technology but face barriers, you can locate low-cost internet services and computer options in your area by visiting [Older Adults Technology Services \(OATS\)](#).

For information on staying connected with video chat, visit our [How to Video Chat resource](#).