



5 Senior-Friendly Equipment Options That Won't Break Your Budget

Creative exercise programming has become very popular in senior living, and with good reason. If you want to help your residents live exceptionally well, you need a well-rounded fitness program as part of your community's offerings. For many older communities, robust fitness-related amenities were an afterthought in the early building design, and the cost to refurbish space is sometimes prohibitive. So here's a list of five senior-friendly exercise equipment options that you can use to enhance your programming without breaking the bank.

Balance Pad – These handy foam squares are portable and safe tools to use for balance training with residents at a variety of fitness levels. You can buy enough to support an entire class, or just one or two to add to your exercise room. You can expect to pay \$50–\$60 per pad.

Mat Table – Mat tables have become a must-have in new fitness centers as they provide a safe and effective surface on which members can sit to stretch and try new core-strengthening exercises without having to get up and down off the floor. They range in size and height from the floor; upholstery colors vary as well. The most common size is 4ft by 7ft and typically costs \$600–\$900.

Wii Fit – Wii bowling and golf are common staples in senior living programming, but we have found a fun and effective way of incorporating additional balance-training opportunities using the Wii Fit. The balance drills, yoga exercises, hula hooping, snowboarding, and slalom courses can add an element of technology and fun to your community's fall-prevention efforts. The programs hone in on helping participants challenge their center of gravity and improve their spatial awareness. At the typical retail price of \$90, you can't go wrong with this fun complement of exercises to your balance and fall-prevention programming.

Weighted Balls – You might think your collection of dumbbells is sufficient for resistance exercise, particularly in a class setting. But these small weighted balls have added a new dimension to our classes in senior living communities. They can be easier to grip than a dumbbell and they're more forgiving if you drop one. We've found that canvas or cloth baskets work well for storing them. Prices range from \$15 for a 2-lb. set to \$28 for a 6-lb. set.

Resistance Chair – We found this exercise chair system several years ago, and we haven't stopped singing its praises. We use the chair as a standalone piece and in group fitness classes. It's a fabulous upgrade from traditional multipurpose-room chairs with arms and too much cushion. The built-in band system allows for easy transition from one exercise to the next, and the rear step makes a positive addition for higher-intensity classes that incorporate both seated and standing exercise. One note of caution about this product: you should expect to budget for replacement seats every three to four years as they do crack and wear over time. The resistance chair can sometimes be found on Amazon.com or Overstock.com with free shipping. The typical retail price is \$280 per chair.

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