



Types of Technology in Aged Care: Gaming Technology

Aged care services are increasingly embracing innovative digital technologies to improve the care experiences of older people and to enable care workers to do more, even with fewer resources (e.g., staff, financial). This information sheet on gaming technology is part of a series covering types of technology currently used in aged care. These information sheets are available on the [ARIIA website](https://www.ariia.org.au).

What is gaming?

A game is a system that involves different components such as rules, players, competition, and opponents. Games are traditionally used for entertainment purposes but can also be used for education and healthcare. Gaming can include traditional board games or may involve more advanced electronic devices that can be interacted with (e.g., computer, tablet, gaming console). [1] Aged care services can use gaming technologies to engage older adults in balance and strength training (e.g., Wii Fit Plus).



How is gaming used in aged care?

Most older adults engage in gaming for health-related reasons. Many older Australians believe that playing video games can increase mental stimulation, physical functioning, and improve social connectedness. [2] A common type of electronic gaming used in aged care settings are exercise video games (often referred to as exergames). Games may be used in aged care to provide entertainment, foster social engagement, and promote opportunities for exercise and/or cognitive stimulation.

References

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2. Aged Care Guide. Seniors game to keep minds active [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2023 Feb 21]. Available from: <https://www.agedcareguide.com.au/talking-aged-care/seniors-game-to-keep-minds-active>
3. ACH Group. 5 benefits of playing video games [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2023 Feb 21]. Available from: <https://achgroup.org.au/blog/5-benefits-of-playing-video-games/>

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ARIIA was established as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, set up to lead the advancement of the aged care workforce capability by promoting and facilitating innovation and research to improve the quality of aged care for all Australians.

How can gaming benefit the aged care sector?

Gaming can be beneficial for older adults, and may result in improvements in:

- Spatial navigation, perceptions, and memory
- Mobility and balance
- Mental wellbeing
- Social connectedness. [3]

Examples of innovative gaming technology in aged care

Some gaming technologies include:

- **Obie:** An interactive gaming console designed specifically for older people. The built in projector allows any surface to be used to play and can be used to project games onto the floor to work on balance and stepping skills.
- **Wii Fit Plus:** An enhanced version of the original Wii Fit software that can be used to tailor exercises, balance games, and fitness activities to an individual.

