

# 7 Tips for Choosing the Right Nursing Home: Finding Mom's Next Grand Adventure

*From Hollywood Stars to 5-Star Communities: Ensuring Mom's Golden Years Truly Shine!"*

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*Dan Stockdale*

right nursing home for Mom can feel a bit like trying to snag the hottest ticket in town. And just like planning a grand vacation, it's all about making sure she has the best pad, enjoys tasty meals, and has some pretty rad neighbors. Here are seven tips to make sure Mom's next chapter is a 5-Star adventure:

1. "Yelp" It Out: Okay, we aren't exactly suggesting Yelp, but go online! Does the nursing home have raving reviews about their homemade banana pudding on Tuesdays? Maybe their garden reminds someone of Biltmore Estate? Dive into those reviews and find the hidden gems! ...and

read them closely to be sure they are posted by real family members who emphasize actual experiences.

2. Take a Tour... or Three: Envision this as scoping out a hotel. Is the environment similar or better than mom's current home? Will she be comfortable? Look at the activities and events calendars; if mom is an avid cribbage player and you see card games on the list of favorite events, this may be a good match. But if bingo is the most adventurous activity listed and mom got her fill of bingo over the years on her trips to Vegas, it may be time for you to B I N ...GO! to the next community to tour.

3. Licenses & Accolades: Does the facility have more stars than the Hollywood Walk of Fame? If they're boasting their achievements, there's a good chance mom will be treated like the superstar she is! Communities are typically rated on a 5-Star system which takes staffing, quality of care, and compliance with regulations into consideration. Don't be fooled, star ratings aren't everything. But they are another piece of information to consider in the decision process.

4. Ratio Schmatio: Yes, the staff-to-resident ratio is important, and it is required to be posted in

the lobby each day. But more than numbers, see if the staff have that special sparkle in their eye and smile on their face. Can you imagine them orchestrating an impromptu sing-along or setting up a spontaneous fashion show? Do they walk with purpose and passion, or do they amble down the hall with a preoccupied gaze?

5. Be a Social Butterfly: Chat up the current residents. Ask them about the staff, the food and care. Who knows, mom might end up having afternoon tea with a former Broadway dancer or a retired pirate (or at least someone with some great tall tales).

6. Amenities Galore: Think of this like scouting out the best resort for Mom. Does it have a spa (aka a lovely bath service)? Check out the bathrooms and spa / bath areas. Is there a daily "Happy Hour" (juice counts)? And what's their policy on room service? If mom gets the munchies at 3am, what are her choices?

7. Penny for Your Thoughts: Okay, maybe more than a penny. Understand the costs. Are you paying privately or are you relying on government assistance for a portion of the expense? Has mom been planning for retirement her whole life or is she a free-spirit who is pulling it all together as she goes?

In all honesty, choosing a community is one of those decisions in life that has its gravity. But it's also an opportunity for a fresh start, new friends and different adventures. Approach it with love, a dash of humor, and the intent to make it the best grand adventure she's ever been on. Happy hunting, and may the odds be ever in your favor!



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