

Searching for Health Information Online

An Internet Course for Older Adults

from the National Institute on Aging



Glossary of Computer and Internet Terms for Older Adults

Students may use this alphabetized list of 37 basic computer and Internet terms as a reference.



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

1 Address Box

A narrow, rectangular box in the browser window where you can type in a web address. Typing in the web address in the address box and hitting Enter on the keyboard will take you to a website.

Address Box



Web Address (URL)



2 Back Arrow

This arrow, often green, is found at the top of most browsers. When you click on the back arrow, it takes you back – in order – through all of the web pages you’ve seen. (Sometimes called the back button.)



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

3 Browse

To explore a website or a number of websites by scanning and reading information.

4 Browser

Software, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, used to find information on the Web. The most visible part of a browser sits at the top of the computer screen, above the web page.

Browser



5 Button

Small box that looks like it's being depressed when you select it. Buttons can turn on (and turn off) many types of functions on the Internet.



6 Clicking

Pressing and releasing a button on a mouse to select or activate the area on the screen where the cursor is pointing. Usually, you click on the left side of the mouse (called a left click). For more advanced functions, you click on the right side of the mouse (called a right click).



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

7 Computer or CPU (central processing unit)

The main part, or “brains” of a computer. The CPU interprets and carries out program instructions.



8 Cursor

A small image on the screen indicating where you are pointing; the mouse controls the movements of the cursor. The cursor can appear in different forms, including:



An arrow, which indicates where you are positioned on the screen.



An I-beam, often blinking, which marks a place on the screen where you can enter or select text.



A pointing hand, which indicates that you are hovering over a link. (See **Link**.)



An hourglass, which indicates that the computer is doing a task. You must wait until it disappears before you can proceed.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

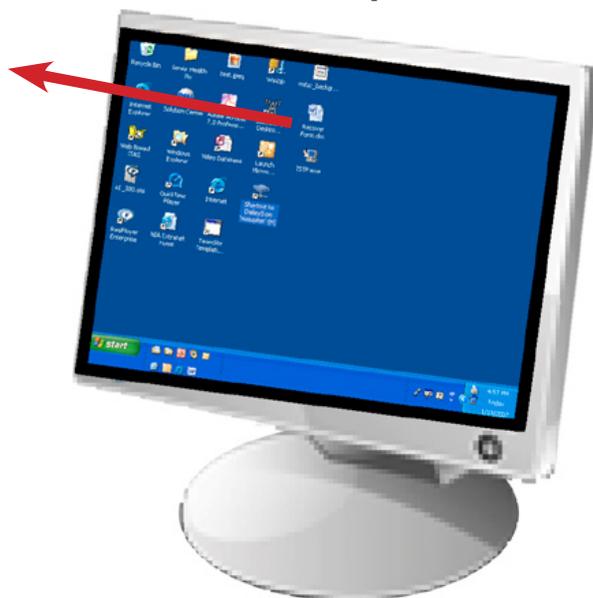
9 Desktop

The information that appears on the computer soon after the computer is turned on. The desktop contains a number of icons, or images, that you can click on to start programs. (See **icon**.)



Icon

Desktop Screen



10 Dialog Box

A special box that appears when the computer needs additional information in order to carry out a task. This dialog box appears in a quiz on the NIHSeniorHealth website whenever you try to advance to the next quiz question without answering the current one. (You must click on "ok" to have a dialog box disappear.)

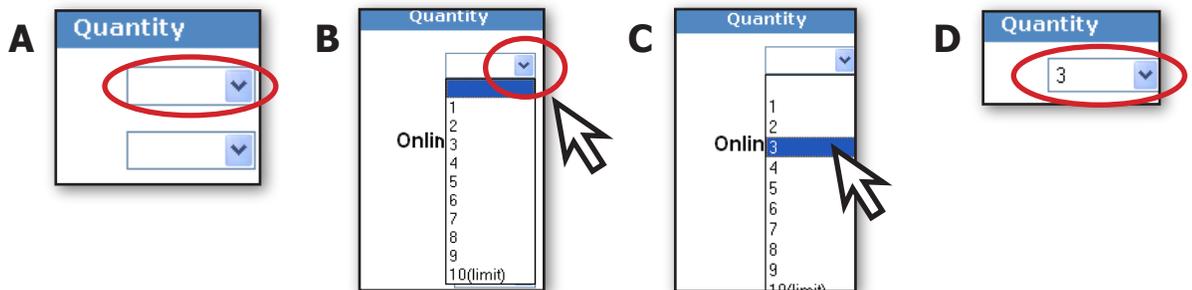


COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

11 Drop Down List

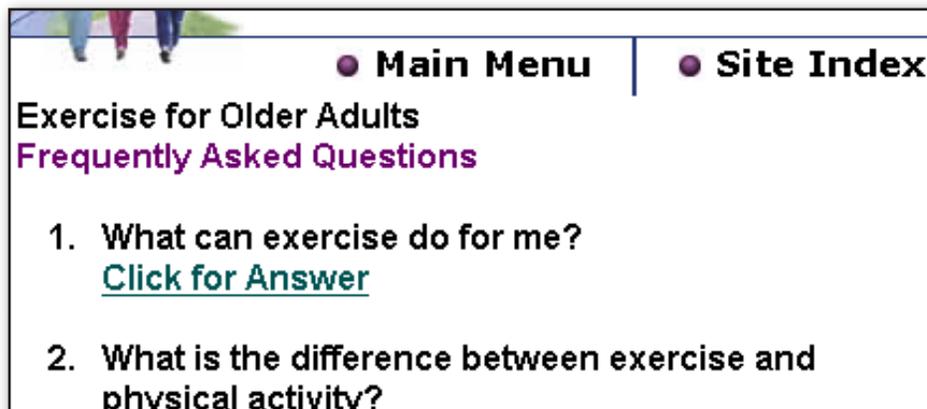
A list of items from which you can make selections.

- A. When you first see a box containing a drop down list, the box will be empty or may display only a single item.
- B. To see a list of choices, left click on the arrow in the box and hold. The list of choices will display above or below the box.
- C. Keeping your left index finger pressed on the mouse, move the cursor to the desired choice (In this case, a quantity of 3 booklets).
- D. Release your left index finger from the mouse, and your selection will appear in the box. The full list of choices will disappear.



12 FAQs

Stands for **F**requently **A**sksed **Q**uestions. These are commonly asked questions and answers that appear on many websites.



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

13 Forward Arrow

This arrow is present at the top of most browsers. When you click on the forward arrow, it takes you forward to a page you just left and is opposite in direction from pages the back arrow takes you through. When the arrow is gray, the forward function is inactive.



14 Go Online

To go on the Internet.

15 Hardware

The physical parts of a computer system.

16 Home Page

The first thing you see when you come to a website, or the opening page of a website. It provides information about the site and directs you to other pages on the site.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

17 Icon

A small picture or image representing a command (such as print), a file, or a program. When you click on an icon, you start a command, open a file, or launch a program.



18 The Internet

A vast, international collection of computer networks that transfers information. A combination of the words international and network. Websites and e-mail are part of the Internet.

19 Keyboard

The keys that operate the computer, very much like a typewriter, with extra keys for special functions.

20 Link (or hyperlink)

A highlighted or underlined feature on a web page that, when clicked, will take you to another web page. A link most often appears as underlined words or an image.

One sure way to tell if something is a link or not: Whenever your cursor turns into a pointing hand, the image or word you are pointing to is a link.



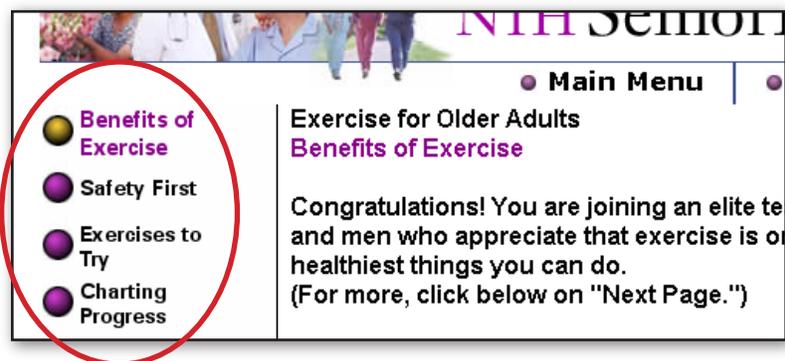
COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

21 Log On

To gain access to a computer system or to a page on a website by entering a password or user ID.

22 Menu

A list of options, or topics, on a website that users can choose from.



23 Monitor

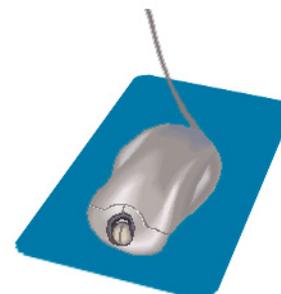
The part of a computer system that contains the computer screen, where information is displayed.



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

24 Mouse

A small hand-held device that controls the position of the cursor on the computer screen. Movements of the mouse correspond to movements of the cursor. (See **Cursor**.)



25 Mouse Pad

The pad on which you move the mouse.

26 Navigate

To move through a website or through various websites.

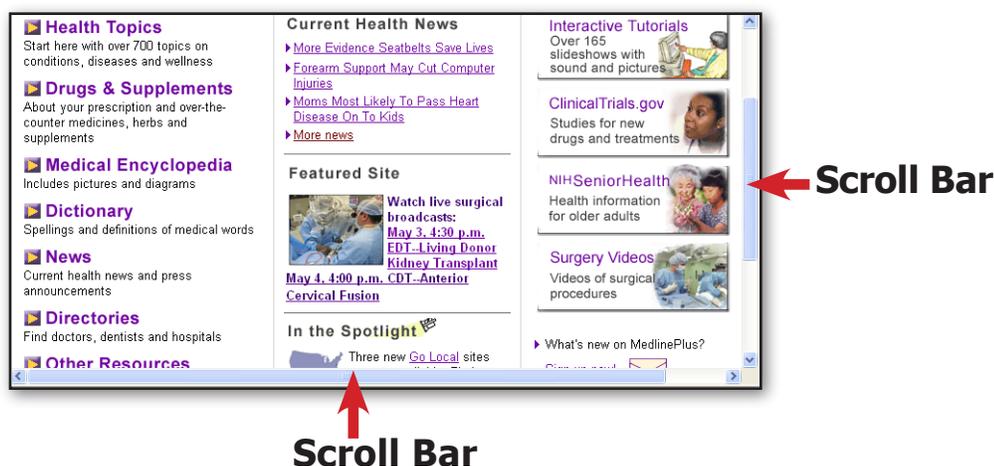
27 Scroll

To move text or other information on a computer screen up, down, or sideways, with new information appearing as the old disappears.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

28 Scroll Bar

A narrow, rectangular bar on the right edge and bottom edge of a web page that lets you move the page to see more of the information it contains. The scroll bar on the right moves the web page up and down, and the scroll bar on the bottom moves the web page right and left.



29 Search Box

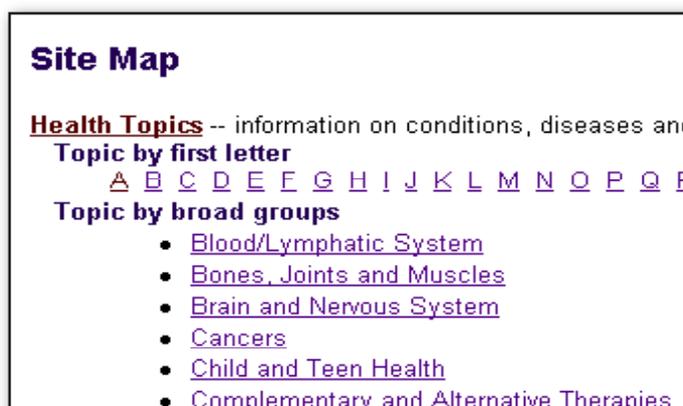
A small rectangular blank space on a web page where you can type in a word or phrase to look for information. Clicking on the button next to the search box (or hitting the Enter key on the keyboard) will take you to a page where that information is located.



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

30 Site Map

A list of the contents on a website, similar to an index in a book. A link to the site map is usually found at the top or bottom of the home page.



31 Software

The instructions that tell the computer and computer networks what to do. Software is installed inside the computer.

32 Speakers

Devices that allow you to hear sound from the computer.



COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

33 Surf the Net

To explore various websites on the Internet.

34 Web Address or URL

The address for a website. (URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator.)

U.S.-based web addresses usually start with the letters www (for World Wide Web) and end with a dot followed by letters that indicate the type of website it is:

- .com** = commercial enterprise or business
- .org** = non-profit organization
- .edu** = educational institution
- .gov** = government agency
- .mil** = military agency
- .net** = another ending for a commercial website

On the Internet, you get to a website by typing in the web address (or URL) into the address box of the browser. For example, to get to the website of the National Institute on Aging (NIA), a Federal agency, you would type www.nia.nih.gov in the address box.

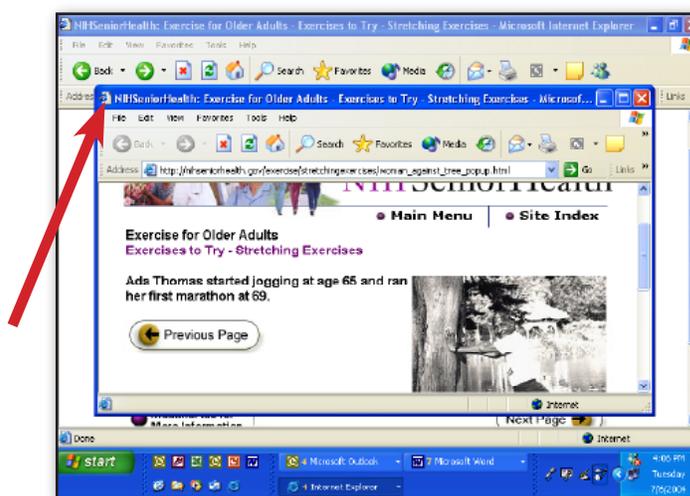
35 Website

A location on the World Wide Web (and Internet) that contains information about a specific topic. A website usually contains multiple pages with different types of information about the topic.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

36 Window

A framed area of a computer screen that appears in front of the web page. Sometimes the appearance of a window means that you have entered another website. At other times, it means you may still be on the same website.



37 The World Wide Web

Also known as the Web, it is a system that lets you access information on the Internet. People often use the term *Web* to refer to the *Internet*, but they are not exactly the same thing. The World Wide Web operates *over* the Internet, and it is the most widely used part of the Internet.