

Peer recommended reads for 2026: have some fun with fiction



Looking for a fun book to relax with? Members of LiveUp's Ageing Well Advisory Group (AWAG) have provided a list of their top picks for 2026.

About AWAG

The Ageing Well Advisory Group (AWAG) played an important role in helping LiveUp stay centred around its primary audience – you. AWAG advised LiveUp by representing the voices of older people in Australia. The group included 14 members aged between 45 and 85, with people from every state in Australia. They helped improve LiveUp resources by sharing their feedback.

LiveUp's mission is to be an evidence-based resource for older adults. A key part of this is working with people in the community. We want to be led by your lived experience. This helps us share resources that are useful, practical, and relevant.

How does LiveUp continue this work today? We now gather feedback through surveys that reach many more older people across Australia. This approach builds on the strong foundations AWAG created and allows even more voices to be heard.

About AWAG's recommended books

These book recommendations come *from* older readers, *for* older readers.

The overall list of recommendations provided by AWAG's members covers a broad range of genres and themes. This article focuses on a few of the easier reads.

Relax with some cozy murder mysteries, crime fiction, and love stories.

Books to relax with: mystery, crime fiction, and love stories

Looking to unwind with something fun and fictional? AWAG has you covered with these easy, enjoyable reads:

1. **The Thursday Murder Club** by Richard Osman
This cozy murder mystery follows 4 unlikely friends in a retirement village. Together, they solve real-life crimes.
2. **Alex Cross Must Die** by James Patterson
In this piece of crime fiction, an American Airlines plane explodes in the sky. Detectives Alex Cross and John Sampson are first on the scene.
3. **The Hypnotists Love Story** by Liane Moriarty
This one's a romantic mystery. Ellen, a hypnotherapist, starts dating a man who's being stalked by his ex-girlfriend Saskia. Intrigued, Ellen wants to meet Saskia. Little does she know, she already has.
– *'A very easy, relaxing read.'*
4. **James** by Percival Everett
James tells the story of *Huckleberry Finn* from Jim's perspective. When Jim learns he will be sold and separated from his family, he runs away and meets Huck, who has faked his own death. Together, they set off on a dangerous journey down the Mississippi River.
5. **Trespass** by Louise Kennedy
Trespass is a forbidden love story. It's set during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. A young Catholic teacher, Cushla, begins an affair with a Protestant barrister named Michael.
– *'Believable and compelling.'*

Reading matters for healthy ageing

Moving more is one of the best things you can do for your brain and overall health. But the activities you do to relax while sitting down also have an impact.

Research from the University of South Australia shows sitting activities that encourage mental or social engagement boost brain health in older adults. This includes hobbies like reading or chatting with friends. On the other hand, passive habits like TV can harm brain health.

So, consider swapping some screen time for a book or conversation – to protect your brain in the long run.

Learn more about how and why to keep reading as you age

Learning can be leisurely

Reading something thought-provoking and engaging is a great way to challenge your brain. Doing so regularly helps keep you mentally active and healthy as you age.

Interested in books to help you keep learning and expanding your mind? Check out AWAG's top picks for:

- [*Ageing science and self-help*](#)
- [*Historical stories and contemporary Australian voices*](#)



Find a book club: connect with your community today

A love of literature can help you connect with others through shared interests and book clubs.

Use LiveUp's [social activities finder](#) to discover book clubs near you. You might find:

- Local library book clubs
- Informal book discussion groups
- Other community groups that suit your interests

If you need more help finding a social group, get in touch with one of our helpful site navigators on **1800 951 971**.

CONTACT US

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LiveUp is a healthy ageing initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.