



Capital Area Parkinson's Society

January 2015 Newsletter

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

www.capitalareaparkinsons.org

Staying Safe and Grounded: Tips to Prevent Falls at Home and Around Town

Stephanie Stephens, Neurology Now, December/January, 2014 – Volume 10, Issue 6

Jerry Lewis did it right, but most of us don't want to do it at all. Falling is no laughing matter. And people with neurological problems are at greater risk. Even elderly patients with mild to moderate neurological impairments have a three times higher incidence of falls than people without neurological challenges, according to a 2013 study in the journal *British Medical Journal Open*. In its 2008 guideline for assessing patients for risk of falls, the American Academy of Neurology cited increased risks for falls among people diagnosed with stroke, dementia, and gait and balance disorders. Patients with Parkinson's disease, peripheral neuropathy, lower extremity weakness, sensory loss, and substantial vision loss also have a higher risk of falling, the authors of the guideline wrote.

TIPS TO PREVENT FALLS:

1. Consult your doctor. When a person falls two or more times within a year or has an injury caused by a fall, they probably need an evaluation by a doctor, says geriatrician Jane Mahoney, MD, a professor of medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.
2. Maintain good vision. Vision problems can increase your risk for falls. Make sure your prescriptions for glasses and contacts are up-to-date, and schedule an annual eye checkup.
3. Exercise regularly. The old adage, "Use it or lose it," holds true for preventing falls.
4. Take stock of your medications. Certain medications can cause dizziness or drowsiness and can affect balance. Make sure your pharmacist, primary care provider, and other specialists

have a complete list of all your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Ask them to identify medications that may cause drowsiness and dizziness, and have them recommend the safest options for you.

5. Do a home assessment. Ask your doctor to recommend a physical or occupational therapist to evaluate your home for falling risks.

OUTDOORS

- Clear all steps and sidewalks of debris, clutter, and slick surfaces.
- Install textured surfaces on stairs, walkways, porches, and decks; put railings on both sides.
- Make sure doorways have low thresholds.
- Install or update outdoor lighting on entrances and in other high-traffic areas.
- Position the mailbox within easy reach.

INDOORS

- Use non-skid floor wax.
- Remove scatter rugs from tops of stairways and high-traffic areas.
- Secure all rugs so they don't slip and so feet can't "get under" a corner.
- Don't leave clothes, shoes, and bags on the floor.
- Paint a contrasting color on top edges of steps.
- Evaluate all rooms for sufficient, uniform lighting, including lights at tops and bottoms of stairs.
- Designate a special place for a first-aid kit and emergency phone numbers.
- Consider wearing an alarm device that alerts another person when you've taken a fall.

BATHROOM

- Install secure grab bars to help get in and out of the tub and shower safely.
- Clean off soap scum and use non-slip strips on tub and shower floors.
- Use adjustable-height shower heads.
- Secure bath mats so they can't slip.

KITCHEN

- Store frequently used items within easy reach to avoid climbing.
- If you must climb, use a quality, solid step stool with a top bar to hold onto.

BEDROOM

- Keep a lamp and telephone by the bed.
- Place nightlights along paths you take to and from the bed. ■



NEW

**Power for Parkinson's
Tai Chi Class**

Begins January 5, 2015, every Monday at 1:00 p.m.
N'Caliete, 2111 Sam Bass Road, Round Rock, TX.
No sign up required! It's FREE!

What is YOUR New Year's resolution?

Happy NEW YEAR

Clean each closet, cabinet or drawer and give away what I don't use to Goodwill, or save as special item as a memory, or sell it.
—Linda Oncken

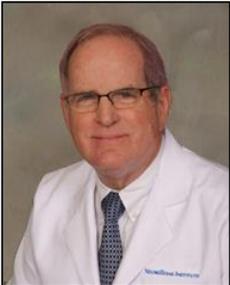
In 2015 I resolve to:

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January Membership Meeting

Saturday, January 17 ■ 2:00 p.m.
Medical Office Building, St. David's Medical Center
5th Floor Conference Room, 3000 N. IH-35



Dr. Thomas Hill will be speaking this month about “Parkinson’s and You.” Trained at the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Hill is a local movement disorder specialist and long-time friend of CAPS. This lively, interactive session will provide a great opportunity to ask questions related to PD.

A potluck will follow. All contributions are appreciated.