Sometimes I wish the world was lined with grab bars! As a home care physical therapist, I deal with the prevention of falls during every visit I make. Unfortunately, the visits often occur after a fall and the injury has already happened. Needless to say, it is these folks who are my more captive audiences.

Falls are the leading cause of death and hospitalization in the United States in people age 65 and older. The cost is more than $16 million in direct medical expenses. This is serious business. Most people think the most common place falls occur is in the bathroom. Yes, the bathroom is a dangerous place, but it is second on the list. The first is the bedroom at the bedside as people awaken and are trying to get to the bathroom. Keep the path to the bathroom clear of clutter and the nightlight shining. This is NOT the place for small rugs. Use your assistive device if you have been advised to do so. Have your “sensible slippers” at your bedside and ready to go. Once you get to the bathroom, be sure to turn the light on. Make sure rugs are non-skid and grab bars are well placed. In the shower, install even more grab bars and have a non-skid surface on the floor.

Falls are often caused by a combination of circumstances. Some we can control, and others we cannot. Things like taking five or more medications or taking a new medication can increase the risk of falls. Any existing medical issues, such as arthritis, low blood pressure, vertigo, vision problems or incontinence, can contribute. One rather common cause we can often control is the loss of strength in muscles used to maintain balance, especially in the ankles and core. Yes – I am saying that a sedentary lifestyle can contribute to a higher risk of falls. Exercise regularly.

One of my favorite more recent studies about falls involved placing “spy” cameras in the homes of 100 assisted living residents. When the films were analyzed, the leading cause of falls identified was people not using the walkers, wheelchairs, canes and braces they were prescribed.

Falling is NOT a normal part of aging. Take control of your environment and make changes to reduce falls. The CDC and AARP publish information on how to successfully fall-proof your residence. Get your vision checked, your medications reviewed and EXERCISE! Feel free to further my quest to line the world with grab bars.
Preparing your Advance Directive for Healthcare

May 13 and June 10 • 12-12:45 p.m. • Glover Park on the Marietta Square

**Registration required. Call 770-956-STAR (7827) to register.**

The Benefits of Physical Activity

Exercise is a well-understood factor in living a healthy lifestyle, but what kinds of activity should people be aiming to achieve? Are all exercises created equally? Find out how to optimize your lifestyle with answers to common misconceptions and questions about physical activity.

In case of inclement weather, all events will be moved to the Lawrence Street Recreation Center (510 Lawrence Street, Marietta, GA 30060).

June 12 • 12-12:30 p.m. • Glover Park on the Marietta Square

Cost: $3,699 per person, double occupancy

Be Your Best You: Inside & Out

Every day is an opportunity to give our best, to move out of our comfort zone and be all we can be! Join us for a motivational program presented by two local celebrities – Tara Hill-Hanover, celebrity hair and makeup artist for CNN, and Sheila Frey, an image consultant and personal shopper extraordinaire. Each speaker will provide information that will help you make your next act in the stages of life, your best yet!

Tuesday, May 13 • KSU Center for Continuing Education
3333 Busbee Drive • Kennesaw, GA

Wednesday, May 15 • Indian Hills Country Club
4001 Clubland Drive • Marietta, GA

Cost: $3,699 per person, double occupancy

The Benefits of Physical Activity

June 12 • 12-12:30 p.m. • Glover Park on the Marietta Square

In case of inclement weather, all events will be moved to the Lawrence Street Recreation Center (510 Lawrence Street, Marietta, GA 30060).

Cost: $3,699 per person, double occupancy

Speaking about Wellness

June 10 • 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Glover Park on the Marietta Square

Cost: $3,699 per person, double occupancy

Well★Screen

Well★Screen provides easy, low-cost access to common health screenings:

- Comprehensive Metabolic Panel - $20
- Hemoglobin A1C - $25
- Lipid Panel - $25 (GLC members receive one free Lipid Panel with coupon)
- Personal Wellness Profile - $20
- Prostate Specific Antigen Test - $30 (physician’s order required)
- Thyroid Screening - $20

Call 770-956-STAR (7827) to locate a screening near you.

Pre-registration and pre-payment are required.

For more information or to register for an event, please call 770-956-STAR (7827).

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