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Rehab Across the LifeSpan

Home Assessment

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I performed a home assessment for my Grandmother who is 76 years of age. About two years ago my Grandmother had severe osteoporosis due to a side effect from a medication taken for a different need. This ended up with her having a total of 9 spinal compression fractures within 2 months. Through all of this she was in a lot of pain and was unable to lay flat, sleep in her bed, cook meals, dress and do any household cleaning. This led to her becoming very weak and deconditioned. She is now doing much better without pain and is now able to do everything again. However, she is not able to do any activity for long periods of time due to weakness and muscle fatigue.

Upon assessing her home there were many areas that have been changed. The basement steps have railings on both sides, there are night lights in each room allowing safety during the night, the bathroom has non-slip stickers on the floor of the tub, a shower chair and a hand railing in the shower and next to the toilet. However, there were just a few things that are unsafe in the home. One being that there is a rug at the front door that gets easily caught in the door making for a tripping hazard. Another thing that I saw was that in her bedroom the chair that she uses to sit on to put on her socks has wheels. This is a safety concern because of loss of support and ability to catch herself if the chair moves and the concern is increased due to her weakness and decreased ROM in her left leg to do an injury in her 20's. She does have hand railings on both sides of the basement steps however, the laundry room is in the basement so she has to

carry the laundry up and down the steps increasing the risk of falling due to the weight and size of the full laundry basket and no longer able to use both hands on the railings.

Some solutions I would advise to reduce risk of falling and increasing safety at home would begin with removing the rug from the front door. I would also replace the chair in her bedroom with a chair that does not have wheels so that it will not move out from underneath her when putting on her socks. Recommending that she uses a sock assist device and a shoe horn. This will allow her to sit up tall increasing her support and balance when putting on her socks and shoes. This will also reduce stress on her old injury on her left leg. The last area to change would be the laundry. First some inexpensive changes, I would recommend using her laundry shoot this would eliminate the need for her to carry a full laundry basket down the steps. Having a hanging rack or table in the laundry room would allow her to carry less clothes up at a time. Using a smaller basket would reduce the weight and size of the basket allowing free movement with less struggle. I would also recommend that when she gets close to the top of the steps she sets the basket on the floor pushing it forward so that she is not carrying the laundry basket when the hand railings end. A more expensive change would be to have someone come in to move the laundry room up to the first floor. This would completely take away the need to carry heavy laundry baskets at all. As dirty laundry could be placed in the laundry room right away, cleaned, and even put away and kept in the same room or easily walked and put away in her bedroom.