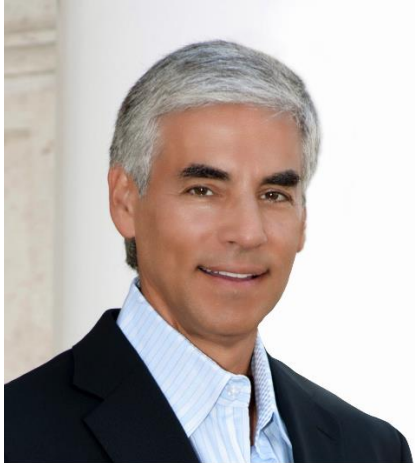


Tips for Living Independently at Home Longer

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It's no secret that 85% of people want to remain living independently at home as opposed to having to move to an Assisted Living Facility or a Nursing Home. But, many do not plan to make sure their greatest desires come to fruition. One of the biggest reasons this doesn't happen is that no plans are put in place to make sure that when a health issue arises that you have put plans in place to make sure your wishes are carried out. This is similar to putting in place legal documents that speak for you if you cannot. What you want to avoid is Crisis management of your situation. In the midst of a health crisis for you or a spouse, you don't want to start calling around to home care agencies and learn what they offer, how much it costs, what they can and can't do for your situation. Ideally you would pick up the phone and boom, the already discussed care and caregivers would show up at your door and get right to work, making your life easier and taking away the stress of what you need done. Our case manager would help you adjust the care as the situation evolves but you will already have the tough decisions out of the way.

The second pitfall is not getting help soon enough. Understanding the importance of transferring the risk to an agency is critical. Are you doing the following things to prove your independence? Struggling to stand at the stove, carrying in the groceries, driving unsafely with poor vision and slow reactions, risking getting in and out of a slippery tub, reaching or bending for things, walking down the hallway grabbing for pieces of molding to keep you upright, eating unhealthy for your situation, and the list goes on. What I hope people will see is that by getting a little help sooner than later and transferring the risk to someone else prevents the fall or accident that keeps you from staying independent. That blink of an eye instant that you look back and say I wish I had.... And now I have no choice.

Another pitfall is, if you are providing care for a loved one, is to not accept any help or take a break from caregiving. Taking a break helps you recharge your batteries and allows you to be a better, more tolerant, caregiver. Especially, if you are caring for a loved one with Dementia. Statistics show that caregivers die from stress-related illnesses before the one they are caring for does.

Pitfall: Believing that you are the only one that can provide the care the way your loved one needs it. In actuality the brain builds new neuropathways when it needs to work and think in a different way. So this can be good for your loved one as they communicate with someone other than you.

Running out for an hour and worrying that your loved one will be alright does neither of you any good...Does not reduce your stress or give you any ME time. You deserve it and you need it.

Often times we see one physically challenged spouse trying to help the other. They often times don't have the training or physical skills to handle the job and end up putting them both at risk. We have seen too many situations where one spouse fell on the other in the shower and both were injured. Issues with not understanding the correct protocol of the medication schedule are serious concerns.

Another huge area of concern is with the ability to drive safely. You can have your driving assessed without it being reported to the DMV and they can work with you on enhancing your driving skills. Or, you can allow someone else to drive.

Lastly a critical issue to protecting your financial assets is to know who you have allowed to provide care in your home. If a caregiver is not employed by an agency as a W2 employee, they most likely are independent contractors. The pitfalls are, they sue you for any injuries they say happened on your property or helping you, hence you could be on the hook for their medical bills and lost wages. You could owe them for their social security taxes you never paid them, if they are found to be employees by the IRS. No coverage for theft if things go missing. No one watching over them to make sure they don't get put on any of your legal documents or get too involved in your personal affairs.

Too many caregivers start to feel entitled and too important, just because you become reliant on them for your care. It is an easy line to cross and one that is best handled by impartial supervision to see that your wishes are being professionally carried out.

Comfort Keepers has designed our "Will Call" program to avoid these pitfalls, so you can get your questions answered, and we can be ready to go when you need us.

Avoid Crisis Management!

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Call us at 941-921-4747 to plan your needs.