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# **STOP FALLS BEFORE THEY START**

## **A DOZEN TIPS TO KEEP YOU ON YOUR FEET**

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Joel J. Digris received his Master of Science degree in Physical Therapy from Arcadia University in 1997. Joel was born and raised in Schuylkill County, and is blessed with a beautiful wife and four beautiful daughters. As a physical therapist, Joel works with people to help them regain the joy in life that is missing due to pain, weakness, dizziness, falls. As a business owner, Joel has an immeasurable desire to excel in serving the community and the patients of [Achieva Rehab](http://www.achieva-rehab.com).

Thank you for reading our report. I sincerely hope this is a good start to bringing back the joy into your life. Developing trust with your healthcare team is important. Because of this, I want to continue to send you information that we feel can guide you to reduced discomfort as you go forward and how a qualified physical therapist can help fast track that process. Please never hesitate to contact me...I am on duty 24/7.

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## FALL RISK



### THE ONLY OPTION IS FALL PREVENTION

To protect yourself from the unnecessary pain and inconvenience that can be caused by a fall, here are a few steps you can take for **fall prevention.**

#### **Re-arrange your home to remove fall risks.**

One of the first and easiest things you can do is go through your house and look for anything that might put you at risk of a fall. This likely includes rugs (particularly if they ever bunch up at points), pieces of furniture in spots that block your ability to walk through a room, and any other low-to-the-ground items positioned somewhere that would be easy for you to walk into without seeing. Remove the offending items or re-arrange your rooms (with help) as needed to minimize your fall risk. And stay on top of this, don't let clutter start to fill those spaces in a month or two and put you right back at risk.



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#### **Install grab bars in the bathroom.**

Bathrooms are one of the most dangerous places in the house. The floor often gets slippery, the space tends to be tight and crowded, and stepping in and out of the bathtub becomes a risky experience with age. One thing you can do to make the space safer is install grab bars. You won't have to struggle as much to get in and out of the tub or up and down from the toilet and you'll have something to grab onto to help you avoid slipping on a wet floor.

#### **Use non-slip mats and tape.**

Speaking of slippery floors, you can save yourself a lot of the risk there by buying non-slip mats to put in your bathroom and any other spot that's of potential concern for getting slippery (your kitchen maybe, or by your front and back doors). Non-slip tape is another useful and cheap option, you can place it in spots around the house to reduce the likelihood of slipping on the ground.



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**Look into walk-in tubs and alternatives.**

They're expensive, but **walk-in tubs** reduce the risk of falling as you get in and out of the tub and could potentially save you from injuries that are more expensive in health care costs than the tub itself. If buying and having a whole new tub installed seems like overkill, you can also look into some more affordable **alternatives to walk-in tubs** that also reduce your risk.

**Do tai chi.**

[Tai chi](#) is known to help improve balance and thus prevent falls. It's an ancient martial art that helps you strengthen the connection between your body and mind and it's entirely safe for most to do. Look into local classes or a video if there's not a class in your area.

**Use a walker or cane.**

If you're finding it harder to keep your balance as you walk, then go ahead and invest in a cane or a walker. It may feel silly or strange to you at first to always walk with a cane or walker, but if it makes you safer, it will be worth it.





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#### **Wear good shoes.**

The right shoes play an important role in how big your risk of a fall is. Go for shoes with rubber soles that give you good traction. Avoid heels. And make sure any shoes you buy are reasonably comfortable, if the fit is off or they give you blisters, you might walk in a less natural way that makes a fall more likely.

Oh, and don't walk around the house in socks or stockings. They can quickly make your floors more slippery than any amount of water on them can. Stick with shoes or go barefoot.

#### **Have your vision checked regularly.**

Poor vision can often contribute to falls. You have a harder time seeing what's in front of you and it can throw your depth perception off. In addition, research has shown that wearing **bifocals can increase your risk of falls**. Go in for regular vision checkups and, if you currently have bifocals, talk to your doctor about your concerns. Having the right glasses for your needs makes you safer.



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#### **Install smart and voice-activated tech**

While you do want to stay active generally speaking, cutting down on the times you have to get up to do something in the dark or when you're tired can reduce your risk of falls. [Voice-activated tech](#) can be used for tasks like turning on the light, turning the temperature up and down, and changing the channel on the TV. These add a lot of convenience to life, but if being able to turn the air down with a command saves you from getting out of bed at night in dark house to do so, they also make you safer.

#### **Pay attention to medicine side effects.**

Some medicines have side effects that can make you more likely to fall. Some might not have those side effects on their own, but start to cause them once they're mixed with certain other types of meds. Talk to your doctor about side effects mixing of the medicines you take. And pay close attention to how you feel – if you start to feel dizzy or off balance within a few days of starting new meds, talk to your doctor about it right away.



## FALL RISK



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