

Ready Hands Home Care Opens New Office in Manassas

We are delighted to announce the opening of a new full-service office to expand our geographical reach in northern Virginia. Located in Old Town Manassas, the office will serve Prince William county and parts of Loudoun and Fairfax counties.

At the new location we are replicating the strategy that has brought us success at the Alexandria office: the careful selection of

Home Care Aides and a highly personal accountability to all our clients and families.

The new office address is 9113 Church Street, Suite 102, Manassas, VA 20110. We can be reached there at (703) 330-7740.

This expansion is enabled by the trust and support of clients, families and senior-serving professionals in our area. We continue to owe them a great debt of gratitude.

What You Should Know About Falling in Older People

Every year one out of three community-dwelling people over 65 falls at least once. Although most falls don't cause serious injury, many seniors fall repeatedly, multiplying the potential for harm. Recurrent falling is a major reason for loss of independence and admission to extended care facilities.

What Causes Seniors to Fall?

Normal aging is only part of the answer. More important are certain age-related medical conditions like dementia, neurological disorders, inner ear disorders, urinary incontinence, visual loss, heart arrhythmias and arthritis.

Some drugs are also major culprits because of side effects like low blood pressure, dizziness, drowsiness and confusion. A few examples: pain medications, antidepressants, sleeping pills, antihistamines, blood pressure drugs and diuretics.

What Can Be Done?

Fortunately, a number of studies have shown that much can be done to reduce falls. The first priority is a medical evaluation directed at discovering and treating medical conditions that contribute to falling. This step is too often ignored.

Exercise is indispensable in any fall prevention strategy. Supervised exercise targeted at improving balance is the best bet. There is also good evidence that Tai Chi, the oriental exercise consisting of slow, coordinated movements and relaxation, reduces falls and improves confidence in seniors. Many senior centers offer Tai Chi classes.

Well-fitting shoes with thin, non-slip soles are a prudent measure for all seniors and a must for those at increased risk for falls. Of course, assistive devices like canes or walkers can be indispensable. A physical or occupational physical therapist can help seniors get the most from these aids.

What About Hazard Reduction at Home?

Modification of the home environment is worth doing, but not to the exclusion of the foregoing measures. Some simple steps include making sure rooms are well-lit, avoiding clutter, eliminating throw rugs, tacking down carpets and placing non-slip mats in tubs and in front of sinks. It may also be desirable to take steps like installing grab bars in bathrooms or solid railings on both sides of a stairway. But don't assume that home modification is all that's needed; by itself, it won't be enough.

(For more on fall prevention and related topics, log onto our website, go to the Resources page and click on Articles.)

Studies show that Tai Chi exercise reduces the risk of falls. Tai Chi classes are offered at several Senior Centers and at other sites throughout our area.



Joyce Aboagye and Matilda Morny Get Quarterly Recognition Awards



It is always difficult to single out particular employees for special recognition, because we are fortunate to have many excellent Home Care Aides at Ready Hands. However, none could be more deserving of our heartfelt appreciation than Joyce and Matilda.

Joyce joined Ready Hands in January of 2006 and has worked with several different clients since then. All have taken note of her cheerful attitude, her diligence and conscientious approach to her work. She is always ready to help when needed. When an emergency arises requiring us to enlist an aide for extra duty, Joyce always tries to help.

Matilda has been with us since March 2008 and has had three sustained assignments with clients needing "total care." She has brought professionalism, compassion and competence to each situation, and her clients and families have loved her. A recent letter to Ready Hands reads, in part, "Matilda overwhelmed Dad with kindness," and "Matilda is certainly the kind of person sent by God to help the rest of us."

It is only through the work of wonderful aides like these that Ready Hands Home Care can achieve the superior level of service that we expect of ourselves.

Thank You, Joyce and Matilda!

Test Your Knowledge About Falling in Older People

Try your hand at this quiz, then check your answers at the bottom of the page.

1. True or False: To avoid falling injury, older people with unsteady gait should not venture out of their homes unnecessarily.
2. Who are more likely to sustain a fracture from a fall—men or women?
3. What percentage of falls take place in the home?
 - a) 20%
 - b) 40%
 - c) 60%
 - d) 80%
4. What proportion of falls among seniors result in serious injury?
 - a) 10%
 - b) 30%
 - c) 50%
 - d) More than 50%
5. Which is more important for reducing falls: reducing hazards in the home, or addressing health factors?
6. Which of the following has been shown to increase the chances of a fall?
 - a) Thick-soled or poorly fitting shoes.
 - b) Multifocal lenses (bifocals, trifocals).
 - c) Fear of falling.
 - d) All of the above.
7. True or False: Roughly 12 million people over age 65 fall each year.
8. True or False: Hip fractures often occur in the upright position, thus actually causing one to fall.

Where to Learn More:

- ⇒ The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, (770) 488-1506. Web: www.cdc.gov/ncipc
- ⇒ The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, (800) 346-AAOS. Web: www.aaos.org.
- ⇒ The American Geriatrics Society. Web: www.americangeriatrics.org. (See their clinical guideline for professionals, "Prevention of Falls in Older Persons.")

ANSWERS TO QUIZ:

1. False. There is convincing evidence that isolation and withdrawal from activities increases the risk of falling.
2. Women, because osteoporosis is much more prevalent.
3. About 60% (c).
4. About 10% (a.) This figure varies depending on how one defines "serious". Roughly 20% of falls result in injuries that require some kind of medical intervention.
5. Addressing health factors by identifying and treating underlying causes. Although all authorities also advise hazard reduction in the home, well-designed trials have

6. All of the above (d.) Well-fitting shoes with thin, hard, slip-resistant soles help reduce falls. Multifocal lenses approximately double the risk of falling due to impaired ground-level depth perception. And, excessive fear of falling has been shown to be an aggravating factor.
7. True. There are over 35,000,000 seniors 65 or over in the U.S., and about one third experience a fall each year.
8. False! This myth persists among some people. All but a tiny number of hip fractures result from the fall impact.