Overcoming the Fear of Falling With Osteoporosis

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Osteoporosis and Fear of Falling

You have heard the warnings from your doctor. You have studied the pamphlets. You have read the information online, and you have talked to several friends who have already been through it. Falling is bad. Falling when you have osteoporosis is even worse.

Their warnings range from cautionary tales to flat out fear-inducing tragedies. In the beginning you took appropriate precautions. You were safe and secure. People kept telling you to be careful and to be safe. You were. But along the way, something began to change.

You noticed that you stayed in more and went out less. You figured that it would just be easier to stay in the safety of your home, and whatever you needed could wait until tomorrow. You may not have realized it, but this was anxiety and fear taking over.

You know that osteoporosis robs your body of its needed bone density. Whether it was due to menopause, poor diet, a medical condition or just the passing of time, your bones have lost what they once had.

The other thing that osteoporosis attempts to steal is your independence. When you stay in more, you lose a part of yourself. Now, it is time for things to change. It is time for you to get yourself back. Here's how:

Forget Fear

You've been able to identify the problem: Anxiety is keeping you afraid and inside too much. The goal is to find balance between the real fear and the anxious fear. The truth is that osteoporosis is scary, but you have to know that the reward is usually worth the risk.

If you can tell the difference between the real risk and the anxious risk, you can still have a life filled with pleasurable experiences and positive supports that you always strived to achieve. The following method helps by systematically removing your fears and challenging the perceived limitations of your condition.

Next page: getting started.

List and Separate

When you are starting out on your mission, make a list. Grab a piece of paper to list as many pleasurable activities as you can. Think about the places and things that make you happy. Activities that you currently do and ones you gave up on because they seemed beyond your comfort zone should fill the paper. If you are struggling with ideas, consult with friends, family, doctors and online activities lists for extra ideas that you have not considered.

Along the way, you will begin to question yourself. You will think that these activities are not practical, so why even write them down? Ignore your notions of practicality to only focus on what you would like to do. Forget **if** you can do it.

Now that your list is completed, separate the activities on the list. Divide your activities into three categories: can-dos, can't dos and maybes. The can-dos are the activities that you feel very comfortable doing in your current condition. The can't-dos are ones that you believe to be far too risky to even consider attempting. The maybes are ones you are unsure about performing. They will require more information and feedback.

Anxiety and fear has a profound ability to make you misperceive and misinterpret yourself and the world around you. This is how anxiety gets bigger and stronger. Because of this, your lists will require feedback.

Encourage trusted supports to look at your lists as you review them yourself. Your doctor and a small group friends and family make a great team of editors. Be sure to weigh their opinions carefully while balancing your own hesitations.

Modify, Modify, Modify

Your activity list is set. You know what you are to do and what you are not to do. The important step now is to take the time to modify the items so that they fit in with your lifestyle. For example, if you really want to attend a baseball game, think about your process before your osteoporosis diagnosis.

Inspect and investigate areas for concern. Rather than being scared off, find methods to change the routine to gain success. Modifications might include making plans to go on a weeknight when the walkways will be clearer and calling the stadium ahead of time to discuss accommodations for someone with your risks. You may be able to acquire special seating options or transportation within the stadium to move you around safely.

This process will show that, although pleasurable activities can no longer be enjoyed in the same way they once were, they can still be enjoyed. You can go the places you want with the people want. Some modifications will be simple and straightforward while others will require a creative team of supports to accomplish your goals. The valuable theme here is to remember that the work and time involved is always worth the payout that comes in the end. Not trying ensures defeat and stagnation.

Next page: being prepared.

Preparedness and Success

The next milestone in the process is to prepare yourself. Modifications to the environment and systems help, but preparing yourself is even more necessary. Since your diagnosis, worry has been growing and taking control. Now is the time to regain your strength. Don't let anxiety and fear ruin your time. If it ruins your time, it ruins your life.

The preparations begin as soon as the plans are made. Learn and practice relaxation techniques consistently, but especially before you leave. These will calm your mind and body, sending you to a more positive place.

Optimistically visualize yourself completing the activity and having a fantastic time. This is another useful tool because you can see yourself doing something that seems tricky or impossible. Once you can see it and imagine it, you can achieve it more naturally.

Reducing the anxiety through preparation will not only benefit you mentally, it will aid you physically as well. People that are anxious tend to be physically tense and rigid. Anxiety leads to muscle tension that can actually increase the risk of falls and injuries. Finding a relaxation technique or set of relaxation techniques that work for you will be immensely helpful.

If the anxiety seems to be an unstoppable force, consult with a mental health professional. He or she can assist by observing the thoughts and behaviors that result in the feelings of fear and anxiety. Also, she can fine-tune your relaxation techniques to be more effective.

Whatever skills you utilize, be sure to modify them for someone with osteoporosis. Something like progressive muscle relaxation can yield a great range of benefits for anxiety, but it also contains a risk of placing too much strain on your body. Be sure to start slow and build your confidence with the relaxations as your tension reduces.

Go, Do. Do Again.

As needed as the previous steps are, there is nothing that can compete with the benefit of going and doing. Leaving your house and changing your environment changes the way you see yourself and the world. Going and doing maintains and further expands your comfort zone. Each time your world will feel a bit bigger and more fruitful. This provides more encouragement to continue the process and continue the cycle. You can gain the momentum to do whatever you desire.

Remember, quality of life is too important to relinquish. As long as you take the steps to find activities, modify the activities and perform the behaviors, you will drastically improve your quality of life. If it seems like a selfish activity, it is, but it is one that will indirectly benefit all the people in your life. They want you to be happy, healthy and safe as much as you do.