

'Intervention is Prevention'

MEASURAbilities specializes in fall prevention and home safety modifications

By Kamala Kirk

Falls are the leading cause of injuries in older Americans, according to the National Council on Aging. Not only do falls threaten a person's safety and independence, but they can also result in costly medical care.

After Deena Goldstein's father fell following lung surgery, she and her husband, Sandy, a physical therapist, started Airpark-based MEASURAbilities Home Safety in 2013 to help create safer home environments.

"More and more of our population is aging in place, and fall prevention home safety is critical," Deena says.

"We noticed a gap in discharge planning where people were being sent home from rehab or the hospital, but nobody was addressing their home environments. People had wheelchairs that were wider than the doorway entrance or walkers that were too wide for the bathroom. This resulted in many repeat falls that would send people back to the hospital, often resulting in more serious issues, including hip fractures, bone breaks and traumatic brain injuries. When my late father was discharged from the hospital with a walker, no one showed him how to use it and he fell when he was at home. This kind of thing doesn't need to happen. Intervention is prevention."

MEASURAbilities Home Safety specializes in clinically guided fall prevention home safety solutions to ensure that everyone, from seniors to people with disabilities, are able to live confidently and safely in their homes. After meeting with patients, their family and care team at a hospital, rehab or other facility to discuss their individual needs for when they return home, a physical or occupational therapist from MEASURAbilities' team is sent to the home to perform a free safety assessment.



Lauren Kelly, an occupational therapist for MEASURAbilities Home Safety, demonstrates how the new pull-down cabinets and appliances work in a recently completed custom remodel for a client's home. (Photo courtesy MEASURAbilities Home Safety)

"We take a look at the areas that are being reported as concerns by clinicians and family, then our therapist makes clinically guided recommendations," Deena explains.

"We provide and install everything they need to create a fully accessible home, from safety bars and ramps to a nonslip surface treatment for floors and even full accessibility remodels. A lot of the time we have the house taken care of before a person is even discharged. We are licensed, bonded and insured."

Deena and Sandy often go into homes and have to remove misplaced safety bars and other items that have been ordered online and installed in the wrong places by handymen.

"A safety grab bar is not an end-all or one size fits all," she points out. "Every person's requirements are different, and when an item is incorrectly installed, it can put a person

at an even greater risk for falling or injury."

One of their most popular offerings is the nonslip treatment, which adds friction by creating a nonvisible etching beneath the surface of floors, tubs and showers. There is no visible change to the appearance of a surface that has been treated, but when the area gets wet there is increased traction, which decreases one's risk of falling.

"Bathrooms are the No. 1 place where falls occur in a home, and often people lose confidence in their ability to be around water," Deena says.

"Research shows that if they're more guarded and fearful, their risk of falling can actually increase. Our nonslip treatment is very quick to apply, and we've done a lot of pool areas, as well as group homes, hotel bathtubs and restaurants, where floors are slippery. The nonslip treatment is also popular in kitchens, where there tends to be