

Vol 5. Issue 7, July 2024

NEWSLETTER

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



GRACEFUL LIVING

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ODE TO THE 80-YEAR-OLD



Among the best-selling books, 'The 80-year-old Wall', written by Japanese author, Psychiatrist Hideki Wada, gives tips on how to live well in old age

Psychiatrist Hideki Wada recently published a book called *The 80-Year-Old Wall*. As soon as the book was released, sales exceeded 500,000 copies, becoming a best-seller. The sales of this book could well exceed one million copies, making it the best-selling book in Japan in recent years.

Dr. Wada is a doctor specializing in mental illnesses among the elderly. In the past 35 years, he has treated about 6,000 patients. To sum up his book in one sentence, it is "an ode to 80-year-olds".

Specifically, this book tells 80-year-olds how to live to the age of 100 in good health. Currently, the "average healthy life expectancy" (the age at which one is physically and mentally independent and healthy) of Japanese men is 72.68 years and that of women is 75.38 years. In terms of average life expectancy, Japanese men are 81.64 years old and women are 87.74 years old.

Subtracting "average healthy life expectancy" from "average life expectancy", men have about nine years and women have about 12 years of time requiring care from others. How to minimize this time is the core content of Dr. Wada's book. According to his point of view, the elderly do not need to take sleeping pills frequently. It is a natural phenomenon that sleep time decreases with age, and no one will die from insomnia. During 24 hours a day, sleep when you want to sleep, wake up when you want

to wake up, this is the privilege of the elderly.

Dr. Wada summarized the secrets of 80-year-olds to become the lucky ones into an agenda which includes...

- Keep walking
- Take a deep breath when you feel irritated
- Exercise to the extent that your body does not feel stiff
- Drink more water when using the air conditioner in summer
- Diapers are very helpful for increasing mobility
- The more times you chew, the more energetic your body and brain will become
- Memory loss is not due to ageing, but to long-term disuse of the brain
- Being alone does not mean loneliness, but enjoying a relaxing time
- Do only what you like, not what you hate
- No matter what, don't stay at home all the time
- Instead of fighting the disease to the end, it is better to co-exist with it
- Dementia in the last stage of life is a gift from God
- Stop learning and you will get old
- Desire is the source of longevity

Source- Internet

Dr. Hideki Wada, who has written more than 800 books, including the bestseller, says that the most important thing he wants to say is the reality that "watching TV makes you stupid". He explains that inappropriate thinking patterns make people stupid.

He further explains: As children grow up, they learn how to think. They learn that there are greys between like and dislike, good and bad, black and white. The more kinds of grey there are, the more cognitive maturity and deeper thinking there is. To recognize an abundance of greys is to be an adult. But television reverts adult thinking, which has grown so much, back to a two-part thinking, only black and white."

Yashwant Deshpande, a senior citizen says...

Becoming old or ageing is not an accident. Most of us plan for a retired life in terms of financial aspects including insurance policy. I feel planning for healthy ageing is equally, perhaps more important. We start our savings around middle-age for old age. But we make a mistake. We keep health in abeyance till after retirement!

The right approach would be to plan and execute a healthy lifestyle around 40, and I did that. This resulted in a healthy body, mind and social activities, a status which I am enjoying even today.



FALLS IN ELDERLY PEOPLE: TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY



Dr Dheeraj Mulchandani

MBBS, MS, DMAS, FALBS, MBA

Consultant, Genaral and Laparoscopic Surgeon
Laser Surgery and Day Care Specialist

A fall is defined as an event that occurs when a person inadvertently drops down to the ground. Fall and fall-related injuries are common and serious problems in older people

With advancing age comes a multitude of problems with gait and balance which may increase the propensity of a fall. In addition to this, decreasing eyesight, loss of hearing, soft bones, easily bruised skin and lack of support all contribute to the seriousness of this too common occurrence in daily life.

Causes

Falls are often caused by a number of factors. Risk factors may be grouped into intrinsic factors, such as existence of a specific ailment or disease. External or extrinsic factors include the environment and the way in which it may encourage or deter accidental falls.

Intrinsic factors

- Balance and gait affected as a result of a stroke, Parkinson's, arthritic changes, neuropathy, neuromuscular disease or vestibular disease.
- Visual motor-reaction time problems. An extended reaction time will delay responses and compensations to standing or walking imbalances, thus increasing the likelihood of falls.
- Medications. Polypharmacy is common in older people; sedatives significantly increase the risk of falling; cardio-vascular medications can contribute towards falls.
- Visual impairment. Visual impairments such as glaucoma, macular degeneration and retinopathy increase the risk of falling and fractures.
- Cognitive problems. Dementia increases the likelihood of falls
- Cardio-vascular causes lead to...
 - Orthostatic hypotension (change of body position – low blood pressure)
 - Post-prandial hypotension (after lunch-low

blood pressure)

- Carotid (blood vessel) sinus syndrome
- Neuro-cardiogenic syncope (dizziness) – the commonest cause of syncope
- Cardiac arrhythmias (change in heart rhythm)
- Structural heart disease, such as valvular heart disease

Extrinsic factors

- Poor lighting due to low luminance of existing lights or lamps, preventing hazard identification and avoidance. Vision deteriorates with age, and extra lighting will be needed where seniors move frequently.
- Stairs with inadequate handrails, or steep stairs, encouraging tripping and falling. Softer surfaces can help limit impact injuries by cushioning areas around.
- Doorways with adequate headroom so that the user's head does not hit the lintel level.
- Rugs/floor surfaces with low friction, causing poor traction and individual instability. All surfaces should have a high friction coefficient with shoe soles.
- Clothing/footwear poorly fitted, shoes of low friction against floor. Clothing should fit the user well, without trailing parts which could snag with obstacles.
- Lack of equipment/aids such as walking sticks or walking frames.

The immediate signs and symptoms of a fall include:

- **Soft tissue injuries.** These are characterised by deep bruises, hematomas (blood collection under the skin), sharp cuts which may bleed profusely, muscle damage and tears, and ligament injuries.
- **Fractures and dislocations.** Five per cent of people who fall end up having a fracture as a result of their fall, and one per cent fracture their 'neck of femur' bone. The other common sites of fractures

include wrist fractures due to falling on an outstretched hand, fractured ribs while falling sideways and skull fractures while falling backwards.

- **Brain injury, brain haematoma (blood in the skull):** One of the most serious outcomes of a fall is the collection of blood inside the skull applying pressure on the brain and causing brain damage. In this case, please contact your medical care provider urgently and consider the possibility that you might need a CT scan to assess the severity of the injury.

Long-term effects

- Any fall results in a lot of time spent in recovery. Depending on the severity of the injury, the person may still be mobile or bed-ridden.
- Disuse atrophy and muscle wasting from reduced physical activity during recovery periods is a serious consequence of such injuries. Due to bed rest, the person is at greater risk for developing illnesses such as pneumonia, pressure or bed sores, dehydration, hypothermia...
- Most hematomas (blood clotting) take up to 6-8 weeks to heal leading to long periods of unbearable pain and suffering.
- Fractures require 8-12 weeks to heal and may be treated either with a plaster cast, slab or formal surgery depending on the extent of damage to the bone and whether dislocation is present or not.

How to handle yourself when you fall

Whether you are at home or somewhere else, a sudden fall can be startling and upsetting. If you do fall, stay as calm as possible and take the following steps:

- **Breathe.** Take several deep breaths to relax. Remain still on the floor for a few moments. This will help you get over the shock of falling.





- 👉 **Decide if you are hurt.** Getting up too quickly or in the wrong way could make an injury worse.
- 👉 **Crawl to a sturdy chair.** If you think you can get up safely without help, roll over onto your side. Rest again while your body and blood pressure adjust. Slowly get up on your hands and knees, and crawl to a sturdy chair.
- 👉 **Get help.** If you are hurt or cannot get up on your own, ask someone for help. If you are alone, try to get into a comfortable position and wait for help to arrive. Prepare for a fall by keeping a well-charged cordless or mobile phone with you at all times and arrange for daily contact with a family member or friend. Emergency response systems are another option: Some smartwatches also have this feature.
- 👉 **Stay positive.** A fall is just a set-back. Stay positive and know that you will heal if you follow your doctor's instructions. Do not be discouraged to go out and walk again. Do not fear a fall, instead prepare to avoid one!

Steps to prevent falls

If you take care of your overall health, you may have a lower chance of falling. Most of the time, falls and accidents don't just happen for no reason. Here are a few tips to help lessen your risk of falls and fractures:

- 👉 Stay physically active. Regular exercise improves muscles and makes you stronger. Exercise also helps keep your joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible. Mild weight-bearing activities, such as walking or climbing stairs, may slow bone loss from osteoporosis.
- 👉 Try balance and strength training exercises. Yoga can improve balance and muscle strength. You can also try lifting weights or using resistance bands to build strength.
- 👉 Have your eyes and hearing tested. Even small changes in vision and hearing are linked to an increased risk for falls. If you have a hearing aid, be sure it fits well and wear it.
- 👉 Find out about the side effects of any medicines you take. If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, tell your doctor.
- 👉 Get enough sleep. If you are tired, you are more likely to fall.
- 👉 Avoid or limit alcohol. Too much alcohol can lead to balance problems and falls, which can result in hip or arm fractures and other injuries.
- 👉 Stand up slowly. Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop. That can make you feel wobbly. Get your blood pressure checked when lying down and standing/sitting up.
- 👉 Use an assistive device if you need help to steady you when you walk. Using canes and walkers correctly can help prevent falls.
- 👉 Take extra caution when walking on wet or icy surfaces. These can be very slippery.
- 👉 Keep your hands free. Use a shoulder bag or backpack to leave your hands free to hold on to railings.
- 👉 Choose the right footwear. To fully support your feet, wear non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes. Don't walk on steps or floor in socks or in shoes and slippers with smooth soles.
- 👉 Consider staying indoors when the weather is bad.
- 👉 Always tell your doctor if you have fallen since your last check-up, even if you did not feel pain when you fell. A fall can alert your doctor to a new medical problem or issues with your medications or eyesight that can be corrected. Your doctor may suggest physical therapy, a walking aid, or other steps to help prevent future falls.

AGEING WITH DIGNITY

Below are the biggest challenges the elderly face - Excerpts

It is well known that as a society we are living much longer thanks to improved living conditions and health care. While being able to reach old age is something to be thankful for, in many ways, there are several challenges facing the elderly, which we all need to pay more attention to. Often it is not until we start to age ourselves or we see a loved one struggling with a problem that we sit up and take notice, but as a society, we can do more to make life easier for our ageing population. This article outlines the biggest challenges that the elderly people face today and how we can support them and enable them to age with dignity.

Ageism and a lost sense of purpose

There are lots of outdated stereotypes about elderly people, which can lead to isolation and marginalization. By coming up with innovative ways to involve older people in the community through social events, we cannot only help them to maintain a sense of identity and self-esteem but also tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience they have, which is so vital for the development of society.

Financial insecurity

While we are living longer, unfortunately, the world of employment and retirement has not evolved at the same pace. Many elderly people are able and more than willing to work past the standard retirement age, but the opportunities are not there. In addition, managing day-to-day finances and planning for later life can be challenging for older generations as much is now done online or remotely. This can also leave them more vulnerable to fraud and scams.

Difficulty with everyday tasks and mobility

A person's mobility and dexterity will naturally decline as age advances, which makes completing everyday tasks more difficult. This can gradually cause people to care for themselves and help them to be social, pursue interests, or take part in activities they enjoy. More support is needed to enable elderly people not only to live independently through products and programs which focus on safety, balance, fitness, and mobility but also to ensure they can continue to thrive as individuals.

Finding the right care provider

When complete independence is no longer practical, many elderly people require additional care. Sometimes this care can be provided by family members, but this can place a lot of strain on the care giver in terms of balancing this with work and other family responsibilities. The care givers need to be given the training, resources, and emotional support necessary to help them deliver the best care for their loved ones and themselves.

In some cases, it is more appropriate for a professional care giver to be employed on a regular basis, e.g., when there are complex medical conditions and/or physical disabilities. With a comprehensive elder care service, the elderly person is able to remain in his/her own home.

End of life preparations

We all need to prepare for the inevitable, but death is often a difficult topic for people to discuss or make plans for. Elderly individuals and their families need support when considering the end of life options available, financial implications, and how to ensure that the individual's wishes are respected.

Sharing is caring!

Source-Internet. Courtesy: SmithLife HomeCare



GRACEFUL LIVING - RECENT ACTIVITIES

AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

Tulsi Trust was established by the Chanrai family in 1975 with an aim to fulfil basic needs of the poor and needy. At a deeper level, it's more than indulging in physical activities. Health care, skills development and education are top priorities. It envisages a fair world for all, working with partners to improve health care and opportunities for livelihood, & education. Add to this, the capacity to understand another's needs and do this with utmost integrity.

Graceful Living (GL) is an arm of Tulsi Trust which came out of a realization of a social need for elderly care. After three active years, GL is now a recognized organization for those in their twilight years and has created an awareness through its activities and talks for senior citizens. GL has a social presence viz. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

In Partnership...

- Intellectual companionship and special care programs – includes companionship, counselling and care-giving for Dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's when required. These services are provided through our partners:

Echoing Healthy Ageing

Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society (PDMDS)

- Physiotherapy sessions which help the elderly to improve their mobility and become more independent:
PRAJ-The Rehab Sphere with Dr Pratha Mehta & Dr Rajshri Lad
- Training candidates in 'elder care' in order to have professionals for the same:
MMP Shah College – elder companionship course for Sociology students
- Dignity Foundation** – Conducting sessions on issues related to ageing with its members of Chai-Masti-Centres
- Activities for the elderly :
Adv Supriya Rele: legal consultation
Mrs Manasi Golwalkar: technology training

- Sensitization programs for school/college students to create an awareness of the needs and issues of the elderly.

Direct Intervention by GL...

- Support Group Meetings
- Webinars
- Guest Lectures by professionals/experts – mainly on Zoom
- Graceful Living Monthly Newsletter carrying important information for the elderly plus articles by known doctors and other professionals
- Co-ordination by GL to create platforms for senior citizen organizations in the city.

Brain Stimulation Activity

On May 17 at Sahabhaav Units 1 & 3, Amruta and Tanvi conducted sessions on "Brain Stimulation Activities" which included 15 participants. The session involved engaging in activities such as quizzes, a short film discussion and encouraging sharing of life experiences among senior citizens.

Geriatric Counselling

GL led a session on Geriatric Counselling for NM Budharani Trust's counselling team on May 24. It was aimed at preparing them to work effectively with senior citizens alongside their current roles. The session emphasized leveraging their counselling expertise for the benefit of the elderly.

Gerontology and Successful Ageing

On May 26, GL conducted a session on "Gerontology and Successful Ageing" at the request of Dignity Foundation. The session was attended by several seniors. The participants responded positively to the discussion, showing interest and engagement in the topic.

Su Jok Therapy Workshop

On May 30, an online workshop on "Su Jok Therapy" was conducted by Prof. GB Luthria, president of Lion's Club (Action Club) who spoke on the subject. Participants learned basic techniques of Su Jok Therapy for self-healing. The workshop was hosted by the Graceful Living team. An enthusiastic response underscores the effectiveness and appeal of the workshop, highlighting its potential to positively impact participants' lives.

VIEWPOINT

Delirious with joy! Monsoons have set in. One feels so good in pleasant weather. You actually feel like working longer hours... and you feel just so happy. So in this rainy season we bring you our July Newsletter! The opening page mentions a book, 'The 80-year-old Wall', written by Japanese author and Psychiatrist, Hideki Wada, who gives tips on how to live well into old age. As soon as the book was released, sales exceeded 500,000 copies, becoming a best-seller. Specifically, this book tells 80-year-olds how to live to the age of 100 in good health. Page 2 carries an article very, very relevant for seniors. FALLS in elderly people written by Dr. Dheeraj Mulchandani, a consultant general & laparoscopic surgeon. It gives you details like causes (intrinsic & extrinsic factors), immediate signs/symptoms of falls, how to handle yourself when you fall, and most important...steps to prevent a fall (if you can)!

Graceful Living's tag line has been 'living gracefully'! An article on Ageing with Dignity mentions the biggest challenges the elderly face. Life does become difficult as you age with a lost sense of purpose, financial insecurity, difficulty in everyday tasks and finding the right care services. But all this is possible by taking corrective measures and moving ahead. What is, is. You can't regret your age. This piece is courtesy: Smithlife Homecare, and paves the way for healthy elderly living.

Talking of falls, I am a senior citizen and I had one of the nastiest falls and suffered a lot of pain and discomfort. Some urchins on the road were playing cricket (luckily with a tennis ball) and one of them hit a hard shot. It came straight on my right eye, hard, (black eye and all that) and I fell with its impact on the left side. But on a poky stone which went into my waist and I started bleeding profusely. People gathered but I managed to call my family and went straight to hospital, got stitches done, and went home not realizing that I had managed a rib fracture as well till an x-ray few days later. Triple whammy, mind you. It's been a month, am still recovering, but life goes on and one HAS TO move forward.

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor

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112-A Mittal Towers, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400 021. Tel.

+91 22842006 | info@tulsitrust.org | www.tulsitrust.org

info@gracefulliving.co.in | www.gracefulliving.co.in

Design by Indus D'Sign



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