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# DEALING WITH FRAILTY

## *Being Active & Proactive Has Its Rewards*

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Human frailty does not happen overnight. It commonly creeps in over months and years. In many instances, it allows enough time for a person to accept the incremental changes. This can make it easier for a senior to adjust to the changes they are experiencing. It can also make it harder for that same person to recognize the effects the frailty and the adjustments are having on their independence and lifestyle.

As frailty develops, there are usually many opportunities for prevention and reversal. It's important to address issues quickly and to fight the tendency to accept things as "part of aging". Do research and talk to your doctor about an appropriate course of action.

Of course, you may be lucky and have the right genes to keep yourself fit, healthy and independent. However, lucky or not, it still helps to have a strategy and a plan for dealing with and preventing frailty.



*Some symptoms that lead to frailty can be reversed or slowed with the help of a good plan, proper therapy and a positive frame of mind.*

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## PHYSICAL

The physical symptoms that lead to frailty are often reversible. It can be helpful to:

- ◆ Maintain fitness and prevent falls.
  - ➔ Exercise to strengthen bones and muscles, as well as improve balance.
  - ➔ Eat a diet that offers the nutrition necessary to maintain good health and body weight.
  - ➔ Have regular hearing and eye exams. Use the prescribed eye glasses, vision aides and hearing aides that allow you to maintain more independence.
  - ➔ Make your home environment safer by identifying, decreasing, and eliminating fall risks. (See our *66 Tips For Avoiding Falls* booklet for more suggestions.)
- ◆ Work with your doctor to utilize therapies and medications that can alleviate illnesses and symptoms that lead to frailty.

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## MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

Some mental and psychological symptoms that lead to frailty, such as depression, are reversible. With others, like dementia, progression may be slowed. In either situation, it can be helpful to:

- ◆ Have a positive attitude. It has been shown to reduce frailty. So see the possibilities and do not use the excuse "I'm too old...".
- ◆ Create opportunities for social contact, mental challenge, or both.
  - ➔ Do things that interest you and challenge your mind on a daily basis.
  - ➔ Find reasons to meet with people, hold conversations, pick up the phone, etc.
  - ➔ Deal with fear-related avoidance. Find ways to build self confidence and safely stay involved physically and/or mentally.
- ◆ Work with your doctor to utilize therapies and medications that can alleviate illnesses and symptoms that lead to frailty.



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