

Aging Parents – How Do I Know If Mom and Dad Are Still Safe Living at Home?

A very large group of people, the baby boomers, are now at the age that they are concerned about their aging parents' ability to take care of themselves, worried about how are they coping living alone in their home. They often feel pulled in two directions as they are still caring for their own children, yet are finding they need to play a frequently increasing role in the care of their parents. On top of this, many of these boomers are still working and often live too far away to “pop in” to check on mom and dad. Many are questioning whether their parents are even safe still living on their own. Should they be climbing their stairs? Will they remember to turn off the stove? Are they safe to go to the bathroom in the dark on their own?

These are valid concerns and a stress shared by many. But there are steps you can take to help aging parents live safely and independently, and Health at Home Physiotherapy can help point you in right direction. There are objective ways our therapists can assess whether a person is at risk for falling in the home, for instance. We have assessment tools to determine how strong they are, what their stamina is like, how their balance may be compromised, we can assess their joint integrity, and monitor their blood pressure and respiration rate as well. We are skilled at assessing their home environment for safety issues and can suggest ideas on how to make their home safer and more enjoyable. This, in turn, will help put your mind at ease. When we do an in home assessment we look at each room, how the occupant uses the room and note any hazards. From here, we make recommendations to the resident, family members and caregivers about what can be done to help maintain your loved one's independence in the home. We will also leave you resources to find any aids they may need to this end.

We often find that our patients have poor leg strength. Lower-extremity weakness is a statistically significant risk factor for falls and by the sixth decade, 12-15% muscle loss per decade is expected. Studies have shown that as little as two sessions per week of leg exercises are enough to improve leg strength. An in home physiotherapist will design a custom exercise program which is both challenging and achievable for your mom or dad. We will continually monitor their gains and adjust the program as needed. Whether they need exercises to do in bed or someone to walk outside with them on the trails, Health at Home therapists will tailor the perfect program.

Health at Home Physiotherapy commits to working closely with our aged patients to keep them safe and in their home and provide peace of mind for their family.

-Heather McGirr