

KAISER PERMANENTE  
PREVENTING FALLS  
FINAL  
JULY 26, 2012

**MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION**

INTERIOR: MAGGIE AND GEORGE'S BEDROOM.

On the bed are piles of clothing. Maggie is holding two sweaters over a stack of clothes. George enters the room, holding a small shopping bag.

MAGGIE

So which sweater should I pack ... this blue one or the green one?

GEORGE

*(He's clearly **not** invested in this decision, but he is taken aback by the stacks of clothes.)*

For cryin' out load ... we're gonna be there for a week, not a month. Why do you need all these clothes?

*The scene continues as each of them go on with their preparations.*

MAGGIE (Voice Over)

We were so looking forward to getting away and spending a week with our grandchildren!

INTERIOR: GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM - SIX MONTHS AFTER GEORGE'S FALL - THEIR "STORYTELLING SETTING"

*George and Maggie are sitting together, talking to camera, as if relating their story to a visitor over coffee.*

MAGGIE

Our daughter Julia told us that she and her husband James wanted to get away for their anniversary ... just the two of them.

GEORGE

So we offered to go over to their place and watch the kids. It would give them some time together, and give us time with the grandkids.

MAGGIE

Well, that was the plan ...

INT. STORAGE ROOM IN GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE

Door opens and light turns on, revealing shelves that are stacked to overflowing, spilling onto the floor. George moves items to make his way to a rear shelf where the suitcases are located. He grabs two of them and starts making his way out of the storage room. He tries lifting the suitcases to clear some of the other items, doesn't quite make it, resulting in an extreme slow motion cascade of items, causing George to lose his balance. A series of close-ups in slow motion show items falling, George's fingers losing their grip on the door frame, etc.

Cut to George lying on the floor. In the background, Maggie enters and approaches George.

MAGGIE

Oh, my gosh, George! Are you alright?!

GEORGE

I think I broke something .... You'd better call an ambulance.

INT. STORYTELLING LOCATION

GEORGE

As I was lying there, I thought, "Oh, please, don't let this be a broken hip!" Well, it was. I went through surgery, spent a few days in the hospital, went through therapy, and months recuperating.

MAGGIE

Needless to say, we never did get to spend the week with our grandchildren. In fact, Julia and James cancelled their plans and spent the week with us.

GEORGE

You know, for as much pain as the broken hip caused me, the worst thing was losing my independence, and the burden I placed on our kids. One moment, we're getting ready to spend the week with our grandkids, and just like that (*snapping his fingers*) I'm in the hospital, not able to move or even go to the bathroom by myself. And I hate asking for help!

MAGGIE

That fall changed our lives. It made us realize that we're not 45 anymore. We learned that we need to do things just a little bit differently now if we want to stay healthy.

GEORGE

Let me tell you, at first that was a tough pill to swallow.

MAGGIE

But it doesn't mean we have to quit doing *everything*. Yes, there are some things we shouldn't be doing ... (*she turns to George*) like cleaning out the gutters ...

GEORGE (to Maggie)

... or cleaning the top of the kitchen cabinets ...

MAGGIE

... yes, but there's still plenty we *can* do. We just need to be more intentional about what it is we do.

GEORGE

Since my fall, I've learned a lot.

MAGGIE

Our whole family has!

GEORGE

After I broke my hip, I developed this almost overwhelming fear of falling again. It was crazy! I was afraid of going anywhere. So I decided to learn what I can do to prevent falls.

MAGGIE

And so did I! The folks at Kaiser Permanente have been great ... the doctors, the nurses, the therapists. What surprised me were all the little things around the house that can cause us to fall.

GEORGE

They gave us a list of things that we can do to make things easier and safer for us at home.

GEORGE AND MAGGIE AT COMPUTER, KP.ORG SCREEN SHOTS

MAGGIE (VO)

We also got a lot of information on the Kaiser Permanente web site. There's all kinds of information just for us seniors, including a whole section on preventing falls.

INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

My goodness, we learned so much!

GEORGE

But what we've told you so far is just scratching the surface. Keep watching and we'll give you more details about what we've learned.

MAGGIE

And if you have family or caregivers that help you out, encourage them to watch as well.

GEORGE

In the meantime, stay healthy ...

MAGGIE

... and stay safe!

## MODULE 2: PREPARING YOURSELF

INT: GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S BEDROOM

Repeat of the sequence in which George falls, we see him lying on the floor, and Maggie discovers him and calls 911.

GEORGE (VO)

That fall changed everything for me.

INT – STORYTELLING SETTING

GEORGE

I found out that once you fall once, it increases your chances of falling again. I was so afraid that I would fall again, I didn't want to move.

INT – KP PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM

A physical therapist is working with George, giving instructions on how to use a walker.

GEORGE (VO)

My therapists were a great help. They explained that sitting around actually increases my risk for falls and that I need to stay active. The more I moved, the more I began to trust my body again, and the less that I feared falling.

*Short excerpt of PT giving George instructions on using the walker.*

MAGGIE (VO)

In addition to helping George learn how to use the walker, they gave him tips on how to do things more safely.

*PT shows George the proper way to get in and out of a car.*

INT – STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

It was good to see the progress George was making.

GEORGE

Yeah ... With the physical therapy and regular exercises, I could feel myself getting stronger and steadier all the time.

INT – KP PHYSICAL THERAPY AREA

*PT gives George tips on using the cane, especially on uneven surfaces.  
He/she then shows how to use the cane while going up and down stairs.*

## STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

Everyone kept telling us that the best way to prevent falls is to improve our balance and have better control of our bodies.

GEORGE

When I was far enough along in my recovery, they recommended that I sign up for an exercise class. One of the things they suggested was Tai Chi, which is a kind of exercise that helps with balance.

## INT / EXT: SENIORS TAI CHI CLASS

George and Maggie are among a group of about 6-8 seniors participating in a Tai Chi class. GEORGE and MAGGIE's comments are interspersed among instructions, demonstrations and comments by the instructor.

MAGGIE

It sounded interesting, so I thought I'd join him. We were lucky to find one in our neighborhood, so off we went! It's helped with *my* balance, too. And I seem to be more aware and in better control of my body.

GEORGE

When I first started doing Tai Chi, I felt a bit awkward and stiff ... especially having recently broken my hip. But I was surprised at how quickly I caught on. And there was plenty I could do easily ... even with my bad hip.

MAGGIE

Another benefit is that the class has given us a chance to meet people and make some new friends!

## INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

With all that George was going through, I realized that it had been well over a year since my last check-up. So I scheduled an appointment with my primary care doctor, and naturally the subject of falls came up.

INT: EXAM ROOM

DOCTOR

Well we need to do everything we can to decrease your risk of falling and breaking your hip. The first thing I'd like to do is just take a quick look and review your medications. You know, you're fortunate. You really only on two medications and neither one should increase your risk for falls. Do you take any over the counter medications?

MAGGIE

I do take an occasional sleeping medication.

DOCTOR

You know sleeping medications are one of those things that really cause more harm than good, especially as people get older. It would be much better to have a relaxing bedtime ritual ... something like what you probably did with your kids when they were young. And getting regular exercise and cutting out afternoon caffeine would be very helpful to ensure a good night's sleep and they're much safer choices.

MAGGIE

Cutting out that cup of coffee in the afternoon is gonna be a little difficult, but it's better than a broken hip.

DOCTOR

Absolutely! Do you take any calcium or Vitamin D supplements.

MAGGIE

I don't ... and I can guess where this is leading! George is after me about it too.

DOCTOR

You know, calcium and Vitamin D are so important, and they're so easy to take to decrease your risk for falling. Most people just aren't getting enough Vitamin D in their diet so a supplement is necessary.

MAGGIE

How much do you think I should be taking?

DOCTOR

You know, for Vitamin D I recommend a thousand international units a day in addition to the dietary sources. As you get older your skin doesn't convert sunlight into vitamin D like it used to when you were younger. And for calcium I recommend 500 – 600 milligram supplement once a day. Again, in addition to your dietary sources. I have a handout I can give you with a list of dietary sources for calcium and vitamin D.

MAGGIE

Thank you

DOCTOR

I also noticed when I looked at your chart your never got around to getting that bone density test we ordered for you last year.

MAGGIE

I know ... life is so busy!

DOCTOR

I completely understand, but the bone density test is a very simple and painless way of checking on our bone health. Osteoporosis ... or thinning of your bone ... is very common especially as you get older. And if you do have osteoporosis there are medications I could put you on that decrease your risk of breaking a bone down the road.

MAGGIE

Must be like George is taking one a week?

DOCTOR

Exactly. And also I noticed that it's been a while since you had an eye exam.

MAGGIE

Yeah, too long ... I'll schedule that, too.

DOCTOR

Thank you so much.

MAGGIE

So what else should I be doing to prevent falls?

DOCTOR

I saved the best for last. And that's exercise. You know exercise will increase your strength, your balance, your stability. And there are so many great options to choose from. Tai Chi is especially good at fall prevention, but there are many good choices. But whatever you choose, I want it to be something you enjoy so you'll stick with it.

So just to review, your going to cut out those sleeping medications, make sure you're taking your calcium and Vitamin D supplements, schedule the bone density test and your eye appointment and remember ...

MAGGIE

Keep exercising!

DOCTOR

Absolutely!

INT: GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM, FAMILY ROOM

George and Maggie are doing exercises. George is doing chair exercises; Maggie's are a bit more aggressive. (*NOTE: These exercises will be monitored by a PT to make sure they are appropriate for George and Maggie.*)

GEORGE (VO)

As I was getting better, my therapist gave me a list of exercises that I could do to help my recovery.

MAGGIE (VO)

And I got my own list of exercises that I should be doing.

GEORGE (VO)

We're doing this in addition to the Tai Chi Whenever we can, we try to do get out of the house and go for a walk. It feels good just to stay active.

MAGGIE (VO)

We're also looking into signing up for a seniors exercise class. That will not only give us a scheduled workout, but it will also give us a chance to stay connected with other people.

INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

GEORGE

A lot of what we're doing now is just about being a little more careful and intentional about what we're doing. Like when we're carrying things. Instead of loading ourselves up with a lot of things so we can carry it all in one trip, we carry fewer things, and make multiple trips.

MAGGIE

Not only is it safer, but we get a little more exercise that way. It's just about thinking about what we're doing, and making those little changes.

GEORGE (to Maggie)

Yeah ... like your shoes ...

MAGGIE (recalling a somewhat painful memory)

Oh, yeah ... the shoes ...

INT: EXAM ROOM

DOCTOR

Oh, and one more thing ... I want to make sure you're wearing sensible shoes as well.

MAGGIE

What do you mean, sensible shoes?

DOCTOR

You know ... something supportive, You want to avoid flip flops, high heels, strapless sandals ...

MAGGIE

Bummer!!

DOCTOR

I know, but it's so much better than breaking a hip

INT: MAGGIE'S CLOSET

GEORGE

... and these

MAGGIE

But these go with my orange dress! The one I bought in Mexico ...

GEORGE

But they have heels ... You know what the doctor said ... and these ... flip flops

MAGGIE

But I've worn them forever ...

GEORGE

It's time to get rid of them

MAGGIE

Right. Well now AI can go shopping for more sensible shoes!

### MODULE 3: PREPARING YOUR HOME

#### INT: THE DEN OF GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE

George and Maggie are surrounded by plastic storage boxes, books, photo albums, papers, etc. They banter back and forth about how to rearrange the furniture, what to get rid of, what to put into storage.

MAGGIE

So George, what do you think? I feel that we just need to be more aware of all this .... Look I can't go from here to there without slipping. Look at all this clutter.

GEORGE (VO)

Maggie has been on my case for years about cleaning up my den.

MAGGIE (VO)

But now there's an especially good reason ... to prevent falls.

#### INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

GEORGE

When I was recovering from my broken hip, my therapist gave me a checklist of things we can do around the house to make it easier for me to get around. And since I was using a walker, it helped a lot.

MAGGIE

And I found that the changes we made to the house made it easier for *me* to get around and do things, too. And I felt safer for the both of us. As they say ... an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

#### INT / EXT: VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

*George, Maggie, Julia and James go from room to room around the house, referring to the checklist as they do the "makeover." George and Maggie's voice over narrative are intermixed with comments by the four of them as they discuss details, logistics, etc. of each of the changes that they make.*

GEORGE (VO)

Julia and James came by and helped us. We went from room to room and went down the checklist that we got from Kaiser Permanente.

JAMES

I think we should start here and we can work on picking up some of the stuff around here.

MAGGIE (VO)

The first thing we did was to pick up and fix all those things that we can slip on or trip over, like throw rugs, extension cords, and all that clutter.

INT – LIVING ROOM

*Maggie put pillow / cushion on chair; George tests it by sitting down and getting up.*

GEORGE (VO)

Just putting a cushion on chairs raises them up just enough so it's easier to sit down and stand up.

*James and Julia remove a rocker and bring in a solid wingback chair.*

MAGGIE (VO)

And whoever said that seniors belong in rockers was off his rocker! Since rockers move back and forth, they don't give you something stable to hang onto. So we replaced our rocker with a good solid chair.

GEORGE

We put a chair in our dressing area so we wouldn't have to stand when we get dressed. Sitting on that chair sure did make putting my pants on a lot easier.

GEORGE (VO)

Julia helped us install some extra lighting in some dark places around the house.

MAGGIE (VO)

We also put in night lights so we can see where we're going when we get up in the middle of the night.

GEORGE (VO)

Julia also put tape on the edges of the steps in front of our house. The tape on the edges really helps to see the steps more clearly.

MAGGIE (VO)

We also went through all my kitchen cabinets.

MAGGIE (to Julia)

... oh, I have to go get my step ladder.

JULIA

No Mom, that's too dangerous. Let's move the cups down to the bottom shelf. These plates that you don't use often, let's move them to the top shelf.

JULIA

Now let's go look at your pots and pans..

GEORGE (VO)

And we have a mop handy to clean up any spills that happen. Nothing worse than a wet floor!

MAGGIE

We also got a little rack for our dog bowls. This makes it easier for us to change her food and water.

### INT: BATHROOM IN GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE

George and his son-in-law James are installing a grab bar next to the toilet. James is reading the instructions; George is forging ahead with the installation process

GEORGE (to James)

We don't need those instructions. Just find a stud and....

JAMES

No now look. It says to angle it ...

GEORGE (VO)

Installing these grab bars was Maggie's idea.

### INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

Well, I've been reading that the bathroom is one of the most common places for people to fall. George was resistant at first.

GEORGE

Yeah, I didn't want the place to look like old people live here. And I don't like putting holes in the walls.

MAGGIE

I pointed out that we're seeing grab bars in restrooms everywhere these days. They're not just for seniors. It's really nice having something solid to hold on to when you're using the bathroom, or getting in and out of the bathtub and shower.

GEORGE

MAGGIE

We put a non-skid mat in the bathtub. We also got a bath bench, and a hand-held shower. I must say, that made showering a lot easier.

INT: THE DEN OF GEORGE AND MAGGIE'S HOUSE

The scene in the den is a marked contrast to the initial scene. Things are put away, furniture is rearranged to make it easier to get around, etc. George is surveying his newly made-over den.

MAGGIE

What do think? Isn't this nice?

GEORGE (*somewhat dubious*)

Well, I *think* I can make this work ...

MAGGIE

Of course you will! Everything's neat and tidy, you'll be able to find things easily ...

INT: DEN / OFFICE

Maggie and daughter Julia are on the computer, looking at web sites that feature accessibility items. They ad lib comments about items that they see.

MAGGIE (VO)

It's amazing all the things that are out there these days that can help make getting around and doing tasks so much easier. Furniture risers, reachers emergency call buttons, motion detector light switches.

INT: STORYTELLING SETTING

MAGGIE

I don't think we need to get some of those things right away, but it's something to be aware of when the time comes.

GEORGE

We've also been talking about doing some remodeling. Like updating our toilets to the new low-water models. I found out that a lot of toilets come with higher seats, which makes it easier getting up and down.

MAGGIE

We'll definitely get those when we get around to replacing our old toilets. (Turning to George) ... which will be soon, right?

GEORGE (giving a "Yes, dear" nod)

Mm-hmm.

INT: LIVING ROOM / DINING ROOM

Julia and James talk to camera, interspersed with a montage of scenes of George and Maggie, recapping the measures they've taken to avoid falls.

JULIA

When we got the call about Dad's fall we were really upset. Of course, we had to cancel our vacation, but we were more concerned about the long-term impact that his fall might have on Dad, and Mom ... and frankly on us.

JAMES

They've always been very active and independent. Now that they're retired and are in a position to really enjoy life, it would be awful to have a fall take all of that away.

JULIA

We're glad that they've recognized that it's up to them to take charge and do what they need to do to minimize their risk of falling.

JAMES

It's great to see them active and exercising regularly,

JULIA

And it's good to see them out socializing with other people. They're even getting out on Friday nights and dancing with their friends.

JAMES

They're staying on top of their other medical issues ... like taking their calcium and Vitamin D supplements. This will help them stay healthier while reducing their risk of falls.

JULIA

And the things they've done around the house make a lot of sense. From the grab bars to the rearranging of furniture and cleaning up ... it's all made a big difference.

JAMES

We know there are no guarantees, but we all feel a lot better knowing that they've done everything they can to keep on enjoying life and each other.

*At this point, George and Maggie enter the scene from the background, ad libbing that dinner's almost ready, and they could use some help setting the table. Good-natured bantering goes on as they get things out for dinner.*

