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THE GOOD LIFE

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Debbie Mumblo: A Walking Success Story at 71 Years Old



Debbie Mumblo and her partner Steve Mitchell, out for a hike.

Meet Debbie Mumblo, a remarkable person with a passion for walking that has brought her not only personal joy, but also numerous health benefits. At 71 years old, with four children and 14 grandchildren, Debbie is an inspiration to all. She's not just the Office Coordinator and Morning Receptionist at LifePath, where she's worked for eleven years, but she's also a walking enthusiast who has achieved inspiring success through her dedication to staying active.

For the past four years, Debbie has been an avid participant in the Million Steps to Prevent Falls campaign. This initiative encourages people to take steps to improve their health and prevent falls, a common concern for older adults. Every year, Debbie tracks her steps; she's walked over 750,000 steps for the program in total, or more than 300 miles over four Septembers. In 2018, she undertook an extraordinary challenge – to virtually “walk across the country.” Her goal was to cover the distance between Boston, MA, and Sacramento, CA: a whopping 2,636 miles. This meant an average of 7.3 miles per day. Remarkably, she exceeded her goal, walking an astonishing 2,849.74 miles, which equates to over 6.7 million steps!

Debbie's motivation for participating is simple – she loves walking. She finds solace in the peacefulness of walking and enjoys exploring the beauty of various walking trails, especially “Rails to Trails” paths. The health benefits of walking further inspire her. She's noticed weight loss, strengthened muscles, improved breathing, and an overall better sense of self.

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Her commitment to walking has brought her not only physical well-being but also a sense of adventure. Debbie's willingness to drive long distances just to experience new walking trails showcases her dedication. She thrives on the challenge and excitement of exploring new paths.

In recent times, Debbie has faced challenges that temporarily hindered her walking routine. An accidental chemical inhalation and a battle with COVID-19 created obstacles. Nevertheless, her determination remains unshaken. Despite setbacks, she plans to participate in this year's Million Steps to Prevent Falls campaign and gradually rebuild her walking routine. Her

goal is to regain her motivation and relish the health benefits she once enjoyed.

Debbie's story is a testament to the power of walking. It's a reminder that age is just a number, and one can achieve remarkable feats through dedication and a positive mindset. She proves that the simple act of walking can lead to profound improvements in physical and mental well-being. As a grandmother, a professional, and a walking enthusiast, Debbie Mumblo is a true walking success story, inspiring us all to put on our walking shoes and take steps towards a healthier and happier life.

If you'd like to participate in the Million Steps to Prevent Falls campaign, simply track your steps and submit them to LifePath, at <https://rb.gy/7rbtd>, by September 30. We will send our region's steps tally in hopes we can be a strong competitor with other areas of Massachusetts! Help us contribute to our steps tally and enjoy the health and fall prevention benefits.

Building Confidence on Our Feet: Strategies for Fall Prevention

Lynne Feldman, MBA, Director of Community Services



Lynne Feldman

While falls can affect anyone, they present a particularly serious concern for older adults. As we age, consequences of falls can be more severe, often resulting in fractures, hospitalizations, and diminished quality of life. Yet, fear of falling can actually increase our risk. In honor of Falls Prevention Awareness week (September 18-22), let's explore some strategies to reduce fall risk and gain confidence in our steadiness.

1. Maintain Physical Activity: Engaging in regular exercise holds the key to fortifying your body's resilience. Strengthening muscles and enhancing balance through activities like walking, tai chi, or supervised workouts can significantly reduce the likelihood of falling.

2. Illuminate Your Space: Adequate lighting is more than convenience; it is a means of hazard prevention. Illuminate all living spaces, corridors, and staircases sufficiently to eliminate shadows that might obscure obstacles.

3. Manage Cables and Cords: The perils of cluttered cords are often underestimated. Routinely inspect your living area and secure cords to prevent tripping hazards. Cord

concealers and cable management solutions can be invaluable tools.

4. Choose Appropriate Footwear: Your choice of footwear is pivotal. Opt for well-fitted shoes with non-slip soles that provide ample support. High heels and ill-fitting shoes can compromise stability and amplify the risk of falling.

5. Monitor Medications: Consult your healthcare provider regarding the side effects of your medications. Certain prescriptions can induce dizziness or imbalance. Being aware of these effects allows for informed decision-making and precautionary measures.

This journey towards fall prevention is not solitary; it involves collaboration with healthcare providers, family members, and support networks.

6. Modify Your Home Environment: Evaluate your living space critically. Remove loose rugs, declutter walkways, and arrange furniture to facilitate unobstructed movement. Necessary modifications, like installing grab bars and handrails in bathrooms and stairwells, can provide essential support.

7. Prioritize Vision Health: Regular eye examinations are imperative. Diminished vision can lead to misjudgment of distances and obstacles. Clear sight is an essential component of fall prevention.

8. Acknowledge Personal Limitations: Self-awareness is a valuable trait. Recognize your physical limitations and avoid overexertion. Utilize assistive devices, such as canes or walkers, if recommended by your healthcare professional.

This journey towards fall prevention is not solitary; it involves collaboration with healthcare providers, family members, and support networks. Communicate openly about your concerns and progress, and do not hesitate to seek assistance when needed. To manage concerns about falls, consider enrolling in a fall prevention program, such as A Matter of Balance, offered frequently by LifePath at local senior centers and other locations. LifePath also offers customized support for mobility concerns; our Resource Consultants can talk you through the options. Call 413-773-5555 or email info@LifePathMA.org to find out more.

Remember, the goal is to exercise caution and mindfulness while building confidence in our steadiness. Embracing these strategies empowers us to navigate our daily lives confidently and securely.



“You learn some great history and stories that you'd never have known without meeting these people. They're all unique and special in their own way.”

- Alan Coutinho, Volunteer Meals on Wheels Driver

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