

INDEPENDENCE EROSION

Threats To Self-Reliance Often Sneak Into The Lives Of Seniors

For safety, a doctor recommends to her 79 year old patient (who has arthritis that causes hand-grip and balance problems) that she should be sitting down when she holds her infant great grandson. Good advice. An act of concern. It is also a simple example of how an erosion of independence can sneak into the life of a senior.

For many seniors, independence isn't taken away, it slips away over time. Family members may notice difficulties (or lose confidence) and step in to be more helpful. Health professionals may place restrictions. What starts out as a practical concern results in some loss of freedom.

It is also quite common for seniors themselves to lose faith in some of their own abilities. So they alter their lifestyle to be safe or avoid embarrassment. Even though they are choosing to do this, they may feel they have no choice...and have lost a level of independence.



Poor vision or balance can turn a beautiful stairway into a barrier that robs a senior of the freedom to use a good portion of their own home.

COMMON THIEVES

There are many conditions that can rob a senior of some (or most) of their independence. Here are some of the general categories these conditions fall into.

- ◆ Acute and chronic illnesses.
- ◆ Physical disabilities and limitations.
- ◆ Loss of mental abilities.
- ◆ Psychological/emotional problems.
- ◆ Poor vision and poor hearing.
- ◆ Incontinence.
- ◆ Weight (too much and too little).

One condition can steal independence on its own. However, the loss is commonly magnified when the individual thieves get together and form a gang. Also, when any of the conditions create an incident that shakes the confidence of a senior or their family, the negative impact on independence can escalate quickly.

WHO'S SUSCEPTIBLE?

Here are some statistics for people (65 and older) who have ability-altering conditions that can sap their confidence and make them potential targets for the independence thieves.

- ◆ 30% of women and 47% of men report having trouble with their hearing.
- ◆ 19% of women and 16% of men report having trouble with their vision.
- ◆ 18% of women and 11% of men report clinically relevant depressive symptoms.
- ◆ 11% of women and 15% of men have moderate or severe memory impairment.
- ◆ 17% of women and 9% of men are unable to stoop or kneel.
- ◆ 15% of women and 7% of men are unable to lift 10 lbs.

(This data comes from charts that were published by the Federal Interagency Forum on Age-Related Statistics - 2004.)



Le Bleu Chateau

*An Assisted Living Home For The Elderly Where We Offer
Personal Comfort To Everyone In The Family*

CA Lic. #197607205 / #197607408

1900/1911 Grismer Ave.
Burbank, CA 91504

Phone: (818) 843-3141

Fax: (818) 843-2780

www.LeBleuChateau.com