Joanne Flack’s Story: A Fall from Distraction

The fall doesn’t hurt you. It’s that sudden stop that does us all in. About ten months ago, I took a good one. I needed to get up and move for something, and I wasn’t paying attention. Having the emergency medical technician pick me up off the floor was pretty embarrassing. I’d cracked my head, but otherwise I was fine. My blood pressure was a little high, but I didn’t go to the hospital to be checked out.

Just prior to my fall, I had my regular doctor make an appointment with a surgeon to put in a new knee. Unfortunately, my bones are too thin and surgery didn’t and isn’t going to happen. I left that office disappointed, and they told me to ‘take it easy, and slowly build the strength back up.’ They gave me a shot in the knee to provide cushion for about six months.

Because of my fall, I learned a few things:

* Make sure my feet are flat on the floor before attempting to stand.
* Once upright, pause to get my balance. Don’t be ashamed if I need help.
* Learn to use my walker. Having a walker fitted to me was very important to maintain my posture.
* Sitting too much caused broken skin on my bottom, which is very painful.
* The insurance will pay for physical therapy to come to me when I couldn’t get to them.
* I kept moving, even if it was only one step more per hour or two. I kept moving so my muscles wouldn’t get lazy.
* When I could move without pain, I felt great about that accomplishment. I just kept moving and walking was the best thing I could do.

I’ve recently learned I can use my walker with a seat to do my grocery shopping. I set the small basket on the seat and it feels so good to be able to be on my feet in the grocery store. I am driving again and, I like being able to go when I want and not when someone else is free to take me.

Following the doctor’s order to take it easy, being patient and doing lots of walking has helped me regain my strength and given me back the feeling of independence that I don’t want to give up.