

EMPOWERING OURSELVES

The holiday season can be particularly challenging because we end up in situations that require us to walk farther or stand longer than is healthy for us. **Remember the consequences of overdoing!** For half of us, those consequences can affect our walking or pain level for 24-48 hours, which is not a lot of fun! In this Newsletter, we offer some suggestions for how to ensure an enjoyable holiday season. Please share your thoughts and suggestions and we will publish those as well.

Together we can make a difference!

- Choose a place to sit that is in the middle of activities, where a lot of people will pass by, instead of sitting in a corner. That way you can easily call out to people and visit with them.
- Even better, choose a central place to sit where there is an empty seat next to you so that you can invite people to sit and visit with you.

80% mention having to stand in line for service (like a check-out counter)

Opportunities to shop online are increasing, but sometimes you want to shop in person. Again the sports cane can come in handy. Rather than having to hope that there are places to receive service sitting down, you can unfold the seat and remaining seated while waiting for service.

77% identify shopping at a supermarket or mall

The challenge with supermarkets and shopping malls is the unavoidable distances to be walked. Here are some ideas, which you may already be using all year:

- Chart out your walking ahead of time to minimize your route. If you are not familiar with layouts, malls often have maps on their websites.
- Identify places that you can sit down for a short rest and do so **before** you begin having mobility problems.
- Use a shopping cart to lean on for support as much of the way as possible.
- if possible, locate a Customer Service counter near the front of a store and ask the staff to act as your runner to fetch items you wish to purchase.

55% refer to problems using public transportation

If you rely on public transportation, strategize about ways to reduce your walking and standing time. Use a sports cane to ensure that you can sit down while waiting. If public transportation waits become extended during the holidays, consider ways to get a ride instead.

44% depend on their own vehicle but have trouble finding parking close by

Parking congestion becomes intense during the holiday season, and spaces close to where you want to go (even disabled parking spaces) fill up quickly. Consider alternatives to driving yourself such as having a friend drive who can drop you off right where you need to go, or even investing in taking a taxi.

HANDLING CHALLENGES OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

To help make this holiday season as pain-free as possible, we can use the results of the *Hidden Mobility Disabilities Survey* to target potential problem activities:

85% point to events (like open houses) where everyone stands

Holiday festivities tend to involve large group activities where people walk round to mix and mingle. So what if you need to be seated? Staying seated in one place can be isolating or can place you at the mercy of the people who choose to approach you. Here are some suggestions:

- Get a sports cane (with a folding seat), if you don't have one, and take it with you. That way you can move around and also be seated while you visit. (You can buy