

FALLS PREVENTION OUTREACH PROGRAM

FALLS PREVENTION

Risk of Falling

Older Canadians are at high risk of falling. Every year, one in three Canadians over the age of 65 will fall, often with serious consequences. Injuries such as hip, wrist and pelvic fractures are common in this age group and can have a lasting impact on quality of life.

Balance

Balance is important in order to maintain stability and ensure that we are able to complete our daily activities without risk of injury. These activities include simple tasks such as rising from a chair, standing or walking. Information collected from your muscles and senses, including your eyes and ears, is sent to the brain and coordinated to help you maintain your balance. It is also important for us to be able to regain our balance after a slip or trip.

Suggested Balance Exercise*

Starting position: Stand with feet should be shoulder width apart, directly behind a chair or couch that you can hold onto for support.

The move: While holding onto the chair, lift one foot off the floor by bending your knee. Hold this position for a few seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side.

Repetitions: Repeat the exercise 2-3 times on each leg. Start by holding for a few seconds on each side and as your balance improves try to hold the position for up to one minute.

*** When trying this exercise have someone present to provide additional support if needed.**

Preventing Falls

There are easy things you can do to help prevent falls. Most falls happen in the home making it the first place to start taking precautions. Your physical health is also important. Talk to a health professional, such as a chiropractor, about evaluating your health risks. A few steps of prevention can help you stay safely on your feet.

1. Talk to a health care professional such as a chiropractor to have your strength and balance evaluated.
2. Talk to your pharmacist about your medications, vitamins and herbal products that you are taking. Interactions may affect your balance and alertness.
3. Exercise regularly to improve your strength.
4. Eat a nutritious and well-balanced diet. Drink alcoholic beverages in moderation.
5. Wear supportive shoes or slippers with non-slip soles and take your time.



If you feel pain, discomfort or dizziness while performing any of these exercises, or within 72 hours of exercising, please cease performing these exercises and consult your doctor.

Removing hazards and installing safeguards in the home

In the kitchen

- Ensure the rugs have rubber backing.
- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Keep everyday items in easy reach.
- Make sure no cords/wires cross your path.
- Use non-slip floor wax.



In the bathroom

- Use a non-slip mat inside and outside the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and tub/shower.
- Purchase a bath and shower bench to get in and out safely.
- install a raised toilet seat.



Stairways

- Keep stairways clear of clutter.
- Ensure handrails on both sides.
- Repair loose railings.
- Install non-slip strips on the edge of each step
- Secure loose or wrinkled carpet.
- Ensure good lighting in stairwells.



Around the house

- Have clear paths from room to room.
- Place night lights to help guide you.
- Make sure tables and lamps are stable.
- Always sit when putting on or taking off shoes or clothing.
- Don't rush to answer the phone, consider a cordless.
- Put a bell or reflector on your pet's collar.

