



A PRESCRIPTION IN **PREVENTING A FALL**

Courtesy of:

- Peterborough Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries Clinic (705) 741-2284
- Chemong Physiotherapy (705) 292-9888
- Lindsay Physiotherapy (705) 324-8512
- Lindsay Rehab Health Centre (705) 324-0404

You can....

Fall in Love,

Enjoy the Fall Season,

Listen to the Sound

of a Waterfall, or even

Fall from Grace.

But....

If You are Over Age 65

You have a 1 in 3 Chance

of Falling Down this Year.

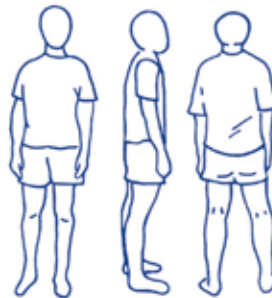
One of the many changes associated with aging is a decrease in balance and coordination. These changes increase the risk of falls, which often result in injury. To a large extent falls can be prevented.

BALANCE EXERCISES

It is very important that you move with control and within your limits. Take precautions that you do not fall. Do each exercise 5-10 repetitions, 2x per day.



◀ **SIDE LEG KICKS**
Kick right leg out to side. Bring back to center and repeat with left leg.



◀ **TURNING IN PLACE**
Standing in place, lead with head and turn slowly making quarter turns/half turns/full turns toward right/left.

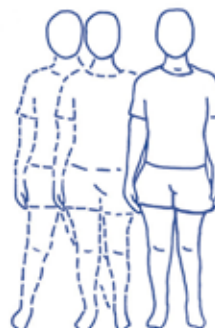
▶ **BACK LEG KICKS**
Kick leg back as far as possible. Return to center and repeat with other leg.



▶ **WALK BACKWARDS**
Walk backward with eyes open. Take even steps, making sure each foot lifts off the floor. Turn and walk backward to starting place.



◀ **SINGLE LEG STANDS**
Holding onto a support, lift leg up while maintaining balance over single leg. Progress to removing hands from support surface for longer periods of time. Repeat with other leg.



◀ **SIDE-STEPPING**
Walk to right/left side with eyes open. Walk evenly, leading with same foot. Make sure each foot lifts off the floor.



CAUSES OF FALLS

- **Vision:** difficulty distinguishing light & darkness; increased glare; difficulty in degree of acuity; problems with depth perception.
- **Balance:** increased sway; decreased proprioception
- **Gait:** decreased speed, step length and height; increased step width.
- **Musculoskeletal System:** decreased muscle strength; loss of muscle mass; decreased postural control; decreased reaction times; slower movement speed; neuropathy.

Also included are:

- acute diseases (i.e. syncope)
- chronic diseases (i.e. arthritis, neurological disorders)
- some medications

Extrinsic Risk Factors For Falls:

- icy sidewalks
- loose rugs
- poor lighting
- obstacles that can be easily tripped over
- assistive devices (walkers, canes, bed rails)
- improper footwear

Not surprisingly, as the number of risk factors increase, the chance of falling will increase. It is clear that many falls are a result of a complex interaction between both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

CHECK LIST FOR PREVENTION OF FALLS

BATHROOM

- non-slip mats in the tub and on the floor
- soap, shampoo and towel are easy to reach
- grab bars in the bathtub or shower
- grab bars beside the toilet
- has bright lights & a night light

BEDROOM

- has a phone beside the bed
- emergency phone numbers are readily available
- has a light that is accessible to turn on/off before you get out of bed
- pathways are free of clutter
- walking aids, if used, are easy to reach before you get out of bed
- electrical cords from electric blankets, lamps etc. are safely secured and controls are easy to reach

KITCHEN

- regularly used items can be easily reached
- bright lighting over work areas
- floors are clean and dry, not slippery
- cupboard doors and drawers are kept closed
- floors are free of clutter

LOUNGE ROOM

- you can easily get out of your lounge chair
- pathways are free of cords, furniture and clutter
- furniture is placed so you don't need to stretch or lean to open windows
- rugs are smooth and firmly in place

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

- step edges have an adhesive non-slip strip and edges can be seen clearly
- steps have a sturdy, easy-to-grip handrail
- paths around house are in good repair
- paths and entrances are well lit at night
- stairs and steps are well lit with light switch at top and bottom. Automatic sensor lights recommended.
- garage floors are free of grease, oil and dirt
- tools are unplugged and stored away
- garden is free of hazards (i.e. tools, hoses)
- stepstool or stepladder is short and sturdy with anti-slip feet

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

- shoes or boots have non-slip soles
- shoes or boots have rounded, broad heels
- tight fitting non-slip slippers for inside the house
- clothing fits securely - no dangling cords or hems
- sit down to dress rather than balancing yourself

For more information on fall related injuries and prevention contact:

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