

Prevention Strategies to Reduce Your Risk of Falling

For personal training to improve your strength and balance, contact:

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Visit www.personalbestthebook.com

Safety Modifications at Home –1- Identify Hazards and 2- Modify Them

Grab bars in shower/tub ♦ Raised toilet seat ♦ Bath seat in shower

Non-slip mat in shower/tub ♦ Non-slip mat on bathroom floor ♦ Leave night light on in bathroom

Have unobstructed path from bedroom to bathroom ♦ Renovations e.g., install walk-in shower, remove steps and deep jacuzzi style bathtub

Remove clutter ♦ Keep floors junk-free ♦ Hide telephone and electrical cords

Remove or tape down area rugs ♦ Remove shaggy carpeting ♦ Put non-slip rubber treads on uncarpeted steps ♦ Install handrails on both sides of staircases and use them every time ♦ Repair loose or uneven steps ♦ Store often-used items in easy-to-reach cupboards ♦ ♦ Avoid climbing on step ladder or chair to reach high cupboards

Have a phone and lamp next to your bed ♦ Get up from bed slowly to avoid dizziness

Be aware of dogs, cats that may cross your path ♦ Be aware of visiting grandchildren and their toys on the floor ♦ Discard worn-out shoes and slippers, wear non-slip footwear in home (not socks)

Keep outside stairs, walkways and driveway free of snow/ice and well lit ♦

Store yard equipment (hoses, rakes) ♦ Hire help to do risky tasks (e.g., climbing ladder to trim hedges, replacing ceiling bulb, snow shovelling)

Use personal emergency response systems as needed ♦ If you live alone, have a daily phone call with a buddy to ensure you're both okay ♦ Keep emergency phone numbers in large print near phone

Wear non-slip shoes indoors and outdoors ♦ Wear winter boots that have good treads, use ice grips over boots in winter ♦ Park indoors in winter or at night if you have a garage

Bring night light when staying overnight elsewhere (hotel, family's home) ♦ Pay attention when walking to avoid potholes, cracks in sidewalks, curbs, steps. In winter, get help walking from car to door.

Get a professional assessment of your home by an occupational therapist and ask for referrals for reliable workers to do the modifications/installations. Ask if financial assistance is available for seniors.

Health Checks

Vision exam

Hearing test

Routine physical

- Ask if any of your medications can cause dizziness, imbalance or drowsiness
- Discuss mobility and gait issues or changes
- Inform physician of any falls in the past year
- Discuss cognitive/memory issues
- Ask if further physical/cognitive assessments are needed
- Ask if you need supplements (vitamin D or calcium) or a nutritional assessment with dietician
- Do you need an osteoporosis screening?
- Are you sleeping well each night?
- Talk to your doctor or incontinence specialist if you have to rush to the toilet to urinate

Foot care – Do you need different shoes, lower heels, or orthotics?

Use walking aid as prescribed (e.g., cane, walker, walking poles)

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Nutrition

- Discuss any dietary concerns with a registered dietician; avoid fad diets and products
- Refer to 2019 Canada Food Guidelines
- Ensure you're eating a balanced diet with adequate protein, healthy carbs and healthy fats
- If you live alone, ensure you can prepare or purchase healthy meals
- If you feel depressed and loss of appetite, discuss with physician
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Ensure any dentures fit properly so they don't interfere with eating
- If your medications or health issues decrease your appetite, discuss with physician
- Drink water to prevent dehydration
- Keep bones strong with calcium-rich foods (e.g., dairy products, salmon)
- Keep bones strong with vitamin D supplement in dosage recommended by your physician
- Get help, if needed, with grocery shopping and meal preparation
- If you're diabetic you can get dizzy and fall. Talk to your doctor to ensure you have it under control.

Exercise

Some benefits of regular exercise: Prevent muscle loss and gain muscle/strength, Strengthen bones, Improve balance, Increase flexibility, Manage weight, Heart health, Cognitive health

Do strength-building (resistance) exercises 2-3 time per week; and cardio exercises (e.g., walking) 5 times per week for total of at least 150 minutes of cardio weekly. Take fitness classes and/or work one-on-one with a personal trainer to gain noticeable improvements. Progressively challenging supervised strength and balance training is a safe and effective way to reduce your risk of falling. The benefits of exercise as part of a falls prevention strategy are short-lived if you stop exercising.

If you're performing the following exercises at home, ensure you use a sturdy chair. If you're unsteady, exercise while someone else is around in case of emergency.

Basic exercises you can do at home 3+ times per week:

- Step up and down on a step. Hold handrail if unsteady.
- Get up from and sit down in a chair
- Hold back of chair and balance on one foot
- Hold back of chair and raise toes
- Hold back of chair and push up onto toes lifting heels
- Hold back of chair, raise one leg to the side, then other leg; advanced is without holding on
- Hold back of chair, push one leg back then other leg; advanced is without holding on
- Squats and lunges holding chair; advanced is without holding on
- Sitting, raise legs forward then lower; advanced is with ball between feet
- Tiptoe-style walking in a straight line for balance

Emergency Plan If You Fall

Assess the situation: Are you injured? ♦ Do you need to call or get someone else to call 9-11?
Is anyone around who can help? ♦ Can you sit up on the floor? ♦ Rest to let your blood pressure adjust before you try to get up. ♦ Can you reach a phone to call for help? ♦ Are you home alone? Is anyone coming home soon? ♦ Can you crawl to a sturdy chair, kneel then lift yourself off the floor onto a chair? Can you drag yourself or crawl to a phone to call for help? ♦ Do you have an emergency response system? (necklace or bracelet) ♦ Do you have phone numbers of emergency contacts you or someone else can call?