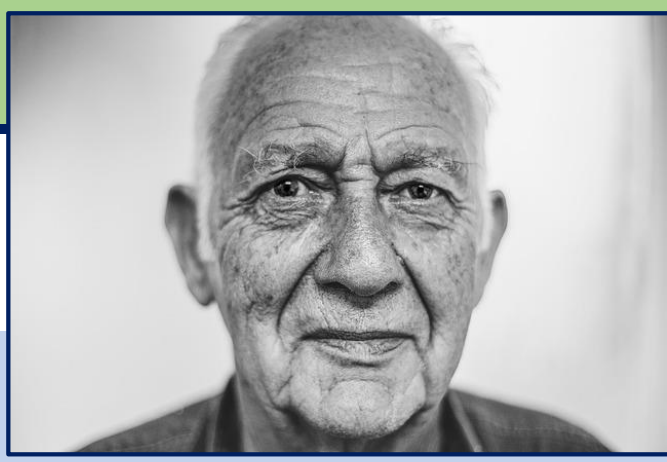
Addressing Geriatric Falls in the Outpatient Setting: A Prevention Initiative

Preventing Falls at a Glance:

Strategies to Decrease Fall Risk & Improve Function in Older Adults



① Identify Home Hazards

Use the following fall prevention checklist to identify and correct home fall hazards.

- I have to walk around clutter and/or furniture while walking through my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," adjust furniture and remove clutter to clear your path.*

- There are thick carpets (e.g. shag) and/or throw rugs in my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," remove shag and/or throw rugs or secure throw rugs with non-slip backing.*

- There are cords/wires/cables extending across walking spaces in my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," wrap excess cord and secure it against the wall. Consider installing additional outlets to prevent cords across walking space.*

- Rooms, hallways, and/or stairwells are dimly lit in my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," request assistance installing additional lighting.*

- I wear socks and/or slippers in my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," wear shoes with non-slip tread while walking in home.*

- I have difficulty climbing stairs in my home.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," assure railings and stair carpet are securely fastened. Consider installing a stairlift to travel up and down stairs.*

- I have difficulty getting into/out of the shower and/or onto/off of the toilet.

  ☐ Yes ☐ No *If "Yes," install hand grab bars both inside the shower and next to the toilet. Place a non-slip mat in the shower for added traction.*

Review medications (including over-the-counter & supplements)

Receive regular eye exams & replace eyeglasses as needed

Receive regular foot exams & discuss proper footwear

② Speak Up: Talk to Your Provider

- If you are concerned about falling, or recently suffered a fall, talk to your healthcare provider.
- Your healthcare provider can help identify physical, environmental, and/or pharmacological factors that may be contributing to your fall risk.

③ Stay Active: Improve Your Function

Engaging in regular physical activity can improve **strength**, **balance**, and **coordination**, reducing your risk of falling.

Physical Activity Recommendation

- Adults aged 65 and older should strive to engage in **150 minutes** of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week

AND

- Strength training at least 2 times per week working major muscle groups

Aerobic Exercise Suggestions

Walking: Walk in bouts of at least 10 minutes with well-fitting sneakers with good tread. Try walking alone or with a friend!

Cycling: Cycle in bouts of at least 10 minutes, adjusting resistance as needed. A good low-impact option for individuals with arthritis.

Water Aerobics: Consider taking a beginner's class. Also good for individuals with arthritis.

Improving Balance & Flexibility with Tai Chi: Studies have shown tai chi to reduce falls and improve balance & flexibility in older adults.

Dispelling Myths about Aging and Exercise

- I have never exercised before, it is too late to start…

  …It is never too late to begin an exercise program.

- I cannot exercise because of my arthritic joints…

  …Exercise actually helps relieve arthritic joint pain.

- I need to go to a gym to exercise…

  …Many effective exercises can be done right at home.

- I should save my strength and energy for my daily activities rather than exercise…

  …Exercise can increase your strength & energy.

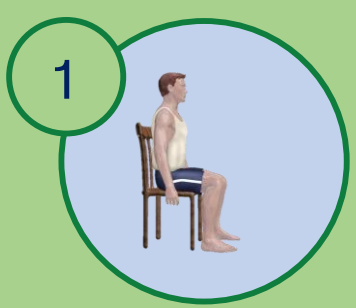
- I am afraid I will fall and hurt myself while exercising…

  …Regular exercise can actually help reduce your risk of falling.

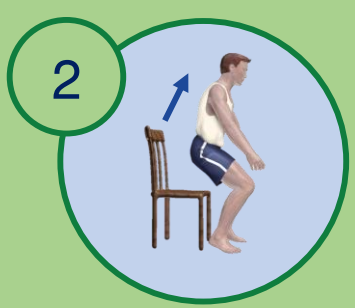
Strength Training For Fall Prevention

Use the *Chair Stand Exercise* below 2–3 times per week to improve leg/hip strength & balance.

Sit in a sturdy chair with your back straight and feet flat on the floor.



Using your hands as little as possible, slowly rise from the chair to a full stand.



Slowly, return to the seated position. **Repeat:** 10–15 times.