

Afraid of falling?

Build confidence and take control of your fear!

Things to know about falls.

- One out of three people over 65 years old will fall each year
- One out of two people over 85 years old will fall each year.
- Falling can be dangerous. Falls may cause broken bones, hospital visits, loss of the ability to take care of yourself , and sometimes even death.

Common things that cause people to fall.

- Decreased or bad eye sight
- Weak muscles
- Trouble keeping balance
- Side effects from medicine
- Bad lighting or dark areas in your house
- Uneven or slippery ground



Good News: You can change many of the things listed above.
You can reduce your chance of falling!

What can I do to help stop myself from falling?

- Schedule an eye check up with your doctor.
- Exercise to improve strength and balance.
- Talk with your doctor about the side effects of your medicine.
- Remove things from the floor of your house that may cause you to trip like rugs, toys, and foot stools.
- Put nightlights in areas of your house where you walk when it is dark.

Where do I start?

1. Schedule an appointment for a health checkup with your doctor. Make sure to talk with him or her about your fear of falling. Ask about your medicine and if it has any side effects.
2. Start exercising. Use the exercises given below to improve your strength and balance. These two skills will help you decrease your chance of falling.

Exercise 1: Single leg balance

Stand on one leg for 15 seconds while holding on to something stable as shown in the picture. Repeat 6 times per leg. Try this once in the morning, near breakfast, and once before bed. If 15 seconds is too long at first, start with a shorter time like 5 seconds and add time as this becomes too easy.

Exercise 2: Sit to stand

Use a chair like the one in the picture that is stable and has armrests. Sit down in the chair and immediately stand back up. Repeat sitting and standing 10-15 times. Do this once in the morning and once at night. If 10-15 times is too hard, do as many as you can safely each time you try.

If you feel dizzy at any time during exercise 1 or 2 sit down until you feel better.



References:

1. Falls among older adults: an overview. Center for Disease control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecrreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>. 10/6/2009. Accessed 7/27/2010.
2. Fuller, G.F. Falls in the elderly. American Academy of Family Physicians. <http://www.aafp.org/afp/20000401/2159.html>. Accessed 7/27/2010.
3. Home safety checklist. National Council on Ageing. <http://www.chd.gov/ncipc/falls/fallprev4.pdf>. Accessed 7/27/2010.

Other things to try!

- Community health programs
- Aquatic exercise
- Physical therapy

Make sure to ask your doctor about how to sign up.