

# Fall Prevention Through Physical Activity

## IT'S A FACT

Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries among Canadian senior citizens and account for more than half of all injuries among seniors. When we were young, falls seemed to be a natural part of life, but as we age, falls can be life-threatening. Falls represent a major threat to the health and independence of older adults. In fact, falling is associated with loss of independence, death, disability, and premature admission to long term care.

**The good news is that certain risk factors for falling can be eliminated and others considerably reduced by simple preventative measures.**



Approximately 33% of older adults 65+ and 50% of those 85+ living in the community will have a fall within the next year.

Falls are the most preventable health risk to Canadian older adults.

### **Risk Factors for Falling**

- History of falls in the past year
- Muscle weakness
- Gait changes
- Balance difficulties
- Four or more prescription medications
- Improper use of walking aids
- Visual disorders
- Arthritis, stroke, Parkinson's disease
- Difficulty performing activities of daily living (ex: bathing, toileting)
- Depression
- Cognitive impairment
- Over the age of 80

**The risk of falling can be significantly reduced with interventions that include balance training and muscle strengthening exercises.**



## Physical Activity & Fall Prevention

- Exercise helps to prevent falls by improving balance, coordination, and strength, which in turn increases independence.
- Even if you begin later in life, physical activity can result in significant health improvements.
- Physical activity can increase joint mobility, improve heart and lung function, and build stronger bones and muscles.
- As our body ages, our bone density decreases and our bones become more porous, contributing to an increased risk of fractures.
- Adequate calcium and Vitamin D are necessary for maintaining strong bones and muscles. Vitamin D is necessary for the absorption of calcium. Osteoporosis Canada recommends that adults over the age of 50 consume 1200 mg of calcium daily and between 800-1200 IU of Vitamin D daily.



***Make sure to consult your physician before starting any new type of physical activity.***

**\*For more information or references used contact  
Forever...in *motion* at  
(306)844-4080**

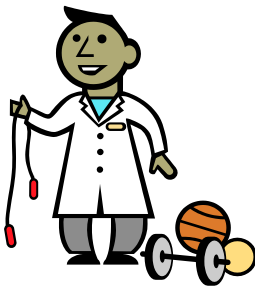
## What Kind of Activity is Best?

Activities that affect bone and muscle mass:

- **Weight-bearing exercise**  
This is any type of exercise where your muscles are working against gravity. This will help to maintain muscle and bone strength. Examples of weight-bearing exercises include walking, jogging, dancing, and climbing stairs.
- **Resistance exercise**  
This is any type of exercise where you are moving objects such as weights and therabands to create resistance. Resistance training has the ability to increase muscle size, strength, and power in older adults.
- **Activities that improve balance, coordination, and flexibility**  
Balance training can improve safe mobility. Flexibility exercises can improve range of motion. A great example is Tai Chi. Tai Chi can reduce the risk for falls by improving balance, coordination, and flexibility.

## References

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