

Reducing Falls Risk and Rate Beyond 65 Years of Age

This information is provided by research centres who are global leaders in aging and health.

Exercise

There is no doubt that keeping active will keep the body more healthy during the ageing process. Exercise is one of the most effective treatments for people who fall. It not only improves muscle strength and function but it improves balance and stamina. It keeps nerve signals strong, the inner ear healthy and maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.

Although exercise is good for our general health, not all exercises have proven benefit in preventing falls. We will select the appropriate proven exercises for you based on your balance, strength, mobility and joint/body control. It is important to note that performing exercise which only improves muscle strength does not reduce falls.

Exercises are done in a class or 1-1 in your home. Regardless of your ability, exercises can be done by anyone.

Research has repeatedly shown that strength and balance exercises are effective at reducing falls in people of high risk of falls and also low risk. These particular exercises are invaluable in falls prevention.

Low Blood Pressure

When we stand upright from sitting or lying, or when we stand still prolonged, gravity pulls blood down into our legs. If we stand up too quickly and our body does not respond quickly enough, the blood will drain away from our brain and result in dizziness, fainting and falls. It can also cause blurred vision, fatigue, nausea, and headache. As we get older our body reacts more slowly to a drop in blood pressure, which is one of the reasons why falls and fainting become more common as we get older.

To better control drops in blood pressure;

1. Review your medication with your doctor, especially if you are on 3 or more medications.
2. Having low blood pressure is not recommended.
2. Drink plenty of water: first thing in morning (8 ounces), with each meal and through the day.
Gradually increase daily water intake to a minimum of 6 glasses (8 ounces each).
3. Try wearing compression stockings. They prevent blood from collecting in the legs.
4. Squeezing leg and arm muscles will temporarily put the blood pressure up if we feel dizzy after standing. This helps get the blood flowing from the legs to the brain.
5. Avoid prolonged standing, especially in the heat.
Sit on the edge of the bed for a minute or two before getting up from lying.
6. Check your heart rate with your doctor regularly. Some people with a very slow heart rate will just drop down for no obvious reason.

Dizziness

Dizziness is usually a sign of an underlying medical problem and warrants a visit to your doctor.

Eye Health

To prevent a feeling of disequilibrium or unsteadiness, it is recommended to keep your eyes healthy by visiting an eye doctor regularly. As well, keeping active will stimulate the nerve signals from our feet and joints to our brain.

These recommendations will help keep you upright, stay fit, healthy, and independent. It is never too early to start.