

2024

San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force **FALL PREVENTION RESOURCE GUIDE**

San Diego County - EAST

Connecting older adults to organizations, programs, and information that can help reduce fall risk



www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org



**LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO**

Dear San Diego County Residents:



The San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force (Task Force) was established in 2004 to reduce falls and their devastating consequences in San Diego County. Members include healthcare professionals and senior service providers from non-profits, businesses, and government agencies who are dedicated to promoting the health, safety, independence, and quality of life of older adults through community-based fall prevention. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services (AIS) coordinates the Task Force.

The Task Force is pleased to offer four regional fall prevention resource guides. This guide highlights programs and resources available in the **Eastern** portion of San Diego County.

In addition to this guide, the Task Force also offers:

- **Networking opportunities:** On a monthly basis, members convene to collaborate on fall prevention initiatives, resources, awareness campaigns, and programs, as well as network with other professionals.
- **Speakers:** Members of the Task Force are available to speak to various groups throughout San Diego County on older adult fall prevention.
- **Community Events:** Hear from expert speakers, access resources, or take part in a balance screening. The Speakers and Balance Screeners Bureau provides free fall prevention presentations and fall risk screenings at various community settings such as libraries, senior living communities, and senior centers, both in-person and virtually. Resource tables are hosted at community events where educational materials and resources are provided.
- **Resources:** Task Force members collaborate to create materials and resources, including a pamphlet with fall facts, questions to ask your healthcare provider, steps on how to get up from a fall, and home safety checklists.

To learn more about the Task Force and connect with us:

Visit our website: www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org

Send us an e-mail: HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

Call: (858) 495-5500

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INTRODUCTION



The World Health Organization defines a fall as an event that results in a person coming to rest accidentally on the ground, floor, or other lower level.¹ Falls can cause broken bones, such as wrist, arm, ankle, and hip fractures. They can also cause traumatic brain injuries which can be very serious. Although not all

falls result in injury, older adults who experience a serious fall injury are at an increased risk of health decline, loss of independence, and nursing home placement.

HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

Falls are the second leading cause of in unintentional injury-related deaths worldwide. California is home to the largest older adult population in the nation, with more than 4.7 million adults over the age of 65. In the state, falls cause nearly half (41%) of all injury-related deaths and 70% of injury-related hospitalizations among older adults.

- In San Diego County, there were 323 deaths, 10,884 hospitalizations, and 27,254 emergency room discharges among those over the age of 60 because of falls in 2021.³
- **In the East County region**, there were 12 deaths, 2,689 hospitalizations, and 11,298 emergency room discharges due to falls in 2021.¹

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON RISK FACTORS FOR FALLS?

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors or conditions that increase the chance that a person may fall. The more risk factors a person has, the greater his or her chances of falling.

Some common risk factors include:

- Age
- History of falls
- Muscle weakness
- Problems with balance and gait
- Poor vision and hearing
- Postural hypotension (when your blood pressure drops when you go from lying down to sitting up, or from sitting to standing)
- Having chronic health conditions including arthritis, stroke, diabetes, Parkinson's, and dementia
- Presence of home and environmental hazards
- Improper use of assistive devices
- Use of multiple medications
- Dizziness
- Foot neuropathy
- Incontinence

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PREVENT FALLS?

Nearly 90% of older adults want to live in their current homes as long as possible, but for some, a serious injury from a fall may result in an inability to live independently.⁴ An older adult who has fallen may require a higher level of care, such as skilled nursing or assisted living. Other consequences of falls include:

- **Physical:** fractures, bruises, pain, or discomfort; the development of medical conditions due to prolonged immobility; unsteady walking
- **Social:** changes to daily routine; loss of social life; decreased quality of life
- **Psychological:** fear of falling; depression and anxiety; loss of self-esteem; embarrassment; distress
- **Financial:** medical costs to Medicare, Medicaid, and private or out of pocket payers

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK OF FALLING?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends four steps that you can take to prevent falls and stay independent:



SPEAK UP

Talk to your healthcare provider about your health, medications, and risk of falling.



KEEP MOVING

Engage in activities that improve balance and strength.



CHECK YOUR EYES

Get a dilated eye exam every year.



MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

Identify and remove fall hazards in and around your home.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

This guide is intended to help you identify resources that best suit your needs. These resources have been categorized into three sections: **Physical Activity, Home Safety, and Health Management**. Each section is further divided into “Organizations and Professionals That Can Help” and “Other Resources.” All programs, services, and resources are free or low-

cost and available to residents in the East region. Please contact the organizations listed below directly for more information or contact health promotion staff at Aging & Independence Services to speak with someone with county-wide knowledge of fall prevention resources at (858) 495-5500. For additional fall prevention resources and information, we invite you to research the following organizations:

San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force

www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org

National Council on Aging

www.NCOA.org/Older-Adults/Health/Prevention/Falls-Prevention

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.CDC.gov/STEADI

Administration for Community Living

www.ACL.gov/FallsPrevention

National Institute on Aging

www.NIA.NIH.gov/Health/Falls-And-Falls-Prevention

- **Hearing:** www.NIA.NIH.gov/Health/Hearing-Loss-Common-Problem-Older-Adults
- **Vision:** www.NIA.NIH.gov/Health/Aging-And-Your-Eyes

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

www.ASHA.org

Hearing Loss Association of America

www.HearingLoss.org

American Foundation for the Blind

www.AFB.org/Research-And-Initiatives/Aging

SECTION 1 – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Physical activity is one of the most important ways to lower your chances of falling. It keeps you strong and has both physical and mental health benefits. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are most helpful. Being physically inactive leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about the best type of physical activity program for you.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that adults aged 65 and older get at least:

- 150 minutes a week (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking. Or they need 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity such as hiking, jogging, or running.
- 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.
- 3 days a week of activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot.

If chronic conditions affect your ability to meet these recommendations, be as physically active as your abilities and conditions allow. To read the full guidelines, visit www.bit.ly/3WQuepU.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP:

Note: The organizations below offer virtual class options.

Aging & Independence Services

Aging & Independence Services provides a variety of in-person balance and exercise classes, including Feeling Fit Club, Tai Chi Moving for Better Balance, and Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention. To learn more, visit www.HealthierLivingSD.org or call (858) 495-5500. *Refer to page 24*

San Diego College of Continuing Education Emeritus Program

The Emeritus Program challenges adults to stay intellectually stimulated, socially engaged, and physically fit. Classes include Health and Wellness, Nutrition, and Tai Chi. Instruction is designed for adults aged 55 and older. To learn more, visit www.SDCCE.edu/Emeritus.

San Diego Oasis (La Mesa Location)

San Diego Oasis works to prevent isolation and loneliness in older adults so they can stay healthy, engaged, and involved in the world. They offer a unique educational program for older adults who want to continue to learn and be productive throughout life. Classes include exercise programs that focus on endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance. Membership is free and open to anyone 50 or older. To learn more, visit <https://San-Diego.OasisNet.org/> or call (760) 796-6020.

SilverSneakers

SilverSneakers is a health and fitness program designed for adults aged 65 and older that's included with many Medicare Plans. Members can access live online fitness classes and an on-demand video library of prerecorded workouts. Exercise classes are designed for seniors of all fitness levels and led by trained instructors. Members can go to gyms, community centers, and other participating locations. To learn more, visit www.SilverSneakers.com.

Your Local Senior Center

Senior centers often provide a wide array of registered and drop-in activities

for older adults, including physical activity programs, social opportunities, and meals. Contact your local senior center to find out what programs are available:

Name	Address	Phone #
<u>La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center</u>	8450 La Mesa Blvd, La Mesa, CA 91942	(619) 667-1322
<u>Salvation Army Senior Nutrition</u>	1011 East Main St, El Cajon, CA 92101	(619) 592-8292
<u>Sharp Senior Resource Center</u>	9000 Wakarusa St, La Mesa, CA 91942	(619) 740-4214

Your Local Recreation or Community Center

Recreation and community centers often provide a wide array of registered and drop-in activities for visitors of all ages, including Zumba, pickleball, open gym, walking groups, and other physical activity programs. Contact your local recreation or community center to find out what programs are available:

Name	Address	Phone #
<u>Alpine Community Center</u>	1830 Alpine Blvd, Alpine, CA 91901	(619) 445-7330
<u>Bostonia Recreation Center</u>	1049 Bostonia St, El Cajon, CA 92021	(619) 441-1670
<u>Fletcher Hills Community Center</u>	2345 Center St, El Cajon CA 92021	(619) 441-1672
<u>Hillside Community Center</u>	840 Buena Terrace, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619) 441-1674
<u>Kennedy Recreation Center</u>	1675 East Madison Ave, El Cajon, CA 92019	(619) 441-1676
<u>La Mesa Community Center</u>	4975 Memorial Dr, La Mesa, CA 91942	(619) 667-1300
Lemon Grove Recreation Center	3131 School Ln, Lemon Grove, CA 91945	(619) 825-3815
<u>Mountain Health Community Center Senior Nutrition</u>	976 Sheridan Rd, Campo, CA 91906	(619)-478-2384
<u>Renette Recreation Center</u>	935 <u>South</u> Emerald Ave, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619) 441-1678
<u>Spring Valley Community Center</u>	8735 Jamacha Blvd, Spring Valley, CA 91977	(619) 479-1832

Wells Center	1153 East Madison Ave, El Cajon, CA 92021	(619)-873-2322
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Your Local Community Pool or Aquatic Center

Aquatic programs are a great way for older adults to stay active. Water-based exercises are easier on the joints and can help improve overall health. Contact your local community pool or aquatic center to find out what programs are available, including lap swimming and group water aerobics classes:

Name	Address	Phone #
Fletcher Hills Pool	2345 Center Pl, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619) 441-1672
La Mesa Municipal Pool	5100 Memorial Dr, La Mesa, CA 91942	(619) 667-1494

Your Local Library

Local libraries often host events, workshops, and programs to promote lifelong learning, wellness, and community engagement. Many branches offer free fitness classes that can help with balance and strength, including yoga and tai chi.

Name	Address	Phone #
Alpine Library	1752 Alpine Blvd, Alpine, CA 91901	(619)-445-4221
Campo-Morena Village Library	31356 Highway 94, Campo, CA 91906	(619)-478-5945
Casa De Oro Library	9805 Campo Rd, #180, Spring Valley, CA 91977	(619)-463-3236
Crest Library	105 Juanita Ln, El Cajon, CA 92021	(619)-442-7083
Descanso Library	9545 River Dr, Descanso, CA 91916	(619)-445-5279
El Cajon Library	201 E Douglas, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619)-588-3718
Fletcher Hills Library	576 Garfield Ave, El Cajon, CA 92020	(619)-466-1132
La Mesa Library	8074 Allison Ave, La Mesa, CA 91942	(619)-469-2151

<u>Lakeside Library</u>	12428 Woodside Ave, Lakeside, CA 92040	(619)-443-1811
<u>Lemon Grove Library</u>	3001 School Ln, Lemon Grove, CA 91945	(619)-463-9819
<u>Pine Valley Library</u>	28804 Old Hwy 80, Pine Valley, CA 91962	(619)-473-8022
<u>Potrero Library</u>	24883 Potrero Valley Rd, Potrero, CA 91963	(619)-478-5978
<u>Rancho San Diego Library</u>	11555 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon, CA 92019	(619)-660-5370
<u>Santee Library</u>	9225 Carlton Hills Blvd #17, Santee, CA 92071	(619)-448-1863
<u>Spring Valley Library</u>	836 Kempton St, Spring Valley, CA 91977	(619)-463-3006

PROFESSIONALS THAT CAN HELP:

Physical Therapists (PTs)

Physical therapists are trained in providing specific and individualized exercise programs to increase mobility, strength, and balance. To learn more, visit www.apta.org. To find a Board-Certified PT in Geriatrics, visit bit.ly/3L6byQs.

- **Vestibular Physical Therapy**, also known as vestibular rehabilitation, is a specialized type of physical therapy and may be more effective than general physical therapy for patients with specific problems such as: chronic falls, unexplained falls, balance problems, dizziness, or vertigo. To find a vestibular physical therapist in your area visit, www.vestibular.org/healthcare-directory. To find a map of vestibular rehabilitation providers, hosted by the Academy of Neurology Physical Therapy's Vestibular Special Interest Group, visit bit.ly/3kYgPPn.

Certified Health and Fitness Professionals

Certified Health and Fitness Professionals, such as Personal Trainers, Group Fitness Instructors, Medical Exercise Specialists, and Health Coaches, can help you work towards your health and fitness goals. To find an American Council on Exercise (ACE) certified health and fitness professional in your area, visit www.ACEFitness.org.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Go4Life

Go4Life, a campaign from the National Institute on Aging, is designed to help you fit exercise and physical activity into your daily life. The campaign offers exercises, motivational tips, and resources to help you get ready, start exercising, and keep going. To learn more, visit www.bit.ly/3C6GZoG.

Walking Groups

Walking groups are a great way to maintain your health and independence while socializing with others. Regular physical activity can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke, slow osteoporosis, improve cognitive functioning and boost your mood. To learn more, visit www.HealthierLivingSD.org.

YouTube

Can't find an in-person exercise class in your area, or prefer to exercise at home? YouTube has countless free workout videos for older adults. Always consult your healthcare provider before starting a physical activity program. Visit www.YouTube.com to search for videos by ability level (i.e. seated, standing) or type of exercise (i.e. strength, balance).

Ride Well to Age Well Guide

The Age Well Transportation and Community Connections team created the *Ride Well to Age Well Guide*. It catalogs transportation options throughout San Diego County and is organized by region. Many of these services provide transportation to some of the sites listed in this guide. Visit <https://bit.ly/4blan9U> to view the guide.

SECTION 2 – HOME SAFETY



According to AARP, 90% of older adults want to age in place and maintain independence, but 85% of older adults have done nothing to prepare their homes for aging. Furthermore, six out of every ten falls occur at home. We spend much of our time at home and tend to move around without thinking about our safety. To maintain your independence, it's important to thoroughly assess your living space and make necessary changes so that you can continue to age in place.

Home Safety Checklist

Floors

- Clear pathways of furniture and clutter.
- Coil or tape wires and cords to the wall.
- Secure rugs and carpets to the floor with double-sided tape (or remove).
- Do not use floor wax.
- Remove low chairs that are difficult to sit in and get out of easily.

Stairs and Steps

- Keep objects off the stairs.
- Fix broken or uneven steps.
- Fix loose handrails or put in new ones on both sides of the stairs.
- Install an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Apply reflective tape to the bottom and top of the stairs.

Kitchen

- Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high).
- Keep a Vial of Life (see appendix) or current list of health information on your fridge in the event of an emergency.
- Never use a chair as a step stool.

Bedroom

- Adjust bed height to a comfortable position.

Lighting

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- Install a nightlight so you can see where you're walking (some nightlights go on by themselves after dark).
- Replace burnt out light bulbs.

Clothing/Accessories

- Wear shoes that have a thin, non-slip sole.
- Wear pants and dresses that have been hemmed so they don't touch the floor.
- Carry a mobile or portable phone with you at all times.
- Consider an emergency response system.

Bathrooms

- Put a non-slip rubber mat on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.
- Consider using a raised toilet seat, padded shower seat, and/or handheld shower head.

Outdoors

- Repair cracks and gaps in the sidewalk or driveway.
- Trim shrubbery along paths to the door.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP:

ElderHelp

Through the Home Safety & Maintenance program, eligible adults aged 60 years and older can receive volunteer assistance with minor projects and services such as home safety assessments, installation of safety bars, replacement of lightbulbs, testing of smoke detectors, and more. To learn more, call (619) 284-9281 (services are available based on volunteer availability).

Jewish Family Service

Fix-It Service provides a four-point safety check, along with minor safety repairs and modifications to improve your mobility and security at home. All services are completed by a pre-screened team of volunteers. To learn more, visit www.bit.ly/3WG4wEG or call (858) 637-3210 (service is limited to Alpine, Boulevard, Campo, Descanso, Dulzura, Guatay, Jacumba/Jamul, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Mt. Laguna, Pine Valley, Spring Valley, Tecate, El Cajon, Lakeside/Santee, and Potrero).

Rebuilding Together San Diego

Through the Safe at Home Program, eligible adults aged 60 years and older can receive free minor home repairs and renovations, including but not limited to, installation of grab bars, raised toilet seats, smoke detectors, and portable threshold ramps; light fixture replacement; and minor electrical repair. To learn more, visit www.RebuildingTogetherSD.org or call (619) 231-7873.

PROFESSIONALS THAT CAN HELP:

Occupational Therapists (OTs)

Occupational therapists are experts in identifying and addressing home safety concerns to help older adults remain in their homes safely. To learn more, visit www.AOTA.org/about/what-is-ot.

Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS)

Certified Aging in Place Specialists are professionals who are trained in meeting the needs of older adults by assisting with aging in place home renovations. CAPS professionals undergo extensive training offered by the National Association of Home Builders to acquire this designation. To access

an Aging in Place Remodeling Checklist, visit bit.ly/3YBSKvn. To find a CAPS near you, visit www.bit.ly/471cxu4.

OTHER RESOURCES:

HomeFit Guide

AARP has created the HomeFit Guide, a 36-page guide with more than 100 tips and suggestions for how to live safely and comfortably in your home. The guide can help individuals and families make their current or future residence—or that of a loved one—"aging-friendly." To access this resource, please visit www.bit.ly/3FPOTDO.

Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults

The Centers for Disease Control has created a checklist that asks about hazards found in each room of your home. For each hazard, the checklist tells you how to fix the problem. At the end of the checklist, you'll find other tips for preventing falls. To view the checklist, please visit www.bit.ly/3l9Eplp.

National Directory of Home Modifications and Repair Resources

The National Directory of Home Modification and Repair Resources lists programs and businesses for home modification in each state. Home modification refers to converting or adapting the environment to make performing tasks easier, reduce accidents, and support independent living. To access this resource, please visit http://www.homemods.org/national-directory/#state_directory.

SECTION 3 – HEALTH MANAGEMENT



As you age, you can develop more chronic conditions, such as diabetes and arthritis, which can increase your fall risk. Additionally, you may be prescribed more medication to treat these conditions. Taking multiple medications can put you at risk for harmful drug interactions and adverse side effects, such as dizziness and dehydration. Learning how to effectively manage your health and medications is critical to your safety.

Questions for Your Health Care Provider

1. **Can my medication contribute to a fall?** Have your healthcare provider review all current medications and supplements. Ask about possible side effects or interactions from the combination of drugs.
2. **Should I be taking nutritional supplements?** Talk to your healthcare provider before starting any medications, including supplements. You may benefit from increasing the number of vitamins and minerals in your diet. Having too little may cause muscle weakness, decreased bone mass, and reduced neurological functioning which can increase

your risk of falling. Keep a medication list and update it regularly. It should include all prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements.

3. **How can my current health affect my risk of falling?** Your healthcare provider can conduct a physical examination to evaluate your functional, neurological, visual, cardiac, and mental health status to determine if you are at an increased risk of falling. Ask for referrals if needed. You may benefit from seeing a healthcare provider who specializes in vision, physical therapy, or occupational therapy.
4. **Can physical activity reduce my risk of falling?** Being physically active is one of the most important ways to reduce your risk of falling. It can improve strength, balance, flexibility, and bone mass. Tai Chi, which is offered by AIS, is one program that has been shown to reduce falls and increase activity levels in older adults.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP:

Note: The organizations below offer virtual class options.

Aging & Independence Services*

Aging & Independence Services provides small-group workshops as part of the Chronic Disease Self-Management (Healthier Living) program. During these workshops, you will learn how to set goals and stick to them, read food labels and meal plan, manage stress and difficult emotions, safely manage medications, and exercise to take care of your health. Participants receive a free Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions book and relaxation CD. To learn more, visit www.HealthierLivingSD.org or call (858) 495-5500.

San Diego Oasis (La Mesa Location)*

San Diego Oasis is a unique educational program for adults 50+ who want to continue to learn and be productive throughout life. Program offerings include self-management programs that focus on chronic diseases, diabetes, and pain management. Membership is free and open to anyone 50 or older. To learn more, visit <https://san-diego.oasisnet.org> or call (760) 796-6020.

PROFESSIONALS THAT CAN HELP:

Pharmacists

Pharmacists are an important part of any fall prevention team. When you pick up your medications, use the opportunity to receive counselling about any side effects you're experiencing, and any changes in the medications you're taking.

Primary Care Physician (PCPs)

Primary Care Physicians play a critical role in reducing fall risk factors. They know your medical history and can help you manage chronic conditions like diabetes and arthritis that may put you at risk. PCP's can also perform fall risk screenings, recommend evidence-based programs designed to reduce fall risk, spot hidden injuries resulting from a fall, and evaluate side-effects and other problems with medications that may increase your risk of falling. Be proactive about addressing falls when you visit your doctor. Tell your doctor if you've fallen recently, feel unsteady on your feet, or are worried about falling.

OTHER RESOURCES:

National Health Organizations

National health organizations (often labeled association, foundation, or society) are non-profit organizations that serve to educate, advocate and support people affected by a range of health conditions. Oftentimes, there are local chapters that work within their communities to provide further support. Visit the websites below to learn more about some of the most popular national health organizations:

Name	Website
Alzheimer's Association	www.Alz.org
American Cancer Society	www.Cancer.org
American Diabetes Association	www.Diabetes.org
American Heart Association	www.Heart.org
American Lung Association	www.Lung.org
American Stroke Association	www.Stroke.org
Arthritis Foundation	www.Arthritis.org
Parkinson's Foundation	www.Parkinsons.org
Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation	www.bonehealthandosteoporosis.org

AgeWell Planner

The National Council on Aging created an Age Well Planner for older adults and family members to complete regarding the health and well-being of aging adults. The planner includes a personalized assessment for individuals to complete depending on their role. At the completion of the assessment, individualized resources are provided based on three categories: finance, Medicare, health and wellness. To access the AgeWell Planner, visit www.NCOA.org/Age-Well-Planner.

Vial of Life

The Vial of Life is a magnetized plastic sleeve that can be attached to your refrigerator door. Inside the sleeve is a form you can complete with important information for first responders to access in the event of a fall or medical emergency. Items you can list include health conditions or disabilities, current medications and immunizations, allergies, physician and emergency contacts, location of advanced healthcare directive (if applicable), and insurance details. Also included in the sleeve is a sticker that can be placed on your front door or window to notify first responders to look for the Vial of Life on your refrigerator door. To request a Vial of Life, call (858) 495-5500 or email HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Community Health Statistics Unit. (2023, April 5). *2021 Community Profiles: Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Regions*. tableau public. Retrieved September 25, 2023, from <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/chsu/viz/2021CommunityProfilesbyHHSRegion/HHS?publish=yes>
- ² World Health Organization. (2021, April 26). *Falls*. World Health Organization. Retrieved January 6, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/falls>
- ³ *Older adult falls prevention program*. Older Adult Falls Prevention Program. (2020). Retrieved January 6, 2023, from <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DCDC/SACB/Pages/OlderAdultFallsPreventionProgram.aspx>
- ⁴ Binette, Joanne, and Fanni Farago. 2021 Home and Community Preference Survey: A National Survey of Adults Age 18-Plus. Washington, DC: AARP Research, November 2021. Retrieved August 1, 2023, from <https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/livable-communities/housing/2021-home-community-preferences/>

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following pages contain additional information and resources from local and national organizations. These materials can be used independently of this guide. Readers are welcome to make copies and share these materials with anyone who could benefit.

Get the Facts on Osteoporosis, Falls, and Broken Bones

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease where the bones become thin, weak, and more likely to break. Although you can break a bone in any part of your body, the most common broken bones associated with osteoporosis are the arm, wrist, and hip.

How are falls and osteoporosis linked?

- **1 out of 5 falls** among older adults leads to serious injury such as a broken bone. If we can prevent falls, we can prevent broken bones of the arm wrist, and hip. Most broken hips are the result of a fall.
- **Lack of Vitamin D** is a risk factor for both falls and broken bones. Daily Vitamin D is linked with reduced falls and fewer broken bones in older adults. Calcium helps keep bones strong. Speak with your health care provider about how much vitamin D and calcium is right for you.
- **Regular physical activity** and exercises that combine weight-bearing, muscle strengthening, and balance help reduce the risk of falls and improves your bone health.



Take action to prevent osteoporosis and reduce the risk of falling

1. **Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium:** A few good sources include milk, cheese, canned sardines, and yogurt.
2. **Eat foods high in Vitamin D:** Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium and can be found in eggs, milk, and salmon but Vitamin D supplements are available.
3. **Get regular exercise and lift weights:** Weight-bearing exercises stimulate bone building to increase bone density.
4. **Don't smoke:** Smoking reduces blood supply to bones and production of bone-producing cells.

5. **Limit your alcohol:** If you choose to drink alcohol, limit to one drink a day for women and two drinks for men. Those taking certain medications should abstain.
6. **Check for home safety:** Falling increases the chance of a bone fracture. Go through your home and remove clutter or add handrails to reduce falls and accidents.
7. **Talk with your doctor about a bone-density test:** Also known as a DXA scan, this x-ray measures the amount of bone in specific areas of the body and helps determine risk for bone fractures. This scan can help doctors manage your bone loss and prevent fractures.

It is never too late to identify and treat osteoporosis or prevent falls to avoid broken bones. To start, use the **American Bone Health Fracture Risk Calculator™** to understand your risk for bone fractures in the next ten years and other factors that could impact your bone health.

Visit <https://americanbonehealth.org/ncoafrc> to take use the calculator or scan the QR code.

Keep your bones strong and healthy to help prevent broken or fractured bones in case of a fall or accident. For more information, visit: www.ncoa.org/falls

Sponsored by **AMGEN**



<https://americanbonehealth.org/ncoafrc>

Falls Prevention for Older Adults

Debunking the Myths of Older Adult Falls

10 Myths About Older Adults and Falls



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Many people think falls are a normal part of aging. The truth is, they're not. Most falls can be prevented—and you have the power to reduce your risk. Exercising, managing your medications, having your vision checked, and making your living environment safer are all steps you can take to prevent a fall. To promote greater awareness and understanding here are 10 common myths—and the reality—about older adult falls.

Myth 1: Falling happens to other people, not to me.

Reality: Many people think, “It won’t happen to me.” But the truth is that more than 1 in 4 older adults fall every year in the U.S.

Myth 2: Falling is something normal that happens as you get older.

Reality: Falling is not a normal part of aging. Strength and balance exercises, managing your medications, having your vision checked and making your living environment safer are all steps you can take to prevent a fall.

Myth 3: If I limit my activity, I won’t fall.

Reality: Some people believe that the best way to prevent falls is to stay at home and limit activity. Not true. Performing physical activities will actually help you stay independent, as your strength and range of motion benefit from remaining active. Social activities are also good for your overall health.

Myth 4: As long as I stay at home, I can avoid falling.

Reality: Over half of all falls take place at home. Inspect your home for fall risks. Fix simple but serious hazards such as clutter, throw rugs, and poor lighting. Make simple home modifications, such as adding grab bars in the bathroom, a second handrail on stairs, and non-slip paint on outdoor steps.

Myth 5: Muscle strength and flexibility can't be regained.

Reality: While we do lose muscle as we age, exercise can partially restore strength and flexibility. It's never too late to start an exercise program. Even if you've been a "couch potato" your whole life, becoming active now will benefit you in many ways—including protection from falls.

Myth 6: Taking medication doesn't increase my risk of falling.

Reality: Taking any medication may increase your risk of falling. Medications affect people in many different ways and can sometimes make you dizzy or sleepy. Be careful when starting a new medication. Talk to your health care provider about potential side effects or interactions of your medications.

Myth 7: I don't need to get my vision checked every year.

Reality: Vision is another key risk factor for falls. Aging is associated with some forms of vision loss that increase risk of falling and injury. People with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as those without visual impairment. Have your eyes checked at least once a year and update your eyeglasses. For those with low vision there are programs and assistive devices that can help. Ask your optometrist for a referral.

Myth 8: Using a walker or cane will make me more dependent.

Reality: Walking aids are very important in helping many older adults maintain or improve their mobility. However, make sure you use these devices safely. Have a physical therapist fit the walker or cane to you and instruct you in its safe use.

Myth 9: I don't need to talk to family members or my health care provider if I'm concerned about my risk of falling. I don't want to alarm them, and I want to keep my independence.

Reality: Fall prevention is a team effort. Bring it up with your doctor, family, and anyone else who is in a position to help. They want to help you maintain your mobility and reduce your risk of falling.

Myth 10: I don't need to talk to my parent, spouse, or other older adult if I'm concerned about their risk of falling. It will hurt their feelings, and it's none of my business.

Reality: Let them know about your concerns and offer support to help them maintain the highest degree of independence possible. There are many things you can do, including removing hazards in the home, finding a **fall prevention program** in the community, or setting up a vision exam.

My Medication Record

Name: _____ Tel #: _____

Age: _____ Address: _____

Primary Doctor: _____ Primary Doctor's Phone Number: _____

Specialist: _____ Specialist's Phone Number: _____

Pharmacy Name: _____ Pharmacy's Phone Number: _____

Diagnoses and Conditions: _____

Recent History/Problems: _____

Drug Allergies: _____

Name of Medication	Purpose or Reason Taken	Dose	Time(s) of day	Special Instructions or Side effects to be aware of

MyMobility Plan

What can you do to stay independent?

Many of us make plans for retirement, but not everyone plans for other changes that come with age. This includes changes in our mobility—our ability to get around. It can be hard to talk about, but physical changes can affect our mobility as we get older. These changes can make it harder to get around and do things we want or need to do—like driving, shopping, or doing household chores.

You might not have mobility problems now, but you could in the future. You may know others who already do—perhaps a parent, relative, friend, or neighbor. You—or your loved ones—can take steps today that will help you stay safe and independent tomorrow.

The MyMobility Plan is a tool to help you plan for those changes and take action now. This planning guide includes checklists, tips, and resources to help you stay safe and mobile in the years to come. You can work through the plan by yourself or with your healthcare provider, family member, or friend.



There may come a time when you can no longer drive but still need to get around.

**Plan today.
Stay independent tomorrow.**



MySelf
Plan to stay healthy



MyHome
Plan to stay safe at home



MyCommunity
Plan to get where you want to go



You can maintain your mobility by staying healthy and managing chronic conditions. As you get older, you may have more visits with doctors or other healthcare providers to keep track of changes in your health. You also may need to focus on exercises that keep you strong and increase your balance. Complete the checklist here to get started.



MyMobility Tip



The lenses used for reading in bifocal glasses change how you judge step heights and can lead to falls. Consider using a second pair of single lens glasses to prevent falls when outside of the home.

☐ **Get a checkup or wellness visit each year.**

Some treatable health issues (such as arthritis or balance problems) may increase your risk of being in a car crash or falling. You can check your fall risk at home using bit.ly/falls-free-checkup and share results with your healthcare provider.

Last Exam Date: _____

Next Exam Date: _____

☐ **Take care of your mental health.**

Stay connected with family and friends, do things you enjoy, and talk to a healthcare provider or counselor. Social isolation and conditions such as depression may increase your risk of falling. Who are some caring people you can talk or visit with?

☐ **Get a medical eye exam each year.**

Untreated eye problems can increase your risk of falling or being in a car crash.

Last Eye Exam Date: _____

Next Eye Exam Date: _____

☐ **Get a hearing exam.**

Untreated hearing loss may affect your safety while driving or cause balance issues that can lead to a fall.

Last Hearing Exam Date: _____

Next Hearing Exam Date: _____

☐ **Be physically active with a focus on increasing your strength and balance.**

Doing strength and balance activities at least 3 times a week can reduce your risk of falling. These activities can be done on your own or with other people. You can do them at home, at a gym, or at a local community center like the YMCA. Activities like walking and stretching are good for you but do not reduce your risk of falling. Find examples of strength and balance activities and tracking tools at: bit.ly/improve-physical-ability and bit.ly/health-tracking-tools.

☐ **Review all your medications regularly with your healthcare provider, such as a doctor or pharmacist.**

Certain medications can affect your ability to drive, walk, or get around safely. This includes some over-the-counter medications. Learn more at: bit.ly/CDC-MedicinesRisk.



MyMobility Tip



Review your health insurance plan to understand benefits. Medicare plans may cover the cost of exercise programs like *SilverSneakers®* or *Silver&Fit®*.

What can I do next?

Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk of falling or any concerns about driving.



Injuries from falling can reduce your ability to stay mobile and independent.

You can help prevent falls in your home by making small changes and removing things that may cause you to trip. Schedule a time to go through the following home safety checklist to find changes that you can make to your home. Decide if you need help with a project and what tools you would need. If you need help, see if there are organizations in the community that provide materials, funds, or help with installations.

Check the floors, stairs, and lighting in each room, including any basements, garages, porches, or entryways.

- ☐ Keep objects, such as purses and laundry baskets, off the floor.
- ☐ Remove or tape down rugs.
- ☐ Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall and out of the way.
- ☐ Check for loose or uneven stairs. Repair if needed.
- ☐ Make sure carpet is firmly attached to every stair or remove carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads.
- ☐ Check for loose or broken handrails. Repair if needed.
- ☐ Install handrails on both sides of stairs if needed.

**MyMobility Tip**

Falls are more likely when you are wearing socks indoors or footwear that does not cover the heel, such as flip flops. Wear safe shoes that fit well, with a firm heel to provide stability, and a textured sole to prevent slipping—even when inside your home.

- ☐ Use overhead lighting at the top and bottom of stairs and consider adding light switches at both the top and bottom of stairs.
- ☐ Add bright lightbulbs to fixtures. More information on choosing how to light specific rooms is available here: bit.ly/light-health.

Check the kitchen:

- ☐ Put often-used items within easy reach.
- ☐ Use a step stool with a non-slip surface and a bar to hold on to when retrieving hard-to-reach items. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Check the bedrooms:

- ☐ Place lamps near the bed so they are within reach when you are in bed.
- ☐ Put in night-lights to see where you are walking in the dark. Consider battery-operated lights for areas that do not have electrical outlets. Also consider motion sensor night-lights.

Check the bathrooms:

- ☐ Put non-slip rubber mats or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- ☐ Install grab bars for support getting in or out of the tub or shower and up from the toilet.

MyMobility Tips for Outside the Home

Falls from outdoor ladders can be especially dangerous. Think about asking someone to help or hiring someone for chores like cleaning gutters and putting up holiday lights.

Snow and ice can increase outdoor falls. Make a plan to have snow removed from your sidewalks and entryways after snowfall. A thin layer of sand or cat litter can help prevent slipping on ice.

**What can I do next?**

Find more home modification information and resources at go.usa.gov/xUEs3 and bit.ly/home-fit-guide.





Your transportation needs may change as you age.

You might get to a point when you are not comfortable driving in certain situations, like at night. Eventually you might not be able to safely drive. Physical changes such as joint problems may make it hard to walk places or use a bus.

We all need transportation for practical reasons like grocery shopping and medical appointments, but we also need it to spend time with friends and loved ones. Staying social helps us maintain our quality of life. The following steps can help you maintain independence and connections as you age.

Do you drive?

- Learn tips to drive safely while aging:
 - NHTSA bit.ly/driving-safely-aging
 - AAA bit.ly/senior-driving-safety
- Consider a driver refresher course. Some insurers give a discount on your car insurance for taking a course:
 - AARP 1-888-687-2277 or www.aarp.org
 - AAA 1-800-222-4357 or www.aaa.com



MyMobility Tip



Staying focused while driving is important for everyone. Avoid distractions in your car, such as listening to a loud radio, talking or texting on your phone, and eating. Set up navigation and adjust your mirrors and radio before you start driving, not while you are on the road.





□ Find transportation options in your community.

Finding transportation options before you need them—and learning how to use them—will help you keep the freedom to go where you want at any age. Here are some places to look for transportation options in your area. Not all of these may be available where you live:

- Rides in Sight 1-855-607-4337 or www.ridesinsight.org
- Eldercare Locator 1-800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.acl.gov
- A place of worship, local senior center, or similar organization
- Health insurance provider, like some Medicare and Medicaid plans
- Local government webpages for public transportation
- Taxis or rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft



□ Make a plan for your future transportation options.

Make a list of all the places you go now and how you get there. Then think about how you would get to these same places if you couldn't use your current way. Consider some of the options you found above. For example, maybe you currently drive yourself to get lunch with friends, but in the future you could get a ride from a friend or take a taxi if you couldn't drive yourself.

MyMobility Tip



Think about how a computer or phone can be used to:

- Have prescriptions or groceries delivered
- Check in with your doctor or other healthcare provider
- Connect with friends and family

What can I do next?

Get comfortable with the transportation options you find by trying them out now, perhaps with a friend or a family member.





Additional Resources

- Healthy Aging: Find information about exercise, nutrition, staying connected, and more at www.hhs.gov/aging/healthy-aging
- *Still Going Strong*: Learn how to age without injury at www.cdc.gov/stillgoingstrong
- Eldercare Locator: Get connected to your local Area Agency on Aging for resources on housing, transportation, and more at 1-800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.acl.gov
- Lifeline: Find support for phone and internet services for people with low incomes at 1-800-234-9473 or www.lifelinesupport.org
- National Council on Aging: Find information about aging well at www.ncoa.org

MyNotes

Use this space to make notes on next steps, things to discuss with your family or friends, or questions you may have for your healthcare provider.

For more information about the MyMobility Plan visit:

www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/older_adult_drivers/mymobility



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

FALL FACTS

- 1 in 4 older adults (65+) fall each year
- Sixty percent of falls occur in the home
- Falls are the number one cause of nursing home admissions

Risk factors for falls include:

- Age: 85+
- Living alone
- Hearing and vision impairment
- Poor nutrition and lack of activity
- History of falls

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

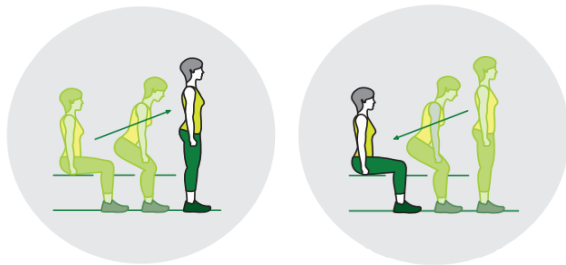
Most falls are preventable! Here are some ways to reduce your risk:

- Be physically active
- Have your medications reviewed by your healthcare provider
- Manage your chronic conditions
- Have your vision and hearing checked annually
- Make necessary home modifications
- Talk to your healthcare provider about falls and if you have a fear of falling

CHAIR RISE EXERCISE

Regularly doing strength, balance, and flexibility exercises can reduce your risk of falling.

1. Sit toward the front of a sturdy chair with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Rest your hands on either side of you, keeping your back and neck straight and chest slightly forward.
3. Breathe in slowly. Lean forward and feel your weight on the front of your feet.
4. Breathe out, and slowly stand up, using your hands as little as possible.
5. Pause for a full breath in and out.
6. Breathe in as you **slowly** sit down.
7. Breathe out.
8. Repeat this exercise 10-15 times. If this is too much, work up to this number over time.



*Check with your healthcare provider as this exercise may not be suitable for everyone

GETTING UP SAFELY

If you fall, stay as calm as possible and take deep breaths to relax. Remain still on the floor for a few moments and decide if you are hurt. Getting up too fast or in the wrong way could cause injury.

If you think you can get up without help:

1. Roll over onto your side. Rest while your body and blood pressure adjust.
2. Pull your knees toward your body and place your hand on the ground in front of your chest.
3. Push yourself into a 'table' position.
4. Crawl to a couch or chair. Put both hands on the seat and slowly push yourself up. If one knee feels stronger, bend it and put your weight on it as you push yourself up with both arms on the chair. Slowly turn around and sit on the chair.

If you are hurt or cannot get up on your own, ask someone for help or call 911. Carrying a mobile or portable phone with you as you move about your house could make it easier to call someone if you live alone or need assistance. An emergency response system, which lets you push a button on a special necklace or bracelet to call for help, is another option.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

1. **Can my medication contribute to a fall?** Have your healthcare provider review all current medications and supplements. Ask about possible side effects or interactions from the combination of drugs.
2. **Should I be taking nutritional supplements?** Talk to your healthcare provide before starting any medications, including supplements. You may benefit from increasing the amount of vitamins and minerals in your diet. Having too little may cause muscle weakness, decreased bone mass, and reduced neurological functioning which can increase your risk of falling. Keep a medication list and update it regularly. It should include all prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements.
3. **How can my current health affect my risk of falling?** Your healthcare provider can conduct a physical examination to evaluate your functional, neurological, visual, cardiac, and mental health status to determine if you are at an increased risk of falling. Ask for referrals if needed. You may benefit from seeing a healthcare provider who specializes in vision, physical therapy, or occupational therapy.
4. **Can physical activity reduce my risk of falling?** Being physically active is one of the most important ways to reduce your risk of falling. It can improve strength, balance, flexibility, and bone mass. Tai Chi and A Matter of Balance are two programs that have been shown to reduce falls and increase activity levels in older adults.

Home Safety Checklist

FLOORS

- ☐ Clear pathways of furniture and clutter
- ☐ Coil or tape wires and cords to the wall
- ☐ Secure rugs and carpets to the floor with double-sided tape (or remove)
- ☐ Do not use floor wax
- ☐ Remove low chairs that are difficult to sit in and get out of easily

STAIRS AND STEPS

- ☐ Keep objects off the stairs
- ☐ Fix broken or uneven steps
- ☐ Fix loose handrails, or put in new ones on both sides of the stairs
- ☐ Install an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs
- ☐ Apply reflective tape to the bottom and top of the stairs

KITCHEN

- ☐ Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high)
- ☐ Keep a Vial of Life or current list of health information on your fridge in the event of an emergency
- ☐ Never use a chair as a step stool

BEDROOM

- ☐ Adjust bed height to a comfortable position

LIGHTING

- ☐ Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach
- ☐ Install a nightlight so you can see where you're walking (some nightlights go on by themselves after dark)
- ☐ Replace burnt out light bulbs

CLOTHING/ACCESSORIES

- ☐ Wear shoes that have a thin, non-slip sole
- ☐ Wear pants and dresses that have been hemmed so they don't touch the floor
- ☐ Carry a mobile or portable phone with you at all times
- ☐ Consider an emergency response system

BATHROOMS

- ☐ Put a non-slip rubber mat on the floor of the tub or shower
- ☐ Install grab bars next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet
- ☐ Consider using a raised toilet seat, padded shower seat, and/or handheld shower head

OUTDOORS

- ☐ Repair cracks and gaps in the sidewalk or driveway
- ☐ Trim shrubbery along paths to the door

Protect and Maintain Your Independence



A Guide to Preventing Falls

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency,
Aging & Independence Services
For more information, call (858) 495-5500 or visit:
www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org





OLDER ADULTS

What's your move?

Physical activity can make daily life better.

When you're active and strong, it's easier to:



Do everyday tasks,
like chores and shopping



Keep up with the grandkids



Stay independent
as you get older

And it has big health benefits, too.



Less pain



Better mood



Lower risk of many diseases

What types of activity do I need?

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity

Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.



Muscle-strengthening activity

Activities that make your muscles work harder than usual count.



And mix in activities to improve your balance!

Aim for a mix of aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and balance activities.



Try activities that count as more than 1 activity type — like dancing, sports, or tai chi — to help keep your body strong and lower your risk of falls.

Physical activity can help manage many health problems.

✓ Reduce symptoms of arthritis, anxiety, and depression

✓ Help keep diabetes and high blood pressure under control

Just getting started?

No problem — start slow and do what you can. **Even a 5-minute walk has real health benefits.** Build up to more activity over time.

And all sorts of activities count.



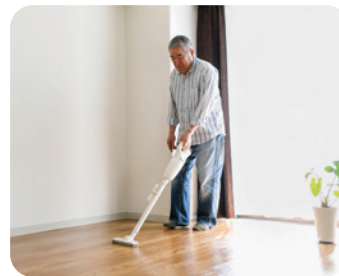
Even things you have to do anyway



Even things that don't feel like exercise

You can get more active.

No matter your age, you can **find a way that works for you.**



So take the first step. Get a little more active each day. **Move your way.**

Find tips to get moving and build a weekly activity plan.

health.gov/MoveYourWay/Activity-Planner



Personal Medicines List

- List all medicines you are currently taking, and use multiple pages as needed.
- Include prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, and herbal products.
- Update this list any time you have a change in the medicines you take.
- Take this list with you when you go to your doctor, pharmacist, or a hospital.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

Name: _____ **Emergency Contact Name and Phone:** _____

Date Last Updated: _____ **Page Number** _____ **of** _____.

Name of Medicine	Dose/Directions	Medicine Taken For	Prescriber/Doctor	Notes

Allergies to Medicine	
Name of Medicine <i>e.g. Penicillin</i>	Describe Reaction <i>e.g. Rash, hives, swollen face or tongue, wheezing</i>

Chronic Conditions or Diseases



FREE PROGRAMS IN SAN DIEGO

Most falls are preventable! San Diego County is home to several free programs that can help you stay healthy, active, and independent as you age.

EVIDENCE-BASED FALL PREVENTION PROGRAMS

TAI CHI

Involves slow, controlled movements to improve balance, stability, and coordination
To learn more, call 858.495.5500 | HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

A MATTER OF BALANCE

Helps reduce fear of falling by coaching participants on how to view falls as controllable
To learn more, call 858.626.6160

BINGOCIZE

Incorporates exercise, nutrition, and fall prevention within the game of bingo
To learn more, call 858.626.6160

OTHER HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

FEELING FIT CLUB

Improves strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance while promoting socialization
To learn more, call 858.495.5500 | HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

HEALTHIER LIVING WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Provides strategies to effectively manage chronic health conditions
To learn more, call 858.495.5500 | HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

Visit www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org for more information.



FACT SHEET

Feet and Footwear for Older Adults

Footcare and safe shoes can prevent falls

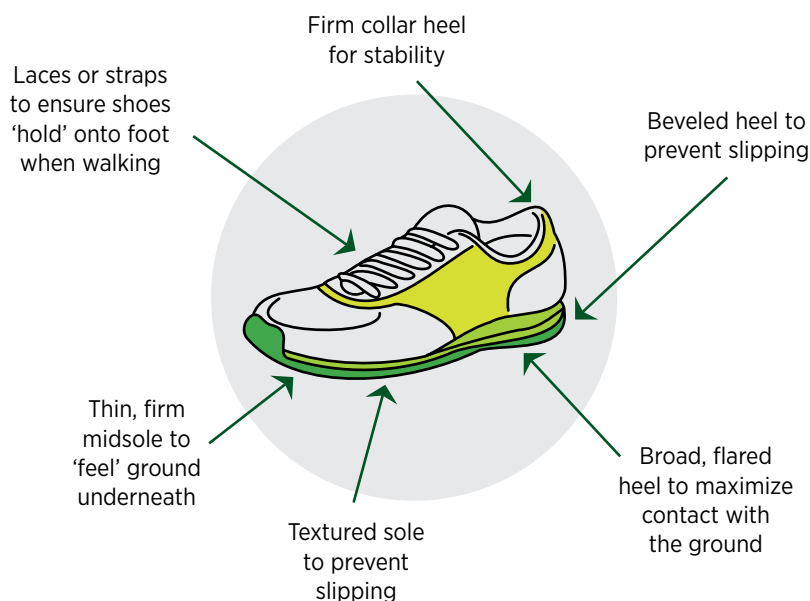
Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults (ages 65 and older) and can have serious consequences, like limited mobility and loss of independence. Routine care for feet and proper supportive footwear can reduce your risk of falls.

What foot problems are associated with falls?

Foot related risk factors that increase fall risk:

- Increased foot pain
- Reduced flexibility in ankle joint
- Reduced calf muscle strength (the muscle that helps you rise on the balls of your feet)
- Reduced sensation resulting from neuropathy (nerve damage)
- Presence of a bunion (hallux valgus deformity) or toe deformities

What makes a shoe safe?



Footwear Tips

Health Tips

- Your healthcare provider or podiatrist can check your feet and determine if there are issues that increase your risk of falling. Podiatrists diagnose and treat foot conditions.
- Ask your healthcare provider to check your feet once a year.
- See a podiatrist if you have foot problems, such as toe or foot deformities or foot pain.
- Work with a physical therapist to learn exercises to increase strength and flexibility of foot and ankle.

Safety Tips

- Always wear properly fitted shoes inside and outside your home.
- Wear sturdy shoes with low heels, traction, and strong arch and heel support.

Working with your healthcare provider or podiatrist to address foot problems and using appropriate footwear can reduce your risk of falling.



EMORY
HEALTHCARE

VA



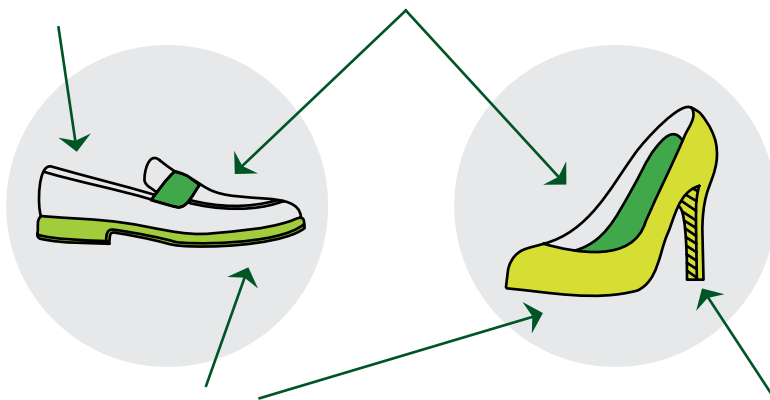
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers

STEADI Stopping Elderly Accidents,
Deaths & Injuries
www.cdc.gov/steadi

What makes a shoe unsafe?

Soft or stretched uppers allow the foot to slide around in the sole

Lack of laces means the foot can slide out of the shoe



Slippery or worn soles are a balance hazard, particularly in wet weather

Avoid high heels (more than 1 inch), especially ones with narrow heels

Examples of appropriate shoes to reduce risk of falls



Safety Tips

- Avoid walking in only socks inside and outside your home.
- Avoid wearing shoes with heels over one inch, with no ankle support, or with a smooth sole.
- Avoid wearing shoes with no back (such as a mule or clog) or strappy back (such as a slingback).

Footwear Tips

- Shop for shoes later in the day to ensure a proper fit.
- Have your feet measured to ensure appropriate shoe width and length.
- Accommodate foot deformities such as bunions or hammertoes by choosing shoes with a wide toe box.
- Consider a pedorthist, a specialist in footwear and devices, for footwear and orthotic recommendations to provide the best possible support for walking. See www.pedorthics.org for a searchable directory of credentialed pedorthists.

RECOMMENDED EXERCISE

Chair Rise Exercise

What it does: Strengthens the muscles in your thighs and buttocks.

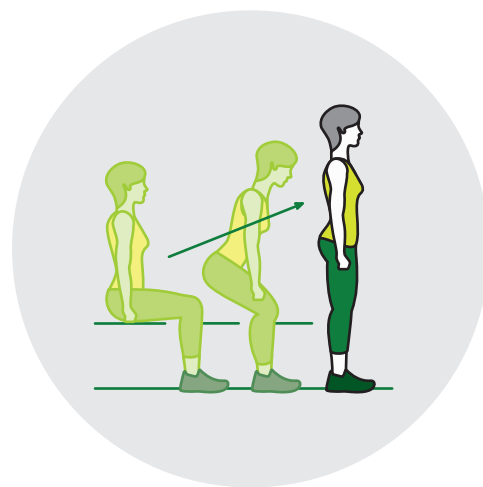
Goal: To do this exercise without using your hands as you become stronger.

How to do it:

1. Sit toward the front of a sturdy chair with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Rest your hands lightly on the seat on either side of you, keeping your back and neck straight, and chest slightly forward.
3. Breathe in slowly. Lean forward and feel your weight on the front of your feet.
4. Breathe out, and slowly stand up, using your hands as little as possible.
5. Pause for a full breath in and out.
6. Breathe in as you slowly sit down. Do not let yourself collapse back down into the chair. Rather, control your lowering as much as possible.
7. Breathe out.

Repeat 10-15 times. If this number is too hard for you when you first start practicing this exercise, begin with fewer and work up to this number.

Rest for a minute, then do a final set of 10-15.





Postural hypotension—or orthostatic hypotension—is when your blood pressure drops when you go from lying down to sitting up, or from sitting to standing.

When your blood pressure drops, less blood can go to your organs and muscles. This can make you more likely to fall.



Postural Hypotension

What it is & How to Manage it



For information about fall prevention, visit go.usa.gov/xN9XA

For more information about hypotension, visit www.mayoclinic.com
www.webmd.com



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

2017

STEADI

Stopping Elderly Accidents,
Deaths & Injuries

What are the symptoms?

Although many people with postural hypotension have no symptoms, others do.

These symptoms can differ from person to person, and may include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Feeling about to faint, passing out, or falling
- Headaches, blurry or tunnel vision
- Feeling vague or muddled
- Feeling pressure across the back of your shoulders or neck
- Feeling nauseous, or hot and clammy
- Weakness or fatigue



When might symptoms happen?

- When standing or sitting up suddenly
- In the morning when blood pressure is naturally lower
- After a large meal or alcohol
- During exercise
- When straining on the toilet
- When you are ill
- If you become anxious or panicky

What causes postural hypotension?

Postural hypotension can be caused by or linked to:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes, heart failure, atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries
- Taking some diuretics, antidepressants, or medicines to lower blood pressure
- Neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease and some types of dementia
- Dehydration
- Vitamin B12 deficiency or anemia
- Alcoholism
- Prolonged bed rest

What can I do to manage my postural hypotension?

- Tell your healthcare provider about any symptoms.
- Ask if any of your medicines should be reduced or stopped.
- Get out of bed slowly. First sit up, sit on the side of the bed, then stand up.
- Take your time when changing position, such as when getting up from a chair.
- Try to sit down when washing, showering, dressing, or working in the kitchen.
- Exercise gently before getting up (move your feet up and down and clench and unclench your hands) or after standing (march in place).
- Make sure you have something to hold on to when you stand up.
- Do not walk if you feel dizzy.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water or low-calorie drinks each day—unless you have been told to limit your fluid intake.
- Avoid taking very hot baths or showers.
- Try sleeping with extra pillows to raise your head.

Four Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls:

① **Speak up.**

Talk openly with your healthcare provider about fall risks and prevention. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines.

② **Keep moving.**

Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength and balance.

③ **Get an annual eye exam.**

Replace eyeglasses as needed.

④ **Make your home safer.**

Remove clutter and tripping hazards.

Learn More

Contact your local community or senior center for information on exercise, fall prevention programs, and options for improving home safety, or visit:

- cdc.gov/falls
- www.stopfalls.org



1 in 4 people 65 and older falls each year.

Stay Independent

Learn more about fall prevention.



Prevent falls
to stay injury-free
and independent.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/steady

This brochure was produced in collaboration with the following organizations: VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Geriatric Research Education & Clinical Center (GRECC), and the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

STEADI

Stopping Elderly Accidents,
Deaths & Injuries

Check Your Risk for Falling

Circle “Yes” or “No” for each statement below			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.
Total		Add up the number of points for each “yes” answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.	

To check your risk online,
visit: www.bit.ly/3o4RiW8

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011: 42(6)493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.