



# A PRESCRIPTION IN **PREVENTING A FALL**

▶ [www.leadtheway.ca](http://www.leadtheway.ca)

*Courtesy of:*

- Peterborough Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries Clinic (705) 741-2284
- Trent Health in Motion (705) 741-4758
- Lakefield Physiotherapy & Foot Health Clinic (705) 652-6999
- Chemong Physiotherapy - (705) 292-9888
- Lindsay Rehab Health Centre - (705) 324-0404
- Lindsay Physiotherapy - (705) 324-8512

*You can....  
Fall in Love,  
Enjoy the Fall Season,  
Listen to the Sound  
of a Waterfall, or even  
Fall from Grace.  
But....  
If You are Over Age 65  
You have a 1 in 3 Chance  
of Falling Down this Year.*

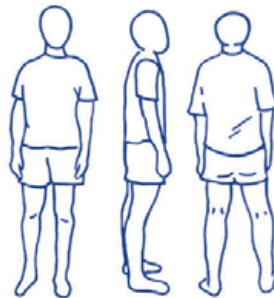
One of the many changes associated with aging is a decrease in balance and coordination. These changes increase the risk of falls, which often result in injury. To a large extent falls can be prevented.

## BALANCE EXERCISES

*It is very important that you move with control and within your limits. Take precautions that you do not fall.  
Do each exercise 5-10 repetitions, 2x per day.*



◀ **SIDE LEG KICKS**  
Kick right leg out to side. Bring back to center and repeat with left leg.



◀ **TURNING IN PLACE**  
Standing in place, lead with head and turn slowly making quarter turns/half turns/full turns toward right/left.

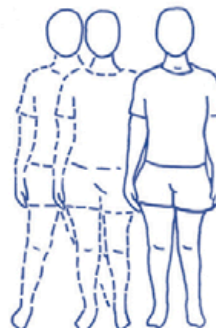
**BACK LEG KICKS** ▶  
Kick leg back as far as possible. Return to center and repeat with other leg.



**WALK BACKWARDS** ▶  
Walk backward with eyes open. Take even steps, making sure each foot lifts off the floor. Turn and walk backward to starting place.



◀ **SINGLE LEG STANDS**  
Holding onto a support, lift leg up while maintaining balance over single leg. Progress to removing hands from support surface for longer periods of time. Repeat with other leg.



◀ **SIDE-STEPPING**  
Walk to right/left side with eyes open. Walk evenly, leading with same foot. Make sure each foot lifts off the floor.



## CAUSES OF FALLS

- **Vision:** difficulty distinguishing light & darkness; increased glare; difficulty in degree of acuity; problems with depth perception.
- **Balance:** increased sway; decreased proprioception
- **Gait:** decreased speed, step length and height; increased step width.
- **Musculoskeletal System:** decreased muscle strength; loss of muscle mass; decreased postural control; decreased reaction times; slower movement speed; neuropathy.

### Also included are:

- acute diseases (i.e. syncope)
- chronic diseases (i.e. arthritis, neurological disorders)
- some medications

### Extrinsic Risk Factors For Falls:

- icy sidewalks
- loose rugs
- poor lighting
- obstacles that can be easily tripped over
- assistive devices (walkers, canes, bed rails)
- improper footwear

Not surprisingly, as the number of risk factors increase, the chance of falling will increase. It is clear that many falls are a result of a complex interaction between both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

## CHECK LIST FOR PREVENTION OF FALLS

### BATHROOM

- non-slip mats in the tub and on the floor
- soap, shampoo and towel are easy to reach
- grab bars in the bathtub or shower
- grab bars beside the toilet
- has bright lights & a night light

### BEDROOM

- has a phone beside the bed
- emergency phone numbers are readily available
- has a light that is accessible to turn on/off before you get out of bed
- pathways are free of clutter
- walking aids, if used, are easy to reach before you get out of bed
- electrical cords from electric blankets, lamps etc. are safely secured and controls are easy to reach

### KITCHEN

- regularly used items can be easily reached
- bright lighting over work areas
- floors are clean and dry, not slippery
- cupboard doors and drawers are kept closed
- floors are free of clutter

### LOUNGE ROOM

- you can easily get out of your lounge chair
- pathways are free of cords, furniture and clutter
- furniture is placed so you don't need to stretch or lean to open windows
- rugs are smooth and firmly in place

### OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

- step edges have an adhesive non-slip strip and edges can be seen clearly
- steps have a sturdy, easy-to-grip handrail
- paths around house are in good repair
- paths and entrances are well lit at night
- stairs and steps are well lit with light switch at top and bottom. Automatic sensor lights recommended.
- garage floors are free of grease, oil and dirt
- tools are unplugged and stored away
- garden is free of hazards (i.e. tools, hoses)
- stepstool or stepladder is short and sturdy with anti-slip feet

### CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

- shoes or boots have non-slip soles
- shoes or boots have rounded, broad heels
- tight fitting non-slip slippers for inside the house
- clothing fits securely - no dangling cords or hems
- sit down to dress rather than balancing yourself

For more information contact:

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