

8 Steps to Stay on Your Feet Presentation:

Speakers' Notes

8 Steps to Stay on Your Feet is a public presentation and companion resource to the 8 Steps to Stay on Your Feet brochure that aims to raise awareness on how you can reduce falls and fall-related injuries.

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8 STEPS to Stay on Your Feet

How you can prevent falls and stay independent.

Speaker's Notes:

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What is a fall? A fall is when you slip, trip, or fall suddenly onto the ground or floor. You could even bump against a wall or land on the stairs.

The fall may or may not cause an injury. Falls can happen anywhere. You can fall in your home, in the community or in a hospital.

People fall for many reasons. These are called risk factors. They include health conditions and choices we make, like shoes we wear. Know your risk factors so you can take action to reduce your chance of falling and fall-related injuries.

Paying Attention to Avoid Risks: In a fast-paced world, it is common to do many things at once. Sometimes we are deep in thought or in a hurry. When our attention is divided, we are less likely to notice what is going on around us.

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1 Improve your balance

- Exercise to improve your balance for 2 hours each week, or about 20 minutes every day.
- Do balance exercises in addition to your other physical activities.
- Visit www.preventfalls.ca or ask your physiotherapist for simple exercises you can do at home.

Are you doing balance exercises for 20 minutes every day?

Speaker's Notes:

Exercise that targets balance can reduce falls:

- The ideal exercises for fall prevention in older adults are balance enhancing activities and lower limb resistance training.
- Those people older than 70 years who do engage in balance and resistance training are much more likely to be healthy and functionally capable than those who do not.

What Does the Evidence Tell Us About Using Balance and Strength Exercise for Fall Prevention?

- FITT principles for balance training to reduce falls are evolving and include; frequency (2-3 times/week); intensity (moderate to high challenge); time (17-27 hours (over 11-12 weeks) to improve balance: 50 hours (over 6 months to continuously reduce falls).

Balance and strength programs that are effective around the world include:

1. Fall Proof Balance and Mobility Program: is scientifically tested and shown to improve balance and mobility and to reduce the risk of falls.
2. Lifestyle-Integrated Functional Exercise (LiFE): incorporates balance and strength training into everyday activities and embeds it within their daily routines. It has been shown to reduce falls by 31 per cent.
3. Falls Management Exercise (FaME): FaME is delivered by Postural Stability Instructors (PSI). The programme is delivered over 9 months (once a week in a group and twice a week at home).
4. Otago Exercise Program: a home-based, individually tailored strength and balance retraining programme with a focus on preventing falls in older adults.

Visit www.preventfalls.ca or ask your physiotherapist for simple exercises you can do at home.

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2 Stay active and exercise daily

- Stay strong and healthy by doing activities that you enjoy such as walking, swimming, cycling, or exercising in a group.
- Start slowly and work up to 20-30 minutes every day.
- If you are just starting to exercise, talk to your doctor first.

Do you do less than 30 minutes of physical activity each day?

Speaker's Notes:

Physical activity improves health at any age. Everyone needs it.

- It keeps your bones and muscles healthy and strong
- It improves your balance
- It helps you move easily
- At any age, your body can get stronger with activity
- It is never too late to start
- Choose activities that make you sweat a little and breathe a little harder.
- You can break activities into 10-minute periods. If you are just getting active, start slowly, and add a few minutes each day.

Benefits:

- It keeps your heart and lungs healthy
- It increases your energy
- It helps you sleep
- It improves your confidence when walking

Take Action:

- Being active will help you with daily living tasks like getting up from a chair or into a car. Activities should strengthen both your arm and leg muscles. Arm strength is needed just as much as leg strength for daily tasks such as: getting up and down stairs, getting in and out of a chair or bathtub and getting in and out of bed.
- If it is hard to get started, find a buddy, make a plan or try something new to keep it interesting. You could even join a class. Find programs at your local YMCA, senior's centre, or municipal recreation department. Always talk to your healthcare provider before starting a new physical activity.

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3 Manage your medications

- Have your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs (such as pain relievers), vitamins and herbal supplements reviewed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse once a year and when you start a new medication.
- Keep an up-to-date list of the names and doses of your medications.
- Take your medications as directed: the correct dose at the proper time.

When was the last time you had your medications reviewed?

Speaker's Notes:

Medications and their side effects can contribute to falls. Did you know that 75% of older adults take one or more prescription drugs, and 25% take five or more drugs regularly?

Ways to take your medications properly:

- Weekly pill organizer
- Bubble Packs
- Avoid misuse of medications
 - Take the recommended dose
 - More is not better
 - Don't share medications
 - Dispose of expired medications

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist:

- Frequent review of all medications to make sure they are being taken correctly and that they are still needed.
- Do not take medications for conditions you no longer have.
- Ask about medication side effects.

Understand why you are taking certain medications and ask for clarification on which medications still need to be taken.

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4 Vitamin D and healthy eating

- Take a 1000 IU vitamin D supplement each day.
- Eat nutritious foods from all four food groups.
- Drink 9 cups of fluid every day, such as water, milk or tea.
- Limit your alcohol intake to no more than 1 or 2 drinks a day.

Are you getting enough vitamin D?

Speaker's Notes:

About vitamin D:

- Adults from 19 to 50 years need 400 to 1000 IU of vitamin D every day.
- Adults over 50 need 1000 to 2000 IU of vitamin D every day.
- Getting enough vitamin D will help your body absorb calcium and keep your muscles strong.
- Good sources of vitamin D are milk, sardines, salmon and other oil fish.
- Sunlight on your skin also makes vitamin D.
- In our northern climate your body cannot make enough vitamin D from October to March. You need to rely on supplements to get enough vitamin D during those months.

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5 Manage your health conditions

- Have regular checkups with your health care provider to manage your chronic health conditions, get early treatment and prevent complications.
- Learn about your health conditions and follow advice to keep up your abilities and health.
- See your health care provider if you don't feel right, or if you feel weak, dizzy or unsteady.

Do you sometimes feel weak, dizzy, or unsteady?

Speaker's Notes:

Some long-term health conditions such as stroke, Parkinson's disease, depression, arthritis, heart conditions and urinary incontinence can increase your risk of falling by causing dizziness, confusion, light-headedness, slowed reactions, reduced awareness of surroundings, blurred vision or a drop in blood pressure.

Diabetes: If you have diabetes, manage your blood sugar. Low blood sugar can increase your chance of falling.

Osteoporosis: Osteoporosis is when you have weak bones that break easily. You are more likely to have osteoporosis as you get older.

Sleeping Troubles: Ask your healthcare provider about how to deal with sleep problems without using sleeping pills. Try things like being more active during the day, avoiding coffee and tea after supper, or listening to quiet music at bedtime.

Blood Pressure: Lightheadedness or dizziness can be caused by problems with your blood pressure. Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Sometimes a drop in your blood pressure can happen when you get up from a lying or sitting position. This is called postural hypotension. Be careful and change your position slowly. If you have been lying down, sit for a few minutes. Stand up slowly and give your body time to adjust. Then slowly begin moving.

Urinary Incontinence or "busy bladder": Do you have a busy bladder and find yourself dashing to the bathroom, getting up and night to go to the bathroom and going often during the day? These can increase your chance of falling if you try to get to the bathroom quickly. Here are some things you can do:

- Drink most of your fluids during the day.
- Cut down on how much you drink in the evening.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you have problems with your "water works." Examples are burning when you urinate or going to the bathroom more often than usual.
- Your healthcare provider can give you suggestions or decide if medications are needed. You could also ask about going to a continence clinic.
- Wear clothing that is easy to take on and off. For example, an elastic waistband is easier to manage than a belt.
- Cut down on how much tea, coffee, diet soft drinks or alcohol you drink. They act like a water pill and increase how often you need to urinate.
- Try to go regularly to the bathroom during the day, about every 2 to 3 hours.

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6 Take care of your eyesight

- Always wear your glasses or contact lenses as prescribed.
- Have your glasses and contact lenses checked by your optometrist every year.
- Have your eyes checked every 2 years by an eye specialist (optometrist or ophthalmologist) or when you notice any changes in your vision.

Has it been more than 2 years since your eyes were tested or 1 year since your glasses were checked?

Speaker's Notes:

Your eyes not only see where you are going, but help with balance and movement. As you age, your eyes change.

- Have your eyes checked each year.
- Watch for glare. Your eyes are more sensitive to glare and need more time to adjust to sudden light changes.
- Your eyes lose depth perception. It becomes harder to judge distance and depth. This can affect how you see stairs and curbs.
- You need more light to see at night. A 60-year-old needs 10 times more light to see at night than a teenager.
- Eliminate exposed or bare bulbs.
- Use blinds or light curtains on your windows. Wear sunglasses outside both in winter and summer.
- Remove your reading glasses when walking.
- Keep pathways well-lit inside and outside.
- Use night lights and motion detector lights.
- Pause and give your eyes time to adjust to changes in light.
- Have a lamp by your bed with a switch that is easy to reach.
- Use non-skid or reflective strips at the edge of each step.
- Use a different colour than the stairs to make it easier to see the edges. Use them on door thresholds too.
- Remove patterned carpet on stairs.

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7 Foot care and safe footwear

- Choose shoes that fit well, provide good support and have low, wide heels.
- When indoors, wear supportive shoes instead of socks or slippers.
- See a doctor, foot specialist (podiatrist) or foot care nurse about foot problems or pain.

Do your shoes have slippery soles or fit properly?

Speaker's Notes:

Taking care of your feet and shoes are important to prevent falls. If your feet are sore, nail care is poor, or if you have foot problems, the way you walk can change.

- Wear shoes that support your feet and help you keep your balance.
- Check your feet often for corns, calluses, bunions, open sores, dry skin and thickened nails. Use a mirror if needed. This is very important if you have diabetes. If you need help, ask your healthcare provider to check your feet for you.
- Have foot pain checked by a healthcare provider. You can ask a podiatrist or a nurse. You can also go to a foot clinic. Ask about foot exercises for foot pain and ankle stiffness.
- Wear well-fitting shoes that provide support and allow enough room if your feet swell. Avoid bare feet, stocking feet and heavy shoes.
- Avoid floppy slippers with an open heel. Wear a pair of shoes that you only use inside.

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8 Identify, remove and report hazards

- Remove things your home that could cause you to trip such as throw rugs, clutter and electrical cords.
- Have good lighting in all rooms, hallways, outside steps and entrances.
- Report hazards in the community to your municipal office. In Winnipeg, call 311.
- Use the home safety checklist at www.preventfalls.ca to identify home hazards.

Are there hazards in your home that could cause you to fall?

Speaker's Notes:

Adapting your home will allow you to stay independent and decrease the chance of a fall and fall-related injuries:

- Use safety grab bars in your tub and shower.
- Do not hold the handle on the soap dish or a towel rack as they can break.
- Use a non-slip mat inside and outside your tub or shower.
- Replace them if they do not stick.
- Keep your toilet paper roll within easy reach.
- Have handrails on both sides of your stairways and check that they are secure.
- Always turn on the lights. When carrying things, keep one hand free to hold onto the handrail.
- Clear path ways of furniture, cords and clutter and keep them
- Remove scatter mats and area rugs or tape down the edges.
- It is easy to catch your toes on the edge and trip.
- Look out for things that can cause you to trip, such as pets, hoses and rakes, door thresholds and buckled carpet.
- There are some items that you can purchase or borrow to help you do things by yourself. These include a seat for your bathtub or shower, a bar beside your bed and an emergency medical alert system. An occupational therapist can help you access these and other items.

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Have you had a fall in the last year?

If you've answered "yes" to one or more of the questions, take action now to reduce your risk of falling by following the tips in this presentation.

Consider additional resources recommended by your health team.

Speaker's Notes:

Afraid You Might Fall?

Paying attention is important, but being too afraid of falling can be a problem. Fear of falling can lower your quality of life and stop you from:

- Doing the activities you enjoy
- Getting out and seeing your friends
- Being active. If you do less, your legs will become weaker and your reaction time will get slower. You will then be at greater risk of falling.

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Contact Information