



TO YOUR HEALTH



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NO FALL ZONE

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Slips, Trips, Falls...And How to Prevent Them

By Jodi Gilman PT

Falls are one of the leading reasons that an individual can lose their independence. More women than men will experience a slip and fall accident. Fall fatalities, though, tend to be higher for men than women. Falls account for over 3 million visits to the emergency room each year. Fractures are the most serious consequences of falls (5%). More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling: usually falling sideways. Floors and flooring materials contribute to more than 2 million falls each year. Falls are the most common cause of a traumatic brain injury. One out of 3 people over age 65 will experience a fall. Half of these will be repeat fallers. Falls can occur every 2 years at age 72+. Age 80+, people may experience a fall each year. So we want to try and minimize these statistics.

Fall prevention requires assessing potential risk factors, managing the risk factors identified and ensuring appropriate interventions are in place.

Three Classifications of Falls

1. Accidental: (14%) A person falls unintentionally either by slipping, tripping or due to some other accident. They frequently are linked to some extrinsic factor. Some of these factors could include:

- Water on the floor, being pulled by dog leash, black ice, etc.
- Improper footwear
- Clothing: pants are too long for example
- Tripping over a pet
- Assistive devices such as cane, walker, rollator may be cause. They may not be fitted correctly or are inappropriate.



These types of falls are considered preventable.

2. Unanticipated Physiological Falls: (8%)

These usually occur when the physical cause is not necessarily reflected in the person's risk factor for falls. They are unexpected and usually associated with some sort of medical condition.

Some of these medical conditions could include but are not limited to: seizures, syncope, delirium, myocardial infarction/heart attack, orthostatic hypotension, stroke and/or pain.

Most of these types of falls are not always predictable.

3. Anticipated Physiological Falls: (78%)

These are the majority of our falls. They occur when an individual scores higher on a fall risk assessment test. Risk factors can include but are not limited to:

- Abnormal/unstable gait pattern
- Previous history of falling
- Use of a mal-fitting or inappropriate assistive walking device
- Need for a device to assist with walking
- Slower righting reactions
- Frequent toileting needs
- Altered mental status
- Certain medications could lead to falls.

About 38-78% of these falls can be anticipated.

Safe Practices for Preventing Falls

Floors:

- Move furniture that could be in your way
- Remove throw rugs or use double sided tape/nonslip backing under rugs
- Keep objects off floors (cords, blankets, etc.)

Kitchen:

- Move items out of high cabinets to be within reach
- Keep things you often use on shelves that are about waist level
- To reach objects up high, use a step stool with bar to hold onto (never a chair)

Stairs:

- Make sure to have good lighting in your stairway
- Fix loose or uneven steps
- Fix loose handrails
- Make sure carpet is firmly attached to stairs (if no carpet, attach nonslip treads)
- Keep objects off stairs



Continued

Bathroom:

- Put nonslip rubber mat or strips in tub/shower
- Have grab bars in and around your tub or shower and next to toilet

Bedroom:

- Place lamp next to bed that is easy to turn on and off
- Put in night-light so you can see where you are walking at night

Wear life alert button at all times!**Other Preventative Measures**

Regular Exercise: Exercise can improve your balance, strength and flexibility which can ultimately reduce your risk for falls.

Supportive Footwear: Choose shoes that fit snugly with nonslip soles and a flat or low wide heel. Avoid slippers, flip-flops, backless shoes, high heels and shoes with smooth leather soles.

Ambulation Devices: There are many devices that can be used to assist with mobility/ ambulation (cane, rolling walker, rollator, etc.) Have a professional assess what device is best for use and assure proper fit.

Review Medications: Talk with your healthcare provider about your current medications to assure these are not adding to your risk for falls. This could include over the counter medications.

Get Your Vision Checked: See an eye doctor every year to assure your prescriptions are adjusted as needed.

In conclusion, we want to try and be ahead of the game to prevent falls. Particularly if they are preventable. Get involved in a good exercise regime.

See your physician routinely to stay on top of health issues. Get eyes checked routinely. Wear proper footwear. Assess living environment to assure you have safety measures in place. This will all promote increased independence, improved health and happiness.

www.cdc.gov
www.stopfalls.org

Reporting Falls - Our goal is to help residents maintain their independence for as long as it is safely possible by encouraging open reporting of falls without fear, and by implementing early interventions to prevent future incidents.

Spotlight on Social Work

By Maeve Lobo, LICSW



Birthdays mark milestones in all our lives—and the Mighty Nineties group has a few thoughts about how to celebrate. At the July meeting, they shared reflections, stories, and a bit of whimsy.

One resident recalled a birthday during the pandemic: she had just turned 90, and due to social distancing, expected little fanfare. But at 5:00 p.m., her neighbors at Concord Court stepped out of their homes and serenaded her. She described herself as “numb with surprise.”

Poetry also found its place in the conversation. A resident proudly shared that her daughter had written a booklet of verse in her honor—each poem a tribute to her qualities.

Visits from family and friends were universally cherished. These occasions are small treasures and a cache of valuable memories.

Travel, while more demanding in one's nineties, hasn't been ruled out. One group member celebrated his milestone with a Rhodes Scholar trip to Bermuda—proof that the spirit of exploration needn't age.

Of course, not all sentiments were sentimental. One resident, with a glint in his eye, simply pleaded for “protection from tyrants!” Another spoke of receiving a subscription to Storyworth as a gift. Details long overlooked surfaced in surprising ways.

And finally, one spirited member declared: “I'm marching till 100—for the CWV teddy bear!”