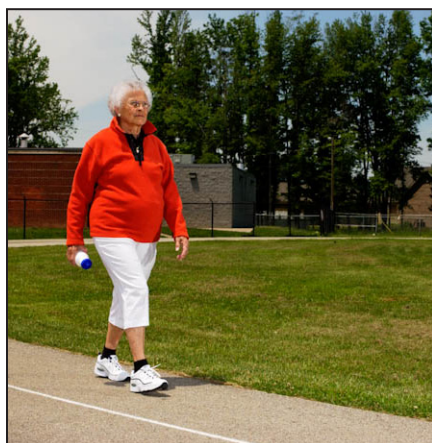


# Stand Up to Falling

## How to Prevent Falls

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While people of all ages are susceptible to falling, the risk of falling and being seriously injured in a fall increases with age. An estimated one in three adults ages 65 and older fall each year. Such falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, including hip fractures and head traumas, and can lead to early death. Falls can also prompt or perpetuate a fear of falling, which can lead to inactivity, reduced mobility, and social isolation, which in turn can contribute to the risk of falling. Fortunately, falls are largely preventable. The following four steps can help older adults and those susceptible to falls to protect their independence and reduce their likelihood of falling.



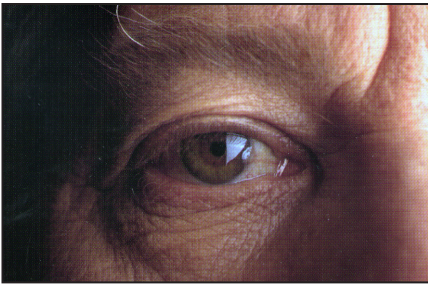
- **Exercise. Exercise. Exercise.** Becoming fit or maintaining a physically fit lifestyle through exercise is one of the most important ways to lower the risk of falling. Inactivity leads to weakness and an increased risk of falling. Exercise makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve strength, balance, and flexibility are most beneficial to fall prevention. The Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute on Aging recommend Tai Chi for people of all ages. The University of Kentucky Family & Consumer Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service supports and encourages A Matter of Balance, a program designed to reduce the fear of falling and to increase activity levels among older adults. Be sure to consult with a doctor before starting an exercise program.

- **Ask a health care provider to review your medicine.** Different medicines work differently in every body. With age especially, sometimes the way a medicine is supposed to work changes. Some medications or combinations of medicines can also create greater

chances for adverse drug interactions and side effects, including dizziness and drowsiness, which lead to falls. Have your doctor or pharmacist review all of the medicines you take, even over-the-counter and herbal medicines.





- **Take care of your vision.**

Poor vision increases your chances of falling, so it is important to keep your eyes healthy. Yearly eye exams, maintaining appropriate prescriptions for glasses and contacts, protecting your eyes from disease, and controlling your exposure to glare and changes in light are ways to maximize your vision.

- **Make your home safer.**

Approximately half of all falls happen in the home. Many of these falls are caused by tripping hazards and unsafe surroundings. Removing items you can trip on, adding grab bars to bathrooms and railings to stairwells, and improving lighting are simple ways in which you can improve the safety in your home.



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