

eFit eLearning Course Handout

eFit Falls eLearning for Individuals & Caregivers

- ❑ What increases the risk of an older adult falling?
- ❑ How can falls be prevented both inside and outside the home?
- ❑ What to do in case of a fall?

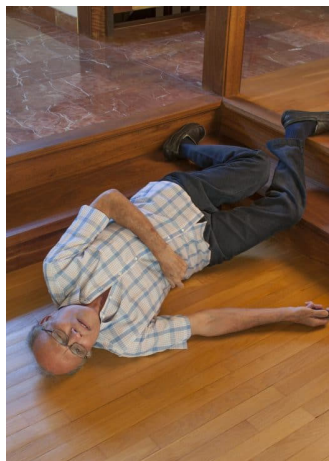
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Falls and Older Adults



- Falls can happen anywhere.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults.
- 1 in 5 older Canadians experience at least 1 fall per year.
- A fall can cause hospitalization, broken bones, head injuries and a fear of falling.
- A fall can impact an older adult's physical health, mental health and quality of life.

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016

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Risk Factors

- Risk factors can increase the likelihood that someone will fall and most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors.
- Risk factors include:
 - previous falls
 - fear of falling that causes a limiting of activities
 - taking multiple medications or substances including over-the-counter and herbal supplements, alcohol, cannabis and street drugs
 - lack of hydration and nutrients from food
 - chronic diseases (Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis and diabetes)
 - change in mental state

[Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017; Noh et al., 2017; Lin & Ferrucci, 2012](#)

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Risk Factors

- Additional risk factors are:
 - vision or hearing issues causing balance or perception issues
 - poor balance, posture or walking ability
 - foot issues-swelling, bunions, corns, untrimmed toenails, numbness, and improper foot wear
 - lack of restful sleep causing lower reaction times and altered perception

[Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017; Noh et al., 2017; Lin & Ferrucci, 2012](#)

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Causes of Falls in the Home



In the home falls can be caused by:

- loose cords, rugs or mats
- poor lighting
- cluttered rooms or hallways
- canes, walkers or improper footwear left out of reach

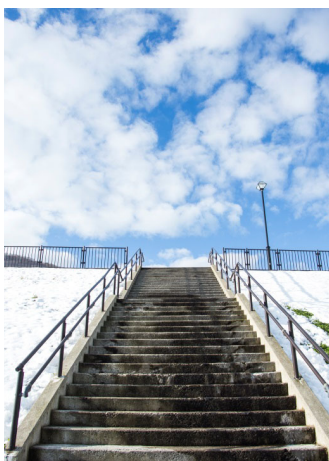
[Cepoiu-Martin et al., 2016](#)

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Causes of Falls Outside of the Home



Outside of the home falls can be caused by:

- uneven surfaces and curbs
- ice, snow and rain that creates slippery surfaces that are harder to walk on.
- colder temperatures - When body temperatures are lower, reaction times are slower. This means someone will be slower to catch themselves if they start to fall.

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Falls are Preventable

Take Care of Your Health

- Know your medications
- Be aware of vision changes
- Be aware of hearing changes

Make Healthy Choices

- Exercise
- Eat well
- Get enough sleep
- Limit alcohol

Be Safe

- Use mobility aids
- Wear safe footwear
- Make the home safe
- Be safe outside

Take Care of Your Health



Know your medications

- Ask a pharmacist for a medication review.
- Ask a health care provider about the side effects of current medications.
- Have an up-to-date list of medications.
- Use a dosette to help organize medications and help prevent taking a double-dose

Take Care of Your Health

Be aware of vision changes

- Have a complete eye exam every 1 to 2 years to check for glaucoma or other eye conditions.
- Use clean vision aids such as prescription glasses, contact lenses and magnifying glasses.
- Make sure the home is well-lit.
- Reduce eye strain by taking breaks from looking at the computer or tablet screen or from reading books.
- Protect eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats.

[Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015; Saskatchewan Health Authority 2017](#)

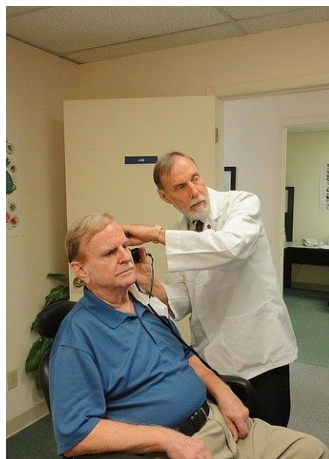
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Take Care of Your Health



[Lin & Ferrucci, 2012](#)

Be aware of hearing changes

- Have hearing checked annually.
- Use assistive devices to improve communication and quality of life.
 - Hearing aids worn in or behind the ear can help some kinds of hearing loss by making sounds louder.
 - Other devices include flashing lights and vibrating devices for doorbells, smoke detectors and alarm clocks.

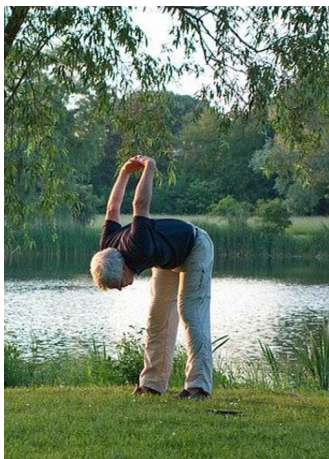
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Make Healthy Choices



[World Health Organization, 2018](#)

Exercise

- Find an enjoyable activity to do 3-4 times a week
 - For example, walking for 20 minutes a day or swimming for 10 minutes a day.
- Perform strengthening activities involving the legs, back and chest at least 2 times per week.
- Participate in resistance and balance training 2 days per week.
 - For example, taking a Tai Chi class.

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Make Healthy Choices



[Government of Canada, 2019](#)

Eat well

- Eat mostly fruits, vegetables, protein and whole grains.
- Limit foods high in unhealthy fats, sugar and salt such as cakes, cookies, doughnuts, fast foods, soda etc.
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Stay hydrated. Water should be the main source of liquid.
- Talk to a healthcare provider about taking supplements for Calcium and Vitamin D to maintain bone health.

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Make Healthy Choices

Get enough sleep and rest

- Make the bedroom quiet and dark.
- Shut off TVs, computers, cell phones one hour before bed.
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Have a bedtime routine with ways to wind down (such as reading or listening to calming music).
- Have a nap early in the day (15 to 45 minutes) if needed.
- Limit caffeine, sugary or spicy foods, alcohol and liquids before bed.

[Noh et al., 2017](#)

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Make Healthy Choices



Limit alcohol use

- Do not mix alcohol with medication(s).
- If taking medications, speak with a health care provider before drinking alcohol.

[National Institute on Aging, 2017](#); [Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015](#)

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Be Safe



[Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015](#)

Use mobility aids

- Mobility aids, such as walkers and canes, provide support while moving.
- Walkers and canes should be adjusted to the right height and in good condition.
- Reachers and shoe-horns can help with getting dressed. ility aids.

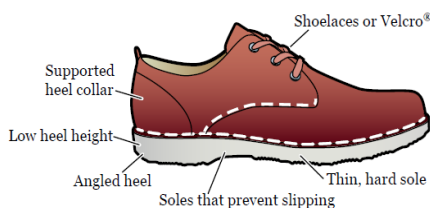
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Be Safe



Wear safe footwear

Footwear should:

- fit properly.
- be comfortable.
- have heels that are less than one inch high.
- have a heel collar that holds the foot in place.
- have hard, non-slip soles.
- have a closure like shoelaces or Velcro (avoid slip-ons, flip flops and shoes with thick soles).

[Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, 2020](#)

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Be Safe

Home safety

- Keep hallways and other high-traffic areas clear of clutter and tripping hazards.
- Secure or remove loose rugs or floorboards.
- Put things away that are not being used.
- Keep frequently used objects close by.
- Use 60 watt bulbs (minimum) in all light fixtures to minimize vision issues caused by low lighting.

[Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015](#)

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Be Safe

Bathroom safety

- Put grab bars around the tub and toilet to help provide extra stability.
- Add a shower seat in the tub/shower to make bathing safer and more comfortable.
- Use non-slip mats on the tile floor and in the bathtub.
- Make sure that important items such as toilet paper, shampoo and soap are close by.
- Use a raised toilet seat.
- Improve the lighting and use nightlights for use at night.
- If there are concerns, have someone nearby while bathing.

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Be Safe



Stair safety

- Install coloured strips on the edge of each stair to help see them.
- Install non-slip strips on each stair.
- Remove loose rugs.
- Install handrails that are sturdy enough to support a person's weight.
- Avoid carrying multiple items or heavy items up and down the stairs.

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Be Safe



Kitchen Safety

- Keep the kitchen open and free of obstacles.
- Keep kitchen well lit.
- Keep commonly used kitchen supplies in easy-to-reach areas.
- Clean up spills right away.
- Store heavy items in lower cupboards.
- Use step stool with sturdy handle to reach higher storage.

Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016

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Be Safe



Right At Home, 2018

Outside the Home

- Use handrails on outdoor steps.
- Use ramps instead of stairs when possible.
- Be aware of uneven curbs and walkways.
- Use ice melt.
- Walk on grass if walkways look slippery.
- Ask someone to help with shoveling snow and yard work if needed.
- Use mobility aids.

Be Safe



Winter safety

- Choose winter boots with a wide low heel and a non slip sole.
- Attach retractable ice picks to the end of canes.
- Use ice grippers on boots.

Have a Plan



[Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015](#)

- Keep a list of the phone numbers of family and friends near the phone.
- Have a plan so that family and friends can get into the home in case of an emergency.
- Have a friend or neighbour who can check in on you.
- Get a personal emergency system (lifeline).

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If You Fall

- Make sure you are not injured before trying to get up or letting someone help you up.
- Roll onto your side.
- Rest while your body and blood pressure adjust.
- Slowly get onto your hands and knees, and crawl to a sturdy chair.
- Put your hands on the chair seat and slide one foot forward so that it is flat on the floor. Keep the other leg bent so the knee is on the floor.
- From this kneeling position, slowly rise and turn your body to sit in the chair.
- Rest for a while before standing up.

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If You Can't Get Up

- If you are injured, call 9-1-1.
- If you are injured and cannot reach a phone, make a loud noise, call for help or use your personal emergency system.

[Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015](#)

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You Have Completed the Falls eLearning Course!

For more information on this and other topics, please visit our [eFit Resources for Individuals & Caregivers on www.sagelink.ca](http://www.sagelink.ca).

We appreciate your feedback. Please contact info@sagelink.ca if you have suggestions, comments or have any questions.

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