

## **Fall Prevention Program for Seniors - Three Steps to Fewer Falls**

Did you know that each year one in three people over the age of sixty will experience a fall? Ouch! In this article, we will discuss a fall prevention program that involves balance exercises, leg exercises, and the elimination of tripping hazards in your home.

### **Balance Exercises**

Your balance deteriorates as you age, mostly due to the fact that you use that sense less and less as the years go by. To counteract this, you need to start exercising your balance on a regular basis. This can be done by standing on one leg or standing with one foot in front of the other like you are on a balance beam.

Stand next to something you can hold on to, like a countertop or the back of a couch, and try to balance for thirty seconds. As you wobble slightly, you can touch your support if needed. You can do balance exercises every day for a couple minutes.

### **Leg Exercises**

Strong leg muscles are indispensable when it comes to preventing falls. They also make the activities of daily life a lot easier. As you age, you will lose about a half pound of muscle per year. Exercising your leg muscles can slow that process.

The best way to strengthen your legs is to use them more. Go up and down the stairs a few times each day. Take a walk. Practice getting up from a recliner ten times in a row. The worst thing you can do is to not use those muscles. They will slowly wither away, until one day you won't be able to go up the stairs or get out of your recliner without help.

## **Reduce Tripping Hazards**

You wouldn't think so, but most falls happen in the home. A lot of these falls are preventable if you know what to look for. There are three categories of tripping hazards. The first is things that are part of your home, like frayed carpet, electric cords, and throw rugs. The second category is clutter, like clothes you wore yesterday, miscellaneous shoes, or magazines on the floor.

The last group of falls is caused by inadequate lighting. You should be able to see what you are about to step on wherever you are in your home, day or night. You don't want to have to walk across a dark room to get to the lamp. Consider adding light switches or nightlights as needed.

Take a tour of your home and eliminate any potential hazards. Then start doing some leg exercises and balance exercises. These three things, when used together, can greatly reduce your chances of falling.

**By Mike Ross**

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