Falls Prevention and Exercise Fact Sheet

ALCHEMY IN MOTION

Falls are a common cause of injury and hospitalisation among older Australia's, but many can be prevented through regular exercise and the right support. As we age, changes in strength, balance and mobility increase our risk of falling. The great news is that regular exercise can support you to stay strong, steady and confident completing your regular daily activities.

The risk of falling can be influenced by many factors, including:

- Older Age
- A previous fall
- Poor Balance
- Slow reaction time
- Muscle weakness
- Reduced sensation in the lower limbs
- Mobility limitations
- Medication use
- Certain medical conditions

Why Exercise is important for Falls Prevention?

A regular exercise program is such an important part of falls prevention. Exercise can assist in:

- **Increasing muscle strength:** Stronger muscles assist with making everyday activities such as standing, walking and climbing stairs easier.
- **Improving balance and stability:** Balance exercises help to maintain control and stability on your feet.
- **Improve mobility and coordination:** Regular exercise helps to improve stability and ability to stay upright when moving.

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- **Maintain bone and joint health:** Weight bearing and strengthening exercises assist in building bone density, which also reduces risk of fractures.
- **Increase confidence:** Being and feeling stronger can help reduce fear of falling and confidence completing activities of daily living.
- **Increase/ Maintain independence:** An overall increase in health and fitness can assist in performing everyday tasks and remaining active in the community.

Examples of Exercises:

- Sit to stands
- Heel raises
- Step ups
- Heel to toe walks
- Tandem balance/ Single Leg Balance (Where appropriate)

Aim to be physically active daily and include a minimum of 2 strength sessions per week.

How can an Exercise Physiologist Can Help?

An Exercise Physiology can help to reduce your risk of falls by competing an individual assessment of your medical history, physical abilities and goals. An EP will develop a safe and personalised exercise program that focuses on increase strength, balance, mobility and coordination.

Key Takeaways

- Stay active and strong to reduce risk of falls.
- Exercise regularly aiming for 2 x strength per week.
- Make your environment safer, reduce trip hazards.
- Start safely.
- Seek assistance from an exercise physiologist for a safe and effective exercise program.