

This brochure was developed through a coordinated project with the Section on Geriatrics of the American Physical Therapy Association. Physical Therapy students were invited to create educational brochures for the Section's consumer focus.

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SECTION ON GERIATRICS

Section on Geriatrics

Helping **YOU** Prevent Falls!



Helping **YOU** Prevent Falls

Common Myths

- I do not need a cane/walker when I am at home
- If I sit most of the time, I will not fall
- It is normal to fall at my age
- It is o.k. for me to fall once
- I will not fall if I do not go out of my house
- I have not gotten hurt from falling, so I never will

NO! These are false!!



Are **YOU** at risk of falling?

- Prior falls
- Stroke
- Parkinson's Disease
- Osteoporosis
- Balance problems
- Not managing medicine/disease
- Lack of exercise & flexibility
- Denial of risk
- Dim light & glare
- Floor surfaces: slippery, throw rugs, clutter, loose wires
- Bathroom hazards: no grab bars, slippery tub or shower, low toilet seats
- Fear of falling & anxiety
- Depression & lack of caregiver support

Physical Therapy & **YOU**

- Work on ways to improve your **balance**
- Provide you with an individualized **exercise program** to promote **strength & flexibility**
- Develop **safe** transfer techniques (i.e. sit to stand, wheelchair, toilet, car)
- Work on ways to **safely walk** indoors & outdoors
- Assess & recommend **home safety**
- **Educate** you & your loved ones on ways to prevent falls

What **YOU** should know!

- 1 in 3 people over 65 & 1 in 2 over 80 fall at **least once** a year!
- **50%** of people who fall, **are likely** to fall again!
- **50%** of people who fall will **require help** with everyday activities!
- **Falls** are the leading cause of injury death in older adults!
- Women fall **more** often than men!

YOU can prevent falls!

- Go to the doctor and:
 - * Get a regular check-up
 - * Check your medication
 - * Check your vision
- Begin a regular exercise program
 - * It makes you stronger
 - * Helps you feel better!
- Check for home safety:
 - * Remove things you can trip over (throw rugs)
 - * Improve lighting
 - * Grab bars in bathroom
 - * Non-slip mats in bathtub
 - * Use handrails on stairs

PREVENTION IS KEY!!



* CDC & NCIPC (2003). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/falls.htm>.

* CDC & NCIPC (2002). Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/spotlite/falltips.htm#1>

* National Safety Council, Science, Technology & Resources Task Force (2002). Retrieved from <http://www.nsc.org/public/issues/strtf1.pdf>