

50+ Wellness Newsletter

We do best what we do most. Be well!

Vitality
for
Life!

November 2010 • A City of Sacramento Publication • Special 2011 Issue



STAND UP TO FALLS

50+ WELLNESS PROGRAM

SPECIAL ISSUE!

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), every year one in three adults over age 65 experiences a fall. In addition to fractures, head and other life altering injuries, falls are a leading cause of injury related deaths. And unfortunately, many who have fallen soon develop a real fear of falling again, which further deters them from leading the active lifestyle they once took for granted. This is why people who plan on having a long and healthy life take fall prevention very seriously. They understand that taking the small steps necessary to ward off falls is one of the best things they can do for their health and longevity.

The City of Sacramento's Older Adult Services division, with support from Kaiser Permanente South Sacramento Community Benefit Program and Area 4 Agency on Aging, is continuing to our "Stand Up to Falls!" project. This special issue of the 50+ Wellness Newsletter - dedicated to the topic of falls and how you can prevent becoming a victim - includes the latest research on the subject, strategies for preventing falls, and details on local resources and special

workshops - all designed especially for you as you Stand Up to Falls! This special Fall Prevention issue of the 50+ Wellness newsletter is one part of our Stand Up to Falls! Project. There are additional opportunities to enhance your chances for a fall-free future:



FAB Clinics

Designed at the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence at CSU Fullerton, the Fullerton Advanced Balance Scale is a measurement tool used to assess the multiple balance functions of our body with 10 simple exercises. While we may be quite active in our lives, engaging in the appropriate amount of exercise and other fitness activities, how sure are we that we are challenging our balance enough to truly remain fall free? Each clinic will provide individual feedback on fall risks and areas for improvement, and a spot in our Fall Prevention 101 workshop will be available to those who need more information to make those changes necessary to Stand Up to Falls!

Falls Prevention-101 workshops:

Many of us know that falls are a very real risk as we age. But how aware are we of the many factors that play into fall risk? It's not just leg strength or watching your step. Medications, nutrition, whole body fitness, sensory changes, and our environment all

have a role in the risk of falling. "Fall Prevention 101", a key component of our "Stand Up to Falls!" project, is a comprehensive workshop designed to help participants prepare for a fall-free future. During this fun and dynamic 4-hour workshop, you will learn about the many factors that affect your balance and ability to remain safely upright. Plenty of time will be dedicated to trying out exercises and other proven strategies to avoid becoming a fall victim. In addition to going home with a new knowledge of fall prevention practices, participants will receive fitness equipment and resource information for continuing your efforts on your own at home.

A Matter of Balance:

Do you have concerns about falling? Unfortunately, many people who are fearful of falling retreat from the activities that make life enjoyable. *A Matter of Balance* is an award winning 8-part workshop designed to help you manage falls and increase activity levels. Participants in *A Matter of Balance* will learn

- New, wiser thinking about falls and recognize "fall-ty" behaviors
- How to make changes at home to reduce falls
- Simple at-home exercises to increase strength, balance and flexibility
- How to set goals for increasing activity and use coping strategies to reduce the concern about falls.

Continued on page 2

Who should attend? Anyone concerned about falls, anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength and especially people who have already experienced a simple or serious fall. Each 8-part series will be offered to just 12 participants.

Rebuilding Together's Safe at Home Program:

The local organization, Rebuilding Together, offers a valuable service called the Safe at Home Program. Skilled volunteers are available to make modifications and minor repairs to the homes of seniors, all aimed at reducing the risk of falls at home. Modifications include grab bars, toilet raisers, shower stools, stair railings, smoke and fire detectors, shower hoses, transfer poles, transition ramps. Repairs are assessed on a case by case basis, but can include light, sprinkler and shower door replacements; concrete repair, carpentry issues, fence repair and other minor issues. Services are free or fee-based, depending on eligibility. For more information, contact Rebuilding Together at (916) 455-1880 or info@rebuildingtogethersacramento.org. Please mention that you're contacting them in response to the Stand Up to Falls! Project.

Sponsorship info:

Stand Up to Falls! is sponsored by Kaiser Permanent South Sacramento Community Benefit Program and Area 4 Agency on Aging

Why the increased risk?

So, why is it that the risk of falling, and suffering a serious outcome, increases as we continue on in years? Some might answer that it's simply that we're "old". While events that typically occur in later life certainly play a large role in the increased likelihood of falling, age alone does not determine our risk. In fact, it's not any single factor that heightens our risk of falling, but many.

Physical Fitness People often strive to be physically fit and "in shape" in order to look a certain way or fit into a particular size of clothing but the real reason to be fit runs much deeper. Being fit not only helps ward off disease and makes us feel great, it also helps us avoid falling. Having strong muscles trained to respond quickly allows us to catch ourselves before we land on the ground. We are better

able to step over objects, even doorways, and pick our feet completely up when walking. And having healthy, strong bones (which also requires proper nutrition), makes a fracture or lasting injury less likely if we do topple over. Inadequate activity has been identified by the CDC as a primary behavioral risk factor for falls.

Health Changes Medical conditions also affect our ability to stay upright. Some cause dizziness or weakness, or result in terrible headaches. Other illnesses and disease affect the senses. Our eyesight may not be what it once was and seeing objects or changes in the ground may be difficult to detect. Finally, medications may contribute to fall risk, causing lightheadedness, drowsiness, or even resulting in increased use of the restroom, which can lead to falls if it involves maneuvering across a dark bedroom at night or the like. According to the CDC, common biological risk factors include: mobility limitations due to muscle weakness or balance problems, chronic health conditions such



as arthritis and stroke, vision changes or loss of sensation in the feet.

Living conditions

Factors in our environment can also affect our risk of falling. Over a lifetime, we collect a lot of things. Having these sticking out from under furniture, piled in hallways and

stacked in rooms all present possibilities for getting tripped up. Buckled carpets, uneven sidewalks, cracked driveways and other unsmooth surfaces can foul even those without an increased risk of falls. When we store items too high to reach without stepping up onto a chair, or try to maneuver through a poorly lit room, our risk of falling increases. The most frequently occurring environmental risk factors include hazards such as clutter and poor lighting, incorrect size, type or use of assistive devices (walkers, canes, crutches) and poorly designed public spaces.

As we can see from the examples listed above, there are many reasons why our risk of falling increases over time. And it's clear that for most people the factors that cause falls are often intertwined and occur simultaneously. But all hope is not lost. There are many proven steps you can take to reduce your risk of falls - read on to find out just what they are!

Staying safe at home

Most of us think of our home as a safe zone - where we are comfortable, surrounded by our belongings and in control. We want to continue living at home, maintaining our independence and sense of self that comes from our nesting places. However, in order to do so, we must address hazards in and around the home that threaten our ability to remain fall-free, remembering to consider our future needs as well. You are encouraged to use the check list below to evaluate the safety of your home in terms of fall risk. Go slowly through each area of your house and property to evaluate its condition, using the checklist as a guide:

Home Safety Checklist

EXTERIOR ENTRANCES & EXITS

- Walk & drive surface free of holes & cracks that present a tripping hazard?
- Secure handrails for all stairs?
- Enough light for driveway, walk & porch?
- Can see out of peephole easily?
- Do door & window locks work?
- Can you hear you doorbell?
- Are stairs easy to identify separately?
- Are walkways free of clutter, cords, etc.?
- Are floors & carpet smooth & not slick?
- Easily enter rooms through each doorway?
- Door levers are manageable?

BATHROOM

- Are basins & tub faucets, shower control & drain plugs manageable & reachable?

INTERIOR DOORS, STAIRS & HALLS

- Are light switches accessible?
- Are walkways & halls wide enough for a walker/ wheelchair as needed?
- Secure handrails for all stairs?
- Are stairs & floors level & sturdy?
- Are hot water pipes covered?
- Is the toilet height manageable? Toilet paper easily reached?
- Can enter & exit shower or bath safely?
- Non-stick surface for shower floor?
- Bath rugs are secured with non-slip pad or rug tape?

KITCHEN

- Enough lighting?
- Counters a manageable height?
- Can you reach regularly used items without a step stool or bending over?
- Are under sink hot water pipes covered?
- Is there under counter knee space if sitting is necessary?
- Can you control the stove & oven without reaching over the stove?

LIVING, DINING & BEDROOM

- Chair, sofa, bed heights allow sitting & standing?
- Do rugs have non-slip pad or rug tape?
- Is chair available with arm rests sturdy & long enough to assist in standing?
- Able to control light from bed?
- Able to place a phone call from bed, chair & sofa?
- Walkways free of clutter, cords, thick rugs?
- Pathways wide enough for a walker or wheelchair?
- Able to reach clothing & belongings easily?

LAUNDRY

- Able to access automatic washer/dryer?
- Area to fold, hand wash, hang & sort laundry?

TELEPHONE & DOOR

- Phone jack location near bed, sofa & chair?
- Able to get phone, dial & hear the caller?
- Able to reach & empty mailbox?

STORAGE SPACE

- Able to reach closet rods & hooks, open drawers?
- Is there a light inside the closet?
- Doors can be opened easily?

WINDOWS

- Can you open windows without bending or stretching to reach opening lever?
- Lock accessible, easy to operate?
- Sill height above floor level?

ELECTRIC OUTLETS & CONTROLS

- Sufficient outlets?
- Outlets accessible without stooping?
- Are extension cords being safely used?
- Can turn on lights before entering rooms?

HEAT, LIGHT, VENTILATION, SECURITY, CARBON MONOXIDE, WATER TEMP CONTROL

- Are there smoke/CO detectors & a fire extinguisher?
- Are thermometer displays easily readable?
- Pressure balance valve available?
- Any rooms too dark?
- Able to open windows; slide patio doors?
- Able to open drapes or curtains?

More about staying safe at home

If you've left any of the boxes in the above checklist unmarked, you have a potential home safety hazard! If you need assistance in resolving the issue, be sure to contact a trusted family member or friend, or licensed handy person.

In addition to making safety improvements to our living environments, behavioral changes can further reduce risk of falls:

■ When rising from a chair, take time to regain your balance before moving.



■ Wear low heeled, rubber soled shoes and fitted slippers. Avoid walking in your stockings.

■ Carry small loads and amounts of items, so that your view is not blocked.

■ Keep one hand available to grasp railings, even if it means making more trips to carry items.

■ Avoid rushing to the phone to reach a call – they can call back or leave a message if you don't make it in time!



■ Avoid rushing to answer the door.



■ If you must reach a high place, use a sturdy, secure step stool and never a chair.

■ Be familiar with hazards out in your community and do what you can to avoid them. For example, avoid a really uneven sidewalk when taking a walk.



Medication – The fall factor

An important but often overlooked side effect of many medications is increased risk of falling that they pose. This can have dire consequences, particularly for those who take multiple medications.



There are a few reasons why medications may increase our risk for falling. Some medicines can simply affect our physical stability and balance. Others affect cognition, attention and alertness, which reduce the ability to focus on walking and pay attention to tripping hazards in the environment. Additionally, as we age, our ability to metabolize, or break down and use, medications may weaken. Our kidneys and livers may not be functioning as well as they once did, resulting in stronger side effects. Finally, multiple medications taken in combination can heighten the side effects and intensify the adverse reactions.

The list of drug classifications that can contribute to falling is long. Be sure to read the instructions and information about side effects that come with your prescriptions, identify the side effects that could result in falls and be alert to them once you start the medication. "Risk of falling" will unlikely be listed as a side effect; instead, be on guard when terms such as drowsiness, visual disturbances, dizziness and dizziness upon standing, confusion and other similar descriptions of side effects are listed.

Both dose and timing taken has been linked to the risk of falling for particular drug classes, with the higher doses making the consumer more susceptible to falls. Furthermore, taking multiple medications has also been associated with an increase risk of falling. In any case, if you are concerned about your fall risk and medications or would like to have your fall risk evaluated, contact your physician or pharmacist for a professional evaluation and be prepared with information, including dosage and instructions, for every medication and supplement you take. And certainly, as new medications are prescribed, add fall prevention concerns to your list of questions for your health care provider!

Eating Right: Nutrition and fall prevention

You may be thinking “how is nutrition going to help me stop from falling?” It’s an understandable question, as the two don’t necessarily seem linked. However, as you continue to read this newsletter and educate yourself about healthy aging and fall prevention, you’ll come to learn that everything is intertwined, either directly or indirectly!

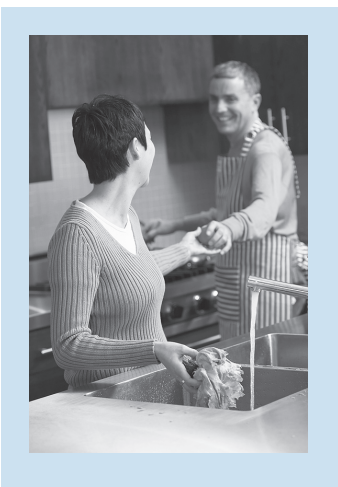
Most have heard the recommendations for good nutrition: plenty of fiber, fruits and vegetables, reasonable proportions of carbohydrates and protein, getting our daily calcium and other nutrients and staying hydrated with water and other non-caloric, non-caffeinated beverages. Hopefully you’re following this common sense advice as much as possible. Proper nutrition not only helps maintain a healthy weight, it keeps muscles nourished, bones strong and minds sharp.

Being physically fit is one of the most effective and simplest ways to reduce fall risk. And by filling our bodies with good things, we give ourselves the best opportunity to function well and independently throughout each day. In addition to eating the right things, we need to be sure to eat the right amounts. Extra weight stresses our joints and makes participating in physical activities less enjoyable. This, in turn, makes it difficult to keep up a fitness routine.

Throughout life, calcium is incredibly important in our diets for strong bones and to ward off osteoporosis. Not only do we need to get plenty of calcium, we also need adequate vitamin D to help our bones absorb that calcium. As we know from an early age, calcium helps strengthen our bones. Strong bones not only support us to prevent falls, they are less likely to fracture and leave us with lasting injuries, in the event a fall does occur.

Lean forms of protein, such as chicken, fish, lean cuts of red meat (in moderation!) and beans, nuts and legumes are important to our building and nourishing muscles. Carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables all provide our body with the fuel needed to do the work of staying fit and independent. And while nonfat may be the popular choice, we need some fats in our diet to help lubricate our joints, nourish our skin and keep our brains healthy. Just stick with the healthy, natural fats found in olive oil, avocado, fish and nuts!

Getting the recommended amounts of the essential nutrients may not directly affect the likelihood of falls, but proper nutrition certainly factors into the other key components of staying upright: exercise, metabolizing medication, and cognitive alertness. It’s perfectly fine to treat yourself now and again, but by sticking with the foods found in nature, and in moderation, you give yourself another leg up in fall prevention!



SAFARI TOURS

One day and overnight trips for Active adults.

www.cityofsacramento.org/safari

(916) 808-TOURS (8687)



Stretch and Strengthen: Fitness for Fall Prevention

The simplest, and most effective, way we can reduce the risk of falling is to remain physically fit throughout our lives. By strengthening our hearts, muscles and bones and challenging our sense of balance on a regular basis, we stand to remain standing! While every day attention to our fitness is best, even two to three days a week has been shown to have a marked improvement.

Why physical fitness? Every movement of our body relies on the bones, muscles and joints that form the structure of our body. The saying “use it or lose it” certainly applies here. When we are sedentary couch potatoes, our muscles weaken from lack of use and our bones are never challenged and strengthened. Just as we know that we need to stay mentally active to keep our brains healthy, we need to keep our bodies active to stay physically healthy.

While stressing our muscles with exercise may seem contradictory to some, it is actually the stress that stimulates muscle growth. Calcium and vitamin D are essential to strong bones, but so are weight-bearing exercises. Muscle pulling on bone builds bone, so weight-bearing exercise builds denser, stronger bones. Stronger bones, in turn, do a better job of supporting our bodies and are less likely to break in the event we do fall.

Flexibility is another component that helps us stay free from falls. A limited range of motion is more likely to force us to stretch beyond our comfort or safe zone to take care of everyday tasks, such as putting on our shoes, reaching for the mail, or standing from a sitting position. If we include flexibility and stretching in our fitness routine, we’ll feel less tight and tense, have more dexterity and be less likely to

stretch ourselves into unsafe positions.

Endurance is an aspect of fitness that cannot be overlooked, whether it’s cardiovascular (our hearts and lungs) or muscular. Imagine carrying a bag of groceries into the house. Without a strong heart and set of lungs, we can easily become winded or tired. Not only is the chore harder than necessary, it can lead to a fall. In this same situation, if our muscles and cardiovascular system are strong, carting groceries into the house becomes a safe, every day task. Even if a slight trip occurs our strong muscles are better able to keep us upright.

So what does a good fitness routine include? Ideally, each of the following activities should be incorporated into your regimen three to five times a week. You don’t need to do the same thing every day - variety is always important as it keeps exercise engaging and less likely to bore us!

Cardiovascular Gets the heart pumping and lungs working, such as brisk walks, aerobics, swimming, biking, hiking, or dancing. No need to push to exhaustion to reap the benefits - you should be able to talk in full sentences but be unable to sing. Aim for a total of 20 to 30 minutes (these can be broken down into 10 minute increments), three to five times a week.

Resistance and Strength training Using resistance bands, free weights, or - if you know how to do so safely - even your own body to build muscle and strengthen bones. Address all areas of the body - your legs, arms, hands, and core! You should be able to finish two to three sets of 8-12 reps but feel muscle fatigue toward the end of your sets. Start small and work your way up. Work different muscles groups on different days and allow those muscles groups time to recover in between.

Flexibility Stretching is a very important part of your routine! As we strengthen muscles they tend to tighten up, so to remain flexible we need to challenge ourselves. You should “feel” the stretch. However, if you experience any pain, you have pushed too far. Ease up and hold your stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Static stretching is best done with warm muscles, such as at the end of your class, walk, or bike ride. However, we don’t want to jump right into a tough routine without giving our bodies time to limber up. Start all workouts slowly and gently, once you start to feel your body warm up and joints loosen, then you can pick up the pace.



Balance training
Strong muscles are well and good but we still need to regularly challenge

our sense of balance to keep it up to par. Routines that include a balance component help our muscles “learn” the movements we need to steady ourselves, help our brains learn to focus and deal with shifts in weight and center of gravity and train our core for better posture - all very important to remaining fall free. When practicing balancing exercises, go slowly and position yourself near a sturdy object you can grasp if you start to get too unsteady.

There are many great ways to include all these important fall prevention components – cardiovascular, strength, flexibility and balance training - into a fun and healthy fitness routine. Your local community center, senior center, community college or fitness club may offer Balance and Strengthening, Senior Aerobics, walking groups, Yoga and Tai Chi classes. You can join a gym, or start a fitness group with friends. Many neighborhood parks have fitness stations you can circuit through. There are countless videos and guidebooks available that address the fitness needs of older adults. The opportunities are out there, waiting for you!

As with any exercise routine, ALWAYS consult your physician before beginning any new activity. While we want to challenge our bodies every day, pain, intense discomfort and dizziness are indicators you may be doing too much and need to stop. Make sure you are participating in a safe manner and not actually increasing your risk of falling. Stay hydrated, keep an open mind and have fun!



Resources for more information
Center for Disease Control, cdc.org
StopFalls.org

Get moving with 50+ Wellness

Exercise, Energize, Enjoy

Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 to 11:30 am, South Natomas CC, 2921 Truxel Road. Increase strength, flexibility and improve balance using a variety of techniques and equipment. \$20 for a 10 session punch card.

Stretching & Strengthening Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 7:30 to 8:30 am, 8:45 to 9:45 am or 10 to 11 am, East Portal Park Clubhouse, Rodeo Way at L Street, East Sacramento. Focusing on proper body mechanics, posture and balance, with a deep relaxation phase at the end of the class. All fitness levels welcome! \$55/month. Pay at Coloma CC, 4623 T Street.

Raja Yoga Mondays, 12:30 to 2 pm, East Portal Park Clubhouse, Rodeo Way at L Street, East Sacramento. Gentle yoga adapted to individual needs. The emphasis is on deep relaxation and proper breathing techniques. \$32 for a 4 session punch card. Sign up at Coloma CC, 4623 T Street

Head to Toe Fitness Monday, Wednesday 8:30 to 9:30 am. Evelyn Moore CC, 1402 Dickson Street. Feel fit and energized with a blend of exercise, tai chi, meditation, group hugs, games, songs and laughter! \$20 for a 10 session punch card.

Stretch N' Flex Tuesday and Thursday, 8 to 9 am, Belle Cooledge CC, 5699 South Land Park Drive. A full hour of intensive exercise, including floor work on mats, exercises standing and sitting, strenuous standing exercises and weight and balance training. Mats, weights, and personal emergency and health information is required. FREE!

Chi Gong for Special Populations Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at Evelyn Moore CC, 1402 Dickson Street. Practice the ancient art of Chi Gong and benefit from a group healing session. FREE!

Fit over Fifty Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:30 to 11:30 am, Pannell Meadowview CC, 2450 Meadowview Road. Includes stretching and strengthening exercises. \$10/5 sessions or \$20/11 sessions.



Neighborhood WALK

Groups meet at various times and days. Hours may change due to summer weather. Call 808-1593 for more info.

Campus Commons - Th 9 am. Meet in front of Campus Commons Clubhouse at 650 Commons Dr.

Garcia Bend Park - MWF 7:30am. Windbridge Dr. at Pocket Rd. Meet in front of playground.

Howe Park - T/Th 9am. Meet in front of Vintage Knolls Apts., 2340 Bell St. across from park.

Land Park - MWF 9am. Land Park Dr. at 16th Ave. Meet on the west side of William Land Golf Course parking lot.

North Highlands - MWF, 9am. Meet at North Highlands CC, 6040 Watt Ave.

Oak Park CC - T/Th 9am. 3425 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd 808-6151

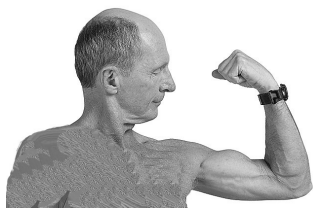
Oki Park - MWF 6:30pm. Wissemann Dr. off Folsom. Meet at pool house.

Pannell Meadowview CC - MWF 8:30am. 2450 Meadowview Rd. Meet in lobby.

South Natomas CC - T/Th 8am. 808-1571.

Tahoe Park - MWF 9am. 59th St. at 11th Ave. Meet at pool house.

If you have questions regarding the above activities, please call us at 916-808-1593.



FIT-4-U Services

There are lots of opportunities in Sacramento to get moving and fit! Need some help locating what activities nearby you might enjoy?

Give us a call at **916-808-1593**

or send us an email at

fiftypluswellness@cityofsacramento.org

and we'll help find what might be available for you and your specific needs!



Laugh a little every day!

You know you're old when you have owned an album for 2 or more decades in 4 different formats.

In 1963 - vinyl

In 1973 - 8-track tape

In 1983 - cassette tape

In 1993 - CD

In 2010 - MP3

50+ Wellness

Newsletter Schedule



The 50+ Wellness Newsletter covers a range of topics and is printed biannually, Spring and Fall. Summer and Winter issues are available via email or online, at www.cityofsacramento.org/parksandrecreation/ohs/50%2B.htm.

50+ Wellness Newsletter publishing schedule:

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Thank you to our partner



KAISER PERMANENTE®

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