

# *Take a Stand to Prevent Falls*



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Falls Prevention Presentation  
Developed by AOTA and  
AGPT, a component of APTA

# Are falls preventable?

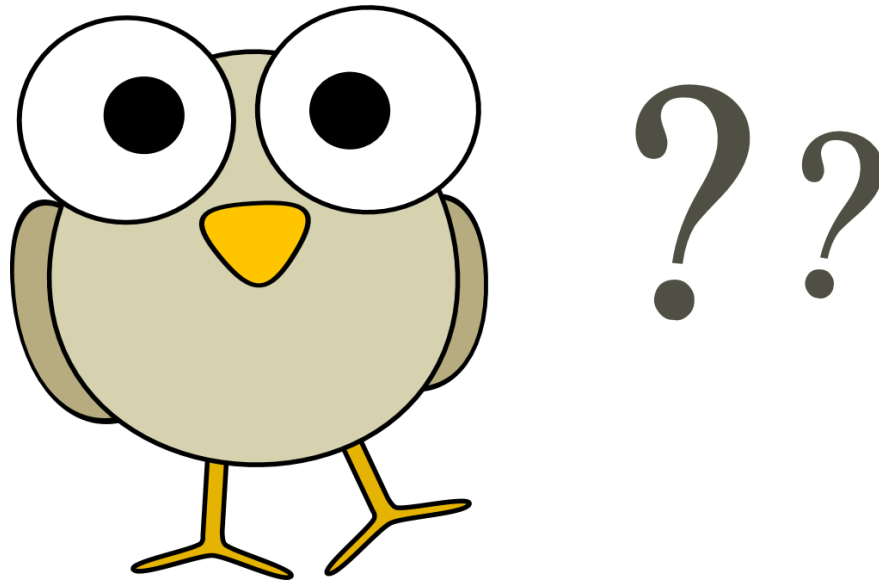


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# YES!

Falls are largely  
preventable!  
Come learn how.

# Today's Discussion

- ▶ Definition of a fall
- ▶ Fear of falling
- ▶ Risk factors for falling
- ▶ Action steps to reduce YOUR fall risk



Image courtesy of Stuart Miles at freedigitalphotos.net

# What is a fall?

- ▶ Landing on the ground or some other lower surface when you didn't intend to be there
- ▶ Includes slips, trips, etc.



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Image courtesy of Michael Heiss at flicker.com

# Have you had a fall?

- ▶ Have you had a fall in the past year?
- ▶ Were you hurt?
- ▶ Do you worry about falling?
- ▶ Do you feel unsteady when standing or walking?

# Do you limit activities?

- **Fear of Falling** is a lasting concern about falling that may cause a person to stop doing activities s/he remains able to do.

*Tinetti & Powell, 1993*



Image courtesy of Dr. Joseph Valks at freedigitalphotos.net



# Why does a fear of falling matter?

- May stop you from activities
- Legs weaken with inactivity
- Inactivity leads to falls
- May make the person feel alone
- May cause depression



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*Boyd & Stevens, 2009; Donoghue, Cronin, Savva, O'Reagan, & Kenny, 2013; Painter et al., 2012*



# Types of Fall Risk Factors

**Most falls result from a number of risk factors:**

- ▶ **Physical risk factors:** Changes in your body that increase your risk for a fall
- ▶ **Behavioral risk factors:** Things we do or don't do that increase our fall risk
- ▶ **Environmental risk factors:** Hazards in our home or community



*CDC, 2014c*

# Risk Factors

## You CAN change

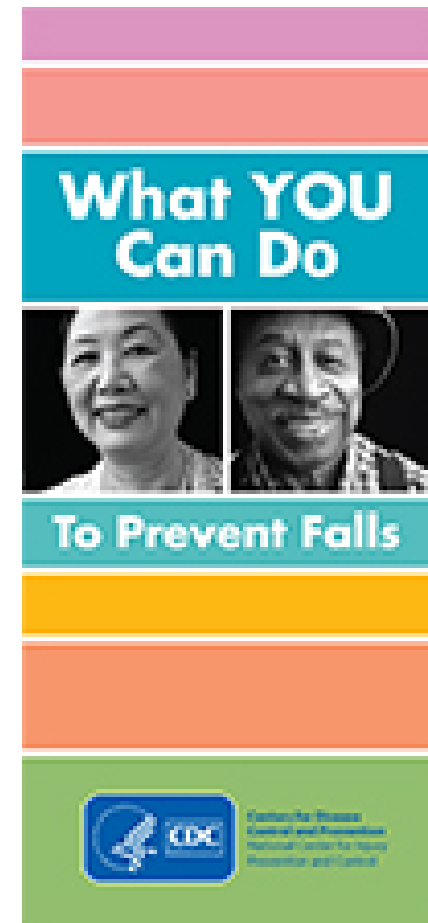
- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Home environment
- ▶ Vision
- ▶ Medication Use
- ▶ Fear of falling
- ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Improper use of assistive devices

## You CAN'T change

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Ethnic background

# What can YOU do to prevent falls?

- ▶ Exercise to improve you balance and strength
- ▶ Have your doctor or pharmacist review your medicines
- ▶ Have your vision checked
- ▶ Make your home safer



CDC, 2014d

# Exercise Recommendations



Photo courtesy of the National Council on Aging

- ▶ Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program
- ▶ Begin with PT or fall prevention classes
- ▶ Be sure classes are for *your* age group or ability level
- ▶ Stick with it!

# Home Safety Evaluation

- ▶ Identify and eliminate fall hazards in your home and community
- ▶ *Check for Safety* Brochure in CDC's STEADI Toolkit
- ▶ An occupational therapist can help identify safety issues and solutions

*CDC, n.d.*



*CDC, 2014a*

# Medications and Falls Risk

- Side effects may make you dizzy
- Medication changes can increase fall risk
- Use one pharmacy
- Review your medications each year
- Be sure you can read your labels



Image courtesy of Victor Habbick at freedigitalphotos.net



# Vision and Falls Risk



Image courtesy of ponsulak at freedigitalphotos.net

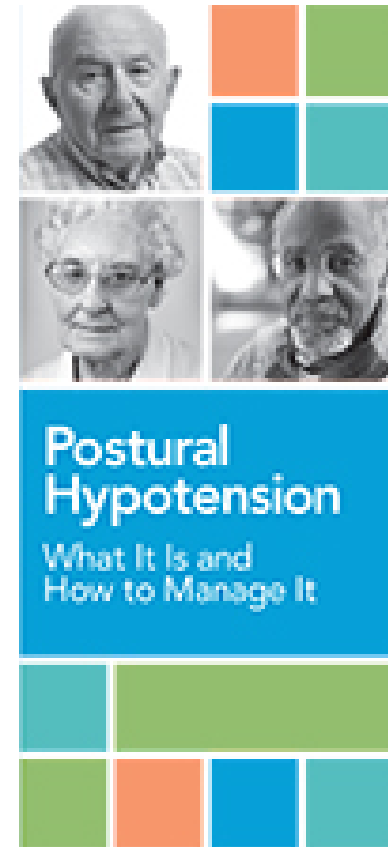
- Having annual eye exams after age 50 can help identify vision problems.
- Wearing multifocal lenses may blur or distort your vision looking down.
- Removing cataract(s) may reduce fall risk.

*AGS & BGS, 2010*

# Blood Pressure and Fall Risk

- ▶ Check your blood pressure regularly.
- ▶ If you get dizzy when you stand up, see your doctor and have your “sit to stand” blood pressure checked.
- ▶ Some blood pressure medications increase fall risk; speak with your doctor.

*AGS/BGS, 2010; Panel on Prevention, 2011*



*CDC, 2014b*

# Chronic Conditions May Contribute to Your Fall Risk

- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Arthritis
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- ▶ Parkinson's Disease
- ▶ Chronic Pain
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

*AGS & BGS, 2010; Panel on Prevention, 2011*

# Risk of Falling May Increase

- Change in your medications
- Illness or infection
- Pain
- Lack of sleep
- Being sad or worried
- Reduced activity level
- Move to new home
- Change in use of cane or walker



Image courtesy of Stuart Miles at freedigitalphotos.net

# Start Small

## Choose one risk factor to address

- **Pharmacist & Doctor** — review medications for side effects that may cause you to fall
- **Occupational Therapist** — home assessment and recommendations to make your home safer
- **Physical Therapist** — help with physical activity, balance, strength, and moving safely

# After a Fall Occurs ...

- ▶ Check for injury.
- ▶ Call for help, if needed.
- ▶ Seek medical attention right away if you might have hit your head.
- ▶ Call your doctor.
- ▶ Check for safety hazards.
- ▶ Learn how to get up safely.



Photo courtesy of Ventrilock at freedigitalphotos.net



# Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Programs

# Otago Exercise Program (OEP)

- ▶ Done one-to-one with a trained PT and is delivered as part of a complete PT program
- ▶ Includes exercise and walking program designed for you
- ▶ If you or your physician feel you should begin with PT, be sure your PT includes the OEP
- ▶ Great start for later Stepping On<sup>®</sup> (SO) program



Photo courtesy of the National Council on Aging

# Matter of Balance

- ▶ Eight weekly 2-hour sessions including peer group discussion, exercise, education, and some behavior modification
- ▶ All exercises can be done in sitting or supported standing
- ▶ Excellent for people who are fearful of falling
- ▶ Great start for later Stepping On
- ▶ Visit <http://www.mainehealth.org/mob>



Photo Courtesy of the National Council on Aging

# Stepping On<sup>®</sup> (SO)

- ▶ Seven weekly 2-hour classes including peer discussion, exercise, expert lectures
- ▶ Great follow-up to Otago (OEP)
- ▶ SO classes include standing exercises that are done by a chair independently
- ▶ You should feel safe standing and walking independently before you begin SO
- ▶ Visit <https://wihealthyaging.org/stepping-on>



# Tai Chi



Courtesy of the National Council on Aging

- ▶ Fantastic program for ongoing fitness and balance training
- ▶ Does not include educational component
- ▶ Classes are usually ongoing and not limited to certain weeks
- ▶ Participants should be able to stand on one leg for 5 seconds

# Finding Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Programs

- ▶ Local Senior Center
- ▶ Area Agency on Aging  
[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or  
1-800-677-1116
- ▶ Hospitals or health clinics
- ▶ YMCA for programs like Tai Chi



Photo courtesy of the National Council on Aging



**REMEMBER**

***Move More!***



# Evidence-Based Resources

## ▶ National Council on Aging

- Provides information on evidence-based falls prevention programs, state falls prevention coalitions, consumer material and the 2015 Falls Free® National Action Plan
- <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-programs-for-older-adults/>

## ▶ Falls Free® Initiative

- Provides resources and evidence-based practice to reduce fall-related injuries and death among older adults
- <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-free-initiative.html>

# Thank You for Coming!

This PowerPoint presentation was developed by Jane Painter-Patton, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Professor, East Carolina University and Mindy Oxman Renfro, PT, PhD, DPT, University of Montana, with assistance from AOTA staff Karen Smith, OT/L, CAPS.

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