

# STEP BY STEP 2017

## A GUIDE TO THE FINDING BALANCE CAMPAIGN



Stay  
Independent.  
Prevent  
Falls.

Finding  
Balance

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## Welcome

Thank you for taking part in the Finding Balance Campaign! People like you turn an idea into a movement. You play a vital role. You have the opportunity to share information with older adults, helping them to take action so they do not fall.

A fall can result in injuries that stop older adults from daily tasks like getting in a car, rising from a chair, or carrying groceries. Preventing falls is important to staying independent.

## Finding Balance

As you grow older, the risk of falling increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent falls.

Finding Balance is a seniors' falls prevention program developed and coordinated by the Injury Prevention Centre at the University of Alberta, in partnership with health professionals and practitioners across Alberta and Canada. The program offers educational resources about preventing slips, trips, and falls among older Albertans. The risk of falling increases as we get older. The Finding Balance program focuses on real life strategies that older adults can use to lower their risk of a fall.

## Campaign Overview

November is Falls Prevention Month across Canada, and the Finding Balance Campaign is dedicated to supporting your efforts to reduce seniors' falls. The overarching theme of the 2017 campaign is to Stay Independent. Prevent Falls. Over a period of four weeks, the Finding Balance Campaign will raise a spotlight on each of our three key messages.

Three key messages have been developed based on current research, evidence-based practice and focus-testing:

- » Keep Active – Exercise for strength and balance
- » Check Your Vision – Talk to your optometrist or ophthalmologist
- » Review Your Medications – Have your doctor or pharmacist review your medications

**Launch Week (Nov. 1- 5)** November 1, 2017 is the Finding Balance Media launch at the Don Wheaton YMCA in Edmonton Alberta. The launch of the campaign comes with an increase in social media activity, the public distribution of promotional materials across the province, and light-ups of Edmonton's High Level Bridge and the Calgary Tower and the City Hall in Lethbridge. Events and activities featuring general promotion of falls prevention are ideal for this week.

**"Keep Active" Week (Nov.6-12)** Encourage seniors to keep moving to stay healthy and independent. Activities planned around this theme should promote improvement of strength, gait, balance, and overall health.

**"Check Your Vision" Week (Nov.13-19)** Seniors' eye health and vision care play an important role in fall prevention. Plan activities for seniors to have their eyes checked by an optometrist or ophthalmologist yearly.

**"Review Your Medications" Week (Nov.20-28)** Seniors who take more than 3-4 medications are at a higher risk of falling. Activities planned for this week ideally provide an opportunity for seniors to review all medications and other supplements with a doctor or pharmacist.

## Campaign Events

The Injury Prevention Centre is encouraging community partners to organize events for seniors in their communities in support of the Finding Balance Campaign. For a list of all Finding Balance Campaign events across Alberta, check out our calendar at [findingbalancealberta.ca](http://findingbalancealberta.ca).

## Event Ideas

The possibilities are endless, but here are some suggestions to inspire you for this year's Finding Balance Campaign:

**Launch Week** to promote general awareness about falls prevention.

- » Seniors tea, crib tournament, pop-up coffee shop
- » Theatre events
- » Nutrition clinic
- » Distribute campaign materials to local businesses

**Keep Active Week** to promote physical activity for all ability levels.

- » Hold an exercise class, dance class, curling tournament, bowling tournament, walking group, balloon tennis, swimming and gardening, pickleball tournament
- » Reach out to local fitness organizations.

**Check Your Vision Week** to promote awareness about vision health

- » Partner with an optometrist to do a vision check day for seniors with your facility or group
- » Have an optometrist give a talk about the importance of eye health.

**Review Your Medications Week** to promote awareness about the risk of taking multiple medications, side effects of medications.

- » Partner with a local pharmacist for a day to review medications.
- » Discard outdated medications (medicine cabinet makeover day).

## Steps for Success

- 1. What** kind of event are you having? Choose how you would like to promote awareness about falls prevention.
- 2. Where** and when will the event be held? Secure a location and follow up with any additional vendors you may need to include.
- 3. How much** will this cost? Can you get sponsors to cover some of the cost?
- 4. Who** will you invite? Get the word out:
  - » Put up posters
  - » Write about it in newsletters and community calendars
  - » Email your friends and networks.
  - » Get active on social media!
  - » Invite the whole family to strengthen Seniors' support networks.
  - » Plan your event to coincide with local Seniors' Days.
5. Invite local media to cover the event (sample media release included)

Tell us about what you are doing! We'd love to give you support, share your efforts on social media and add your event to our events calendar.

**PRO TIP:** Advertise everywhere you can! Excitement builds as more people hear about your event from different places.

**PRO TIP:** Prime the tip jar. Did you know people are more likely to tip if there are already tips in the jar? The same goes for attending events. People are more likely to go to an event that their friends are going to; try a phone tree invitation strategy!

## Proclamations

Have your mayor proclaim Falls Prevention Month.

Proclamations, typically issued by the mayor, are a formal recognition of the importance of a community event. They may be read at a council meeting, or at a local event, depending on the mayor's schedule.

Every municipality has a different process for requesting proclamations. Check your municipality's website or phone your mayor's office to find out how! You can use the sample letter included in this guide for all the information you will need to make the request.

## Seniors Challenge: 150 for 150

Did you know that 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall? Good news is there are steps you can take to prevent a fall.

**KEEP ACTIVE!** 30 minutes of physical activity, 5 days a week can lower your risk of a fall.

If you're 65 and older, WE challenge YOU to 150 minutes of physical activity for each week in November – that's 30 minutes of being active 5 days a week. Walk, hike, dance, stretch and have some fun with friends or the grand kids. All your favourite activities count towards your goal!

Easily keep track of your progress, and find activities across the country using the Canada 150 passport. [Passport2017.ca](http://Passport2017.ca)

## Make it social!

Tell your friends on social media and in real life! Encourage them to get active with you.

Share your pictures with us and we'll feature them on IPC's social media channels!

Follow the Injury Prevention Centre on Facebook and Twitter for updates about the challenge and the Finding Balance Campaign!

## Media

TV, radio stations and newspapers love to cover local events!

1. Customize our sample media release to include details about your Finding Balance Campaign event.
2. Send the release to your local newspaper, TV or radio station.
3. Follow up with a phone call.
4. Tell us! We might get requests from media looking for someone local to cover for a story. We would love to be able to highlight the great community work you are doing.

Write a column or a letter to the editor about your own experience with falls and how you prevent them.

**PRO TIP:** When you write to the media, tell them the most exciting or unique detail first and build out other details from there. That's called a hook.

## Social Media

Get active on social media now! Share daily, if you can. It's a great way to spread the word about your event and messages to prevent falls.

Hashtags help to connect with a broader audience. They start with a hash (#) and include a word or phrase to indicate a larger conversation. You can learn more about hashtags here. Use these hashtags on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the campaign.

#FindingBalance

#StayIndependent

#KeepActive

#CheckYourVision

#ReviewYourMeds

#PreventFalls

Get creative and put your own spin on the posts or share and retweet from the Injury Prevention Centre!

**PRO TIP:** Upload an image with your post to get even more attention!



## Resources

Download or order resources from [findingbalancealberta.ca](http://findingbalancealberta.ca) in the campaign resources catalogue section.

## Education Resources

- » Stay Independent. Prevent Falls Brochure
- » Falls Prevention Information Sheets (6)

## Campaign Resources

- » Campaign Swag
- » Poster – all three campaign key messages
- » Exercise for Strength and Balance Poster
- » Self-Assessment Checklist
- » Self-Assessment Checklist Poster
- » How to Get Up From the Floor – multiple languages
- » Ideal Shoe
- » Getting a Good Night's Sleep
- » Screensaver
- » Email signature
- » Social Media and Newsletter Sample Posts
- » Social Media Graphics (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
- » News Release Sample
- » Proclamation Sample

## NEW Resources

- » In and Around Your Home – Information Sheet
- » In Your Community – Information Sheet
- » Nutrition
- » Speak Up About Dizziness
- » Depression

## NEW Tools to Support Presentations:

- » Falls Presentation Toolkits
- » Finding Balance Roll-Up Banners

## Contact us

Have questions? We have answers.

**Contact:**

Nan Shybunka, Campaign Lead  
[nans@ualberta.ca](mailto:nans@ualberta.ca)  
(403) 342-2125

Karen Gill, Communications Coordinator  
[karen.gill@ualberta.ca](mailto:karen.gill@ualberta.ca)  
(780) 492-9759