

BACKGROUNDER

What is Finding Balance?

Finding Balance is a seniors' falls prevention program that is developed and promoted by the Injury Prevention Centre at the University of Alberta. The program works in partnership with Alberta Health Services and with guidance from an advisory committee, healthcare practitioners, and community groups from across the province.

Falling is not a natural part of aging and can be prevented, as people with strong legs and good balance are less likely to experience a fall. Luckily, no matter what someone's abilities are today, strength and balance can be improved.

To prevent falls older adults should:

Challenge Their Balance

- Practice movements like reaching while standing, toe and heel raises, stepping in different directions, step-ups or half-squats.
- Try tai chi, yoga, or sports that challenge their balance.

Build Strength

- Do exercises for their leg muscles.
- Use bands, weights, or their own body weight.
- Try squats, hamstring curls, and side leg lifts.

Be Active

- Do activities they enjoy!
- Try to do 30 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity or exercise at least 5 times per week.
- Walk, dance, garden, bicycle, or swim.

Start a conversation about falls and find out if an older adult is at risk of falling by completing the *Finding Balance* Falls Self-Assessment Checklist online at www.findingbalancealberta.ca/risk.

Older adults can also work with their healthcare provider to identify factors that may put them at risk for a fall. Having an appointment every year with an optometrist can check for changes to eyesight, cataracts, and other conditions.



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Review medications with a doctor or pharmacist. Medications for sleep, anxiety, and treating depression can result in dizziness, sleepiness, and unsteadiness.

Wear supportive footwear. In the winter anti-slip devices can be worn with footwear for added traction.

Make the home safer by removing all tripping hazards, and improve visibility by using night lights.

November is Falls Prevention Month

It is a time to raise awareness about falls prevention and injuries among older adults and to encourage leadership and collaboration among health professionals, communities, and families in support of seniors' health. Join in the campaign and find *Finding Balance Alberta* on Facebook and @StopFalls on Twitter, or follow the hashtags #PreventFalls2020 #BeActive and #BuildStrength.

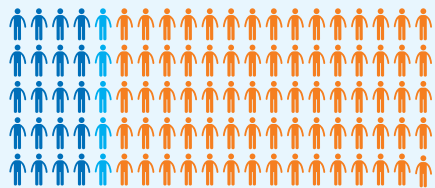
More resources on fall prevention

Look for no cost, downloadable resources such as the *Could a fall change your lifestyle? Finding Balance Brochure* and the *How to Get Up From a Fall Instruction Sheet* in the Resource Catalogue on the *Finding Balance* website. Some resources such as the instruction sheet have been translated into multiple languages! Certain resources are also printed and available to order through the order form.

How can I learn more about Finding Balance?

Visit www.findingbalancealberta.ca for more information, free shareable resources, and to learn more about the program and how to become involved in the campaign.





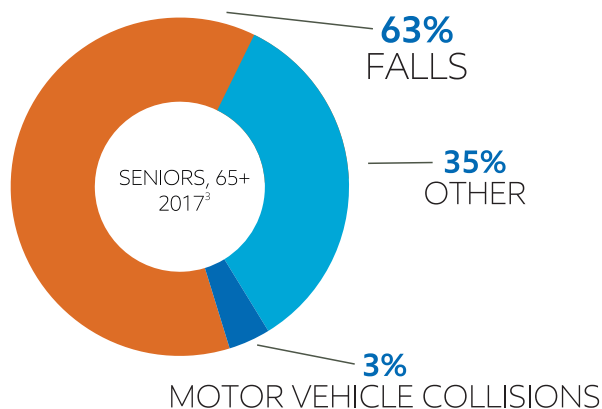
20-30%
OF SENIORS
IN ALBERTA
WILL **FALL** AT LEAST
ONCE A YEAR¹

95% OF ALL
HIP FRACTURES
&
40% OF ALL
NURSING HOME
ADMISSIONS ARE A
DIRECT RESULT OF
FALLING¹

92 Emergency Department
Visits Each Day³

25 Fall-related Hospital
Admissions Each Day³

THE **AVERAGE**
LENGTH OF STAY
IN HOSPITAL
DUE TO A FALL IS
3 WEEKS²



FALLS ARE THE **LEADING**
CAUSE OF INJURIES
AMONGST SENIORS³



There were about 9,000 fall-related
hospital admissions in 2017.

FALLS **COST** ALBERTANS
OVER \$290 MILLION
EVERY YEAR IN HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS
AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS²



AVERAGE COST OF FALLS²:

Hospital Admissions:

AGED 65+: **\$23,200**

AGED <65: \$12,100

Emergency Department Visits:

AGED 65+: **\$693**

AGED <65: \$341



¹ Public Health Agency of Canada, Seniors' Falls in Canada: Second Report, Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2014.
² 2017/2018 Alberta Health, Analytics and Performance Reporting Branch, Data received April 2019, Costs are based on RIW.
³ Injury Prevention Centre, Edmonton [Database], Accessed February 2019, Unpublished data available upon request.

Find out what actions you can take to prevent falls and stay independent.
findingbalancealberta.ca