

# ACTIVELY AGING

A *Finding Balance* guide to falls prevention for ages 55+



***Finding Balance* is an education program and public awareness campaign designed to educate and empower adults age 55+ to prevent falls and stay independent.** The falls prevention program and campaign is developed and led by the Injury Prevention Centre, School of Public Health, University of Alberta in partnership with practitioners, health care organizations, and older adults from across Alberta.

This Actively Aging booklet was created by *Finding Balance*, with support from our partners and sponsor Lifeline, to help adults age 55+ lead healthy, independent, and active lives by providing information and actions a person can take to reduce their risk of falling.

In Alberta, middle-aged adults are experiencing falls at rates approaching those of older adults, with emergency department injury visits for falls accounting for<sup>1</sup>:

- 34% among those aged 55-59
- 39% among those aged 60-64
- 59% among those 65 and older

While falls may become more likely with age, most of them can be prevented. Discover how you can take action today to prevent falls and maintain your independence with the Actively Aging booklet.



Additional resources can be ordered and / or downloaded at:  
**[findingbalancealberta.ca/resource-catalogue](https://findingbalancealberta.ca/resource-catalogue)**

### **Need more information?**

email: **[info@findingbalancealberta.ca](mailto:info@findingbalancealberta.ca)**

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Through the Actively Aging resource, Finding Balance is offering a select number of evidence-based exercises designed to challenge your balance and build strength. These activities are ideal for individuals who are ready to move beyond their current fitness levels and take the next step in their wellness journey.

If you'd prefer not to exercise on your own, there are many community-based classes and fitness programs available to support your physical activity and health goals. Connect with your local recreation centres, municipalities, seniors' centres, and other community organizations to share your fitness goals and explore the options available to you.

Most importantly – remember to have fun!

# Are You at Risk Of Falling?

To begin your journey through this Actively Aging Booklet, start by taking this checklist to learn more and plan your actions to lower your risk of falling.

Circle YES or NO for each statement below		Why it matters	
YES (2)	NO (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
YES (2)	NO (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
YES (1)	NO (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles - a major reason for falling.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometime increase your chance of falling.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometime increase your chance of falling.
YES (1)	NO (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.
<b>TOTAL:</b> _____		<b>Add up the number of points for each “yes” answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this score with your doctor.</b>	

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool. (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011: 42(6)493-499. Adapted with permission of the authors.

# Spot the Hazard Home Safety Checklist

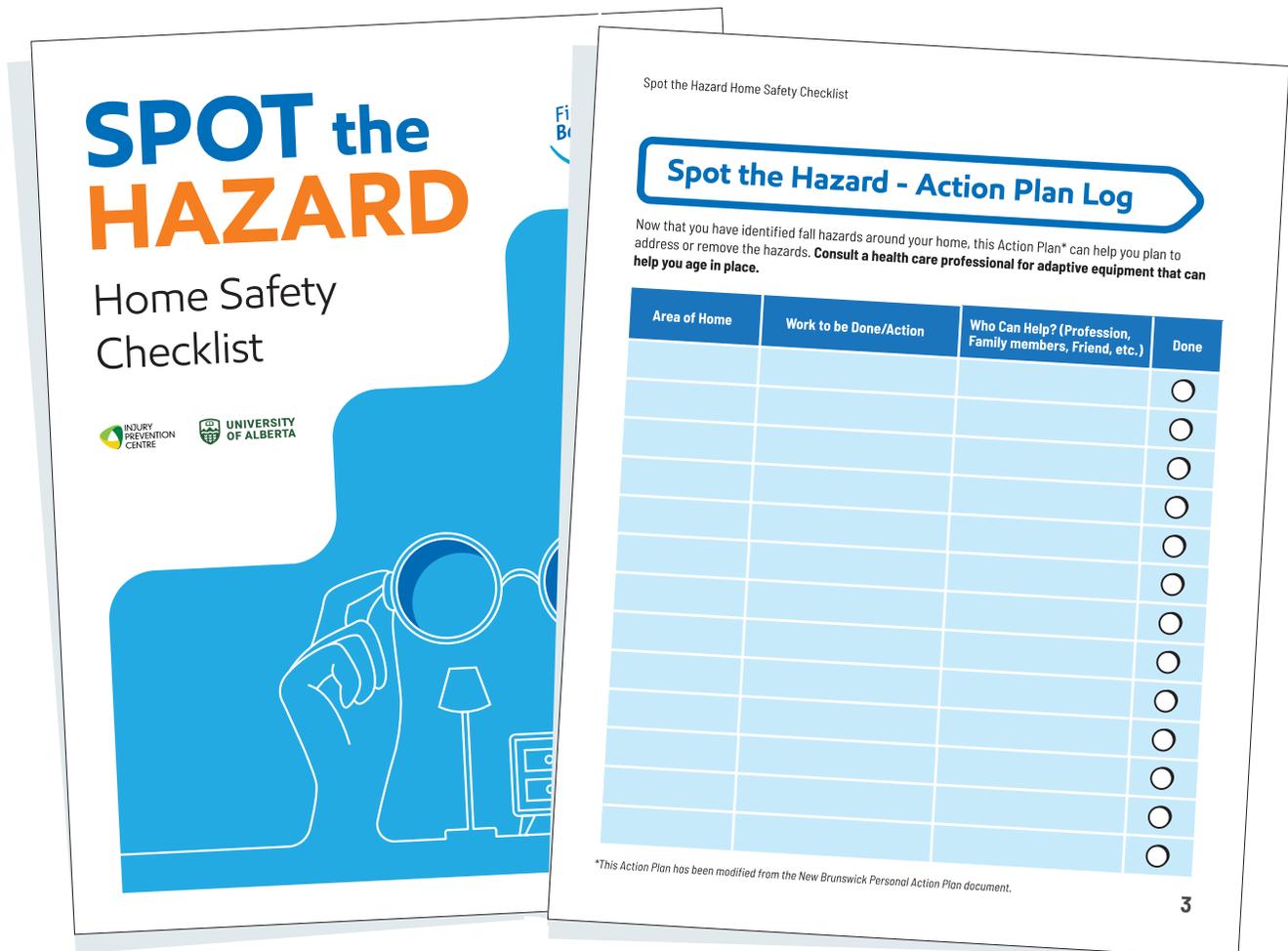


Another important step in your Actively Aging journey, is to take the **Spot the Hazard Home Safety Checklist** to reduce the risk of falls in your home.

The **Spot the Hazard Home Safety Checklist** is a guide with before and after pictures to spot hazards in your home that may increase your risk of falling. Small changes at home can make a big difference in keeping you safe.



Order your own FREE booklet at [findingbalancealberta.ca](http://findingbalancealberta.ca)



# Move Your Body



**Regular balance exercises are one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of falling.**

Staying **physically active** is one of the most important ways to maintain our health and independence. As we enter our 40's, we naturally begin to lose muscle strength, our bones become more brittle, and changes in our senses and other factors can affect our balance. Vary your activities to keep things fun and engaging!

**Good balance** is essential - it helps us stay upright, improves stability, prevents falls, and supports all functional movement. The more active we are, the better we can preserve muscle strength, keep our joints flexible, maintain balance, and lower the risk of falling.



**At least 2 hours of balance-focused exercises per week can reduce your risk of falling by up to 30%.**

You can break it into smaller chunks, 15-20 minutes a day is ideal. Keep it up for at least 6 months to build a strong, lifelong habit.

## How much Physical Activity do we need?

Staying active every day benefits both your body and mind. According to the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, adults should aim for at least **150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week**. This should include:

- **Muscle-strengthening activities** involving major muscle groups at least twice a week
- **Daily activities that challenge your balance**

A good target is **30 minutes of brisk activity per day**, five days a week. You don't have to do it all at once – **short sessions of 10 minutes or more** throughout the day also count.

# Benefits of Walking

Being active every day lays the foundation for better health and wellbeing, reduces the risk of falls, and helps us stay mobile, strong, and independent.

To improve your health benefits through movement, do more:

- physical activity
- standing
- muscle strengthening activities
- balance challenging movements
- limiting sedentary time
- getting good quality sleep

Taking 7,000 – 10,000 steps throughout the day will help you reach the 150 minutes of recommended physical activity per week.



Reap the benefits of walking for your health and wellbeing!

Walking offers a wide range of benefits including:

- Improves physical, mental, and social health.
- Fosters a deeper connection with nature.
- Prevents falls by improving balance and stability.
- Boosts mood and energy through increased endorphin levels.
- Supports the management of certain health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.
- Helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Promotes healthy aging by keeping the body active and mobile.
- Is easy to incorporate into daily life - it can be done almost anywhere, in any season.
- Requires minimal equipment - just a supportive pair of shoes.
- Pairs well with both strength and balance training.

To get you started or ramp up your walking, think about **FIT**.

**F** - Frequency

**I** - Intensity

**T** - Time

**Frequency:** Try to walk every day or at least 3-5 days per week.

**Intensity:** If just starting, build up your pace slowly. Aim for moderate intensity walking.

**Time:** Build up slowly. Start by walking as much as you can, even if it's 5 minutes. Set a goal to walk briskly 15 minutes in total per day.

# Actively Aging: Tips to Reduce Your Risk of a Fall

## Alcohol and Your Health

As we age, our bodies become more sensitive to alcohol. Age, body weight, and other health conditions will impact how our bodies respond to alcohol. For more guidance, refer to Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines.

## Balance and Mobility

Consult with a health professional to discuss your balance and how you walk, to help guide you to the right support, exercises, and / or assistive devices as needed.

## Cognitive Health

Maintaining good cognitive health is essential for preventing falls. It supports your ability to multitask - such as walking while carrying an object - and to respond quickly if you lose your balance. Engaging in brain-stimulating activities and staying physically active can help reduce your risk of falling.

## Eating Well

Nutrition is an important part of actively aging. As we age, changes in appetite, weight, swallowing, and meal habits can quietly impact our nutrition - often going unnoticed until they lead to more serious concerns like frailty or falls. The Nutrition Check-Up helps identify those risks early.



## Footwear and Foot Care

As we age, taking care of our feet and wearing proper footwear are important to help prevent falls. Feet that are healthy and pain-free can help you keep your balance.

## Health Conditions

Inform your healthcare provider if you have any chronic conditions, illnesses, previous falls, concussion, or symptoms like dizziness, shortness of breath, joint pain, or numbness in your feet while walking. These factors are important to consider when creating a fall prevention plan.

## Medication

Your health needs may change with aging. You may take more than one medication, vitamin, or supplement to stay healthy. It is important to review all your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.

## Vision and Hearing

Difficulty seeing and / or hearing can affect your awareness of your surroundings and your balance. Get these checked regularly if you have any concerns.

Scan the QR code to take a quick nutrition check-up.

Or for more information, visit: [ahs.ca/OlderAdultNutrition](https://ahs.ca/OlderAdultNutrition)



# Getting Ready to Exercise



## How to Use This Guide:

- **Start at your comfort level.** Move from **Beginner**, to **Intermediate**, to **Advanced** exercises as able, to challenge yourself.
- **Frequency:** Aim for 10–20 minutes, 3–5 times a week.
- **Listen to your body:** Avoid pain, dizziness, or strain.

## Before you start practising the following exercises:

- **Speak to your healthcare provider before exercising if you are unsure if these functional mobility movements are right for you.**
- Prepare your exercise space by clearing away unnecessary clutter.
- Wear well fitting and supportive non-slip shoes.
- Remember to set the pace: always warm up and start exercising at a level you find easy. Build up gradually.
- Make sure to have a sturdy chair, kitchen countertop, or wall close by for **\*support** as needed. 
- Know that it's normal to feel a bit stiff for a few days after exercising the muscles you have used in these exercises. This is common and shows that your

body is responding to the increased movement and challenge.

- Warm up your body and engage your major muscle groups by, for example, marching in place or walking around the room while adding arm movements.
- Focus on your **ABC's**
  - » **Alignment**
  - » **Breathing**
  - » **Control**

Think about your body alignment, posture, and engaging your core as you exercise.

- Breathe throughout all exercises.
- Perform slow and controlled movements.
- Start with a few repetitions and increase as you progress.
- Hold balance exercises for 10 – 15 seconds per side.
- Modify to suit your abilities. Everyone is different.
- Ensure you move at your own pace / speed / ability.

## Tips for Progressing:

- Use your **\*support** as much as you need to maintain balance.
- As your balance improves, try reducing the amount of support you need.
- Eventually, challenge yourself by hovering your hands just above the support surface just in case.

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Beginner Movements

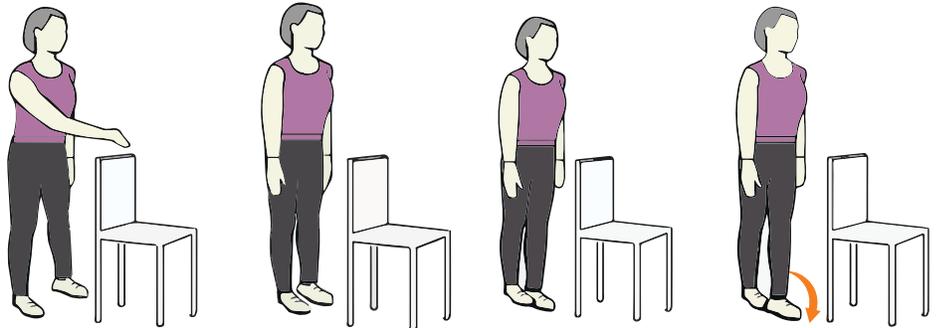
**Beginner Balance and Strength Movements - These beginner-friendly movements build essential strength and coordination. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.**

## Exercise

## Demonstration

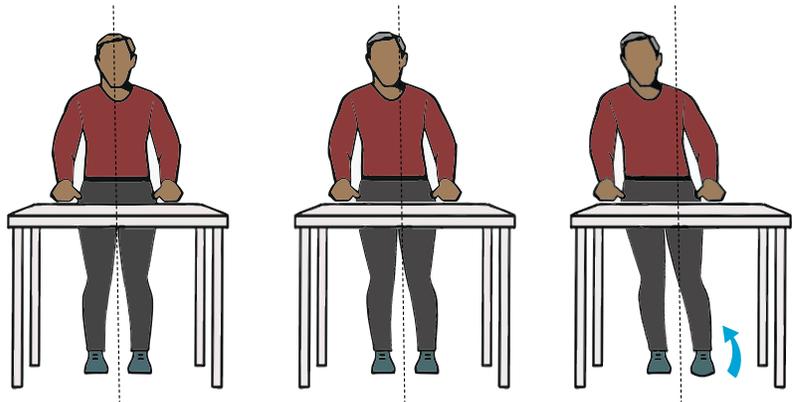
### Standing Balance Challenge

This activity helps you stay steady, improve your posture and feel where your body is. It gets you ready for harder movements.



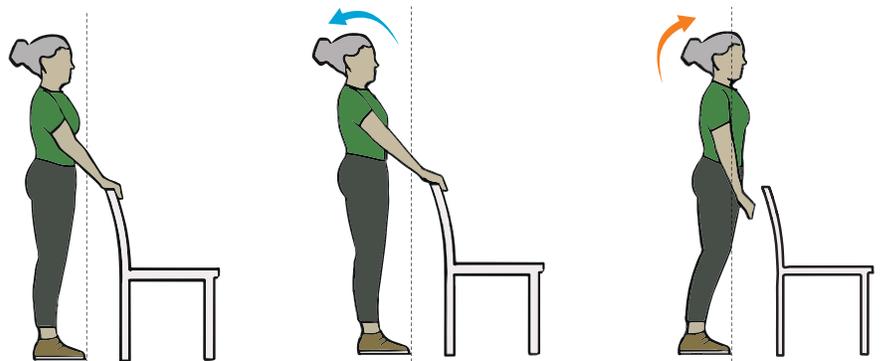
### Weight Shifts Side to Side

It makes your hips and legs stronger to help with daily movements.



### Weight Shifts Forward and Back

Helps improve control and movement. Helps with walking and reaching.



Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>Stand with feet the same width as your hips, keep your arms at your sides and eyes open. Hold the back of a chair lightly. Stand tall for 10 seconds and work up to 20 seconds. Try to stay as straight and steady as you can. Progress when this feels easy.</p>	<p>Bring your feet together. Let go of the chair if you feel balanced. Hold for 30-60 seconds.</p> <p>Try closing your eyes if you feel steady.</p>	<p>Semi-tandem: Stand with toe of back foot to arch of front foot, eyes open. Hold 10-30 seconds.</p> <p>Tandem: Stand heel-to-toe (one foot in front of the other), eyes open. Hold for 10-30 seconds.</p> <p>Try the same stance with your eyes closed. Hold 10-30 seconds.</p>
<p>Stand with feet hip-width apart. Hold something sturdy.</p> <p>Shift your weight to one side, then the other. Keep your feet flat. Repeat 10 times on each side.</p>	<p>Same as Level 1, but shift a little more each time. Pause briefly at each side. Repeat 10-15 times.</p> <p>Try using less support on the surface.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2, but try with your eyes closed and / or try with feet closer together. Reduce hold on support surface.</p> <p>Try on an unsteady surface (e.g. foam mat or folded towel).</p>
<p>Stand with feet hip-width apart. Hold the back of a sturdy chair. Slowly shift your weight forward, then back to center. Repeat 10 times. Keep feet flat on the floor.</p>	<p>Same as Level 1, but lean forward more (toward your toes) and back (toward your heels). Keep your body straight. Repeat 10-15 times.</p> <p>Try using less support.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2, but try without holding on. Lift arms as you lean forward, lower as you lean back. Repeat 10-15 times.</p>

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Beginner Movements

**Beginner Balance and Strength Movements - These beginner-friendly movements build essential strength and coordination. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.**

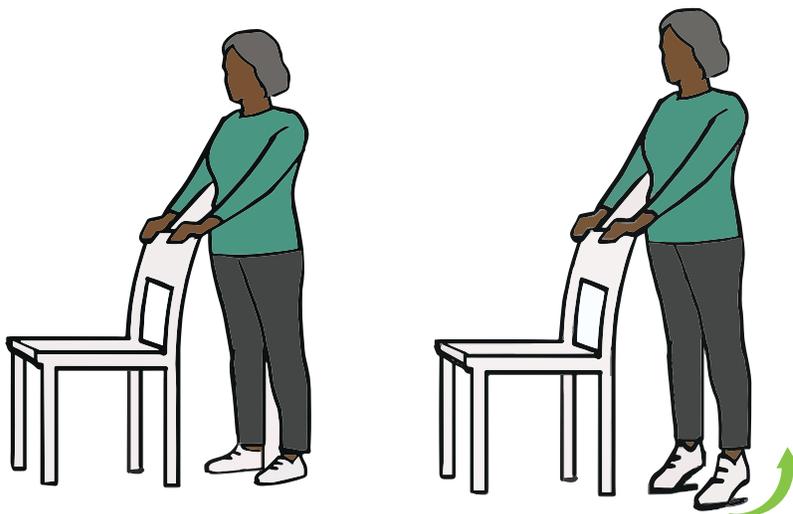
## Exercise

## Demonstration

### Heel Raises

(alternate option to standing would be seated in a chair)

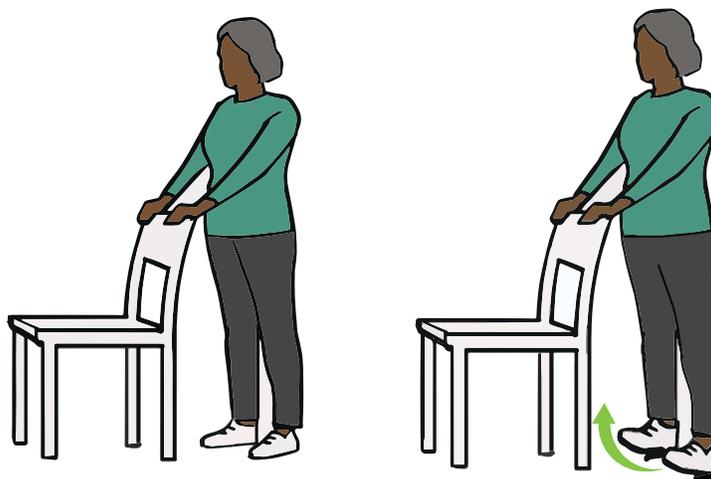
Strengthens the muscles on the back of your lower leg (calves). Helps with ankle stability, walking, and stairs.



### Toe Raises

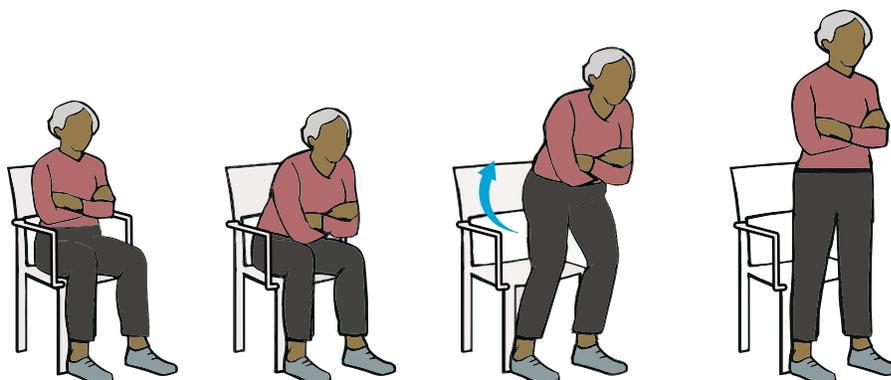
(alternate option to standing would be seated in a chair)

Strengthens the muscles on the front of your lower leg (shins). Helps with balance, walking, and stairs.



### Sit to Stand

Strengthens legs. Helps you stand up from a chair, bed or toilet.



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p>Stand behind a steady support surface. Hold on with both hands. Slowly rise up onto your toes, then lower back down. Repeat 10 times.</p>	<p>Hold the chair with one hand. Rise up onto your toes and hold for 2-3 seconds. Lower slowly. Repeat 10-15 times.</p>	<p>Stand without holding on. Perform heel raises slowly. Try closing your eyes while staying balanced.</p>
<p>Stand behind a steady support surface. Hold on with both hands. Keeping your heels on the ground, lift your toes and the balls of your feet off the floor. Lower your toes back down with control. Repeat 10 times.</p>	<p>Hold the chair with one hand. Keeping your heels on the ground, lift your toes and hold. Lower slowly. Repeat 10-15 times.</p>	<p>Stand without holding on. Perform toe raises slowly. Try closing your eyes while staying balanced.</p>
<p>Sit in a sturdy chair with armrests. Place feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Use hands to help push yourself to standing. Sit back down slowly. Repeat 5 times.</p>	<p>Sit toward the front edge of the chair with feet flat on floor. Cross arms over your chest or place hands lightly on thighs. Stand up slowly and with control. Sit back down slowly with control. Repeat 8-10 times.</p>	<p>Do sit-to-stands without using your hands. Sit back down slowly with control - try tapping your bottom to the chair without fulling sitting. Pause while standing. Repeat 10-15 times.</p>

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Intermediate Movements

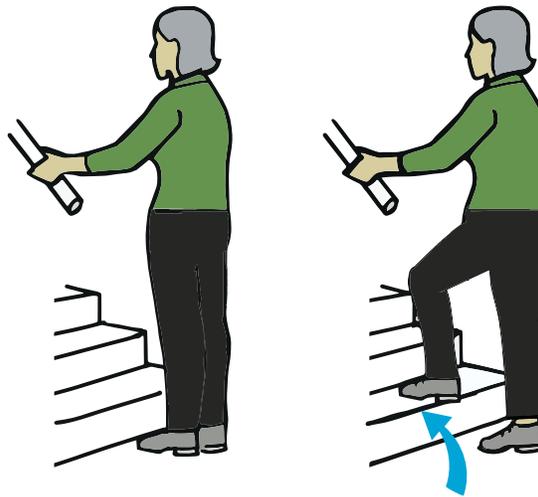
**Intermediate Balance and Strength Movements - These movements add dynamic and real-world balance challenges. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.**

## Exercise

## Demonstration

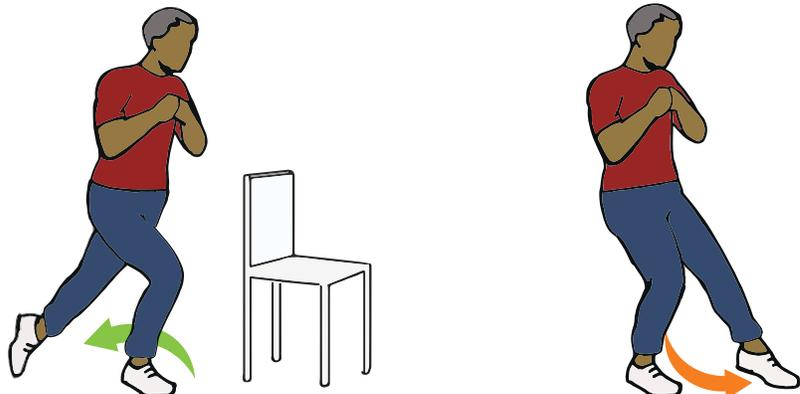
### Step-Ups

Helps with balance on stairs and uneven ground / surfaces.



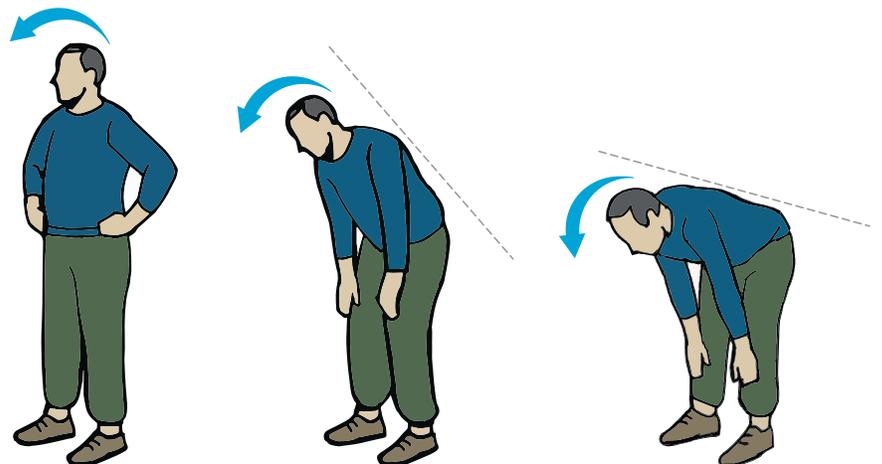
### Standing Toe Taps

Improves balance and hip strength. Helps with stepping and reaching.



### Modified Deadlift

Strengthens your back, hips and legs. Helps with safe lifting during activities like picking things up from the floor.



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p>Stand in front of a low step or other raised surface with some kind of support (like a banister). Step up with one leg, then down again. Do the same with the opposite leg. Repeat 10 times for each leg.</p>	<p>Same as Level 1, but without using support.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2, but use a higher step and / or go faster.</p>
<p>Stand behind support surface. Hold a chair or counter. Gently tap one foot forward, then return to center, keeping weight on standing leg. Then tap it out the side. Return to center. Use both hands for support. Repeat 5-10 times per leg.</p>	<p>Stand tall with one hand on the chair. Tap your foot slightly faster or further. Keep your upper body still. Repeat 5-10 times per leg.</p>	<p>Do the toe taps with no support. Try tapping in all directions – front, side, diagonal and backward. Repeat 10-15 times per leg.</p>
<p>Stand tall with feet hip-width apart. Place hands on thighs. Slide hands down your legs as you push your hips back. Keep your back straight and hinge from the hips (not the waist). Keep movement slow and controlled. Return to standing. Repeat 5-10 times.</p>	<p>Same movement but reach lower (to mid-shin or just below knees). Repeat 10-12 times.</p>	<p>Hold a light household object for resistance if comfortable. Keep feet closer together. Hinge at hips and lower to mid-shin or feet. Keep chest lifted and core engaged. Repeat 12-15 times.</p>

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Intermediate Movements

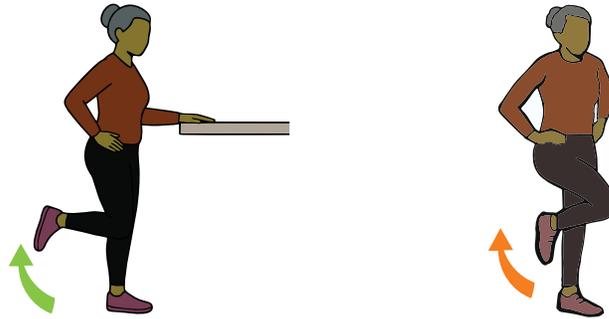
**Intermediate Balance and Strength Movements - These movements add dynamic and real-world balance challenges. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.**

## Exercise

## Demonstration

### Single Leg Stance

Improves balance for tasks like stepping in and out of a bathtub or using stairs.



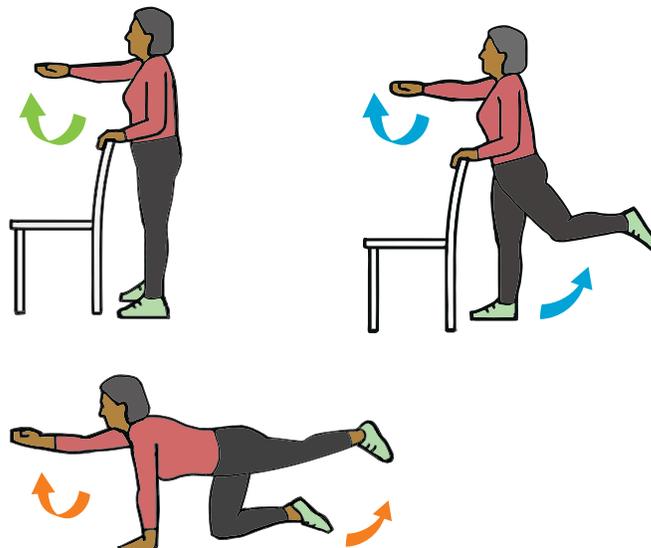
### Wall Push- Ups

Wall push-ups build upper body and core strength which help maintain upright posture. This improves balance and reduces the risk of tripping or falling during daily activities.



### Modified Bird-Dog

Improves core stability, postural control and simulates real world tasks like reaching.



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p>Stand with feet hip-width behind a support surface and hold on to it. Lift one foot slightly off the floor. Hold position for 5-10 seconds, then lower. Switch legs.</p>	<p>Same as Level 1 but use one hand for support. Lift foot a little higher. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Switch legs.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2 but stand without holding on. Try turning your head or closing your eyes. Hold position up to 30 seconds each leg.</p>
<p>Stand an arm's length from a wall, with feet flat on the floor. Place your hands about shoulder height on the wall. Slowly bend your elbows to bring your body toward the wall. Push back to the starting position. The closer the feet are to the wall, the easier it is.</p>	<p>Keep the same movement but stand further away from the wall. Stand on toes.</p>	<p>Stand an arm's length away from the wall and keep one leg raised. Repeat the same push-up movement. Switch legs.</p>
<p>Stand behind a chair, using chair for support. Slowly extend your right arm forward keeping your spine straight. Hold briefly, then return to the starting position. Repeat with the opposite left arm.</p>	<p>Stand behind a chair and using chair for support. Slowly extend your right arm forward. At the same time, extend your left leg back. Keeping your spine straight. Hold briefly, then return to the starting position. Repeat with the opposite arm and leg.</p>	<p>Begin on your hands and knees in a tabletop position. Your wrists should be directly under your shoulders, and your knees should be under your hips. Slowly extend your right arm forward and your left leg backward. Keep both the arm and leg parallel to the floor. Repeat with the opposite limbs.</p>

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Advanced Movements

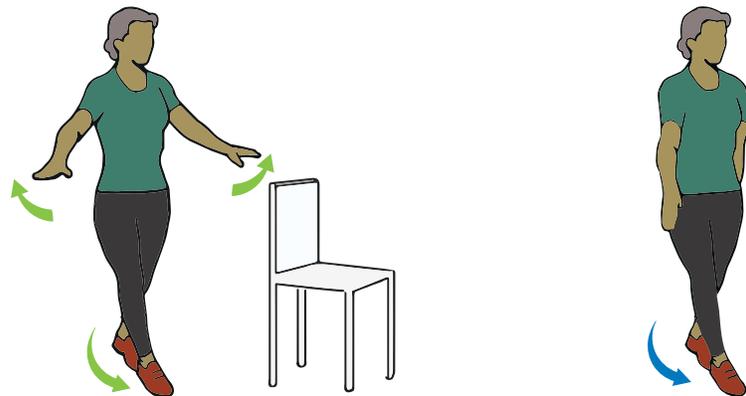
**Advanced Balance and Strength Movements - These exercises challenge balance, coordination, and reaction time in motion. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.**

## Exercise

## Demonstration

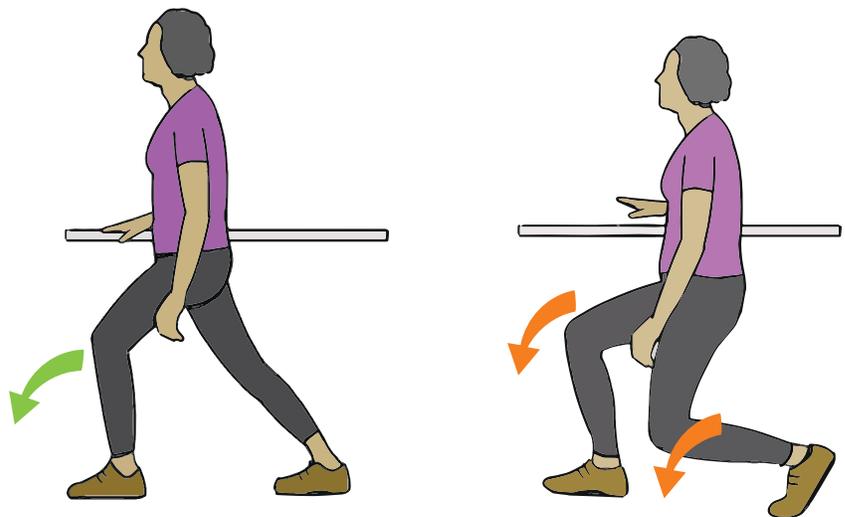
### Tandem / Tightrope Walk (Heel-to-Toe Walk)

Helps you walk more steadily and with better control.



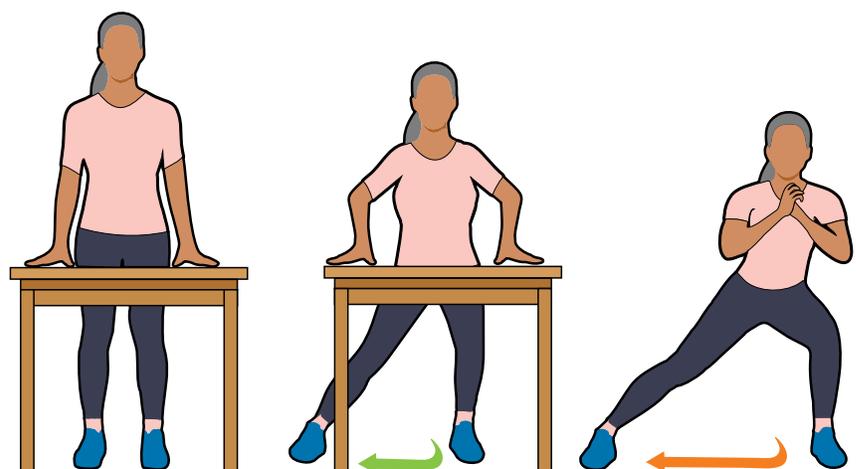
### Forward Lunges

Strengthens legs. Helps with walking and daily activities.



### Side Lunges

Strengthens legs and improves side to side balance, which is important for every day movements.



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p>Stand near a counter or wall for support. Place the heel of one foot in front of the toes of the other (like walking a tightrope).</p> <p>Take 5-10 slow steps. Use support as needed.</p>	<p>Same as Level 1 but keep arms down at sides. Look ahead, not at feet. Take 10-15 heel-to-toe steps.</p>	<p>Same as Level 2, then try walking backwards in same way. Try other variations:</p> <p>Walk forward on heels (toes raised)</p> <p>Walk forward on toes (heels raised)</p>
<p>Stand next to a sturdy chair or countertop for support.</p> <p>Step forward slowly with one foot, lowering your body until your front knee is bent about 90 degrees. Keep your back straight and hold onto support if needed. Step back to start. Repeat 5 times on each leg.</p>	<p>Stand without holding on. Step forward and lower down as before, aiming for a full 90-degree bend in both knees.</p> <p>Try 8-10 lunges per leg, stepping back to starting position each time.</p> <p>Keep your arms at your sides or on your hips.</p>	<p>Do 10-12 lunges on each leg without holding on. Add a slight pause when your knee is bent to challenge your balance. Optional: Try side lunges by stepping out to the side and bending knee while keeping the other leg straight. Repeat 10 times each side.</p>
<p>Stand next to support surface. Take a small step to the side with one foot. Bend the knee of the stepping leg while keeping the other leg straight. Keep your back straight and hold support if needed. Push back to standing. Repeat 5 times on each side.</p>	<p>Stand without holding on. Step wider to the side and bend the knee more deeply, keeping the other leg straight. Try 8-10 reps on each side. Keep your arms at your sides or on your hips.</p>	<p>Do 10-12 side lunges on each leg without holding on. Add a slight pause when your knee is bent to challenge your balance.</p>

# Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength: Advanced Reactive Control Exercises

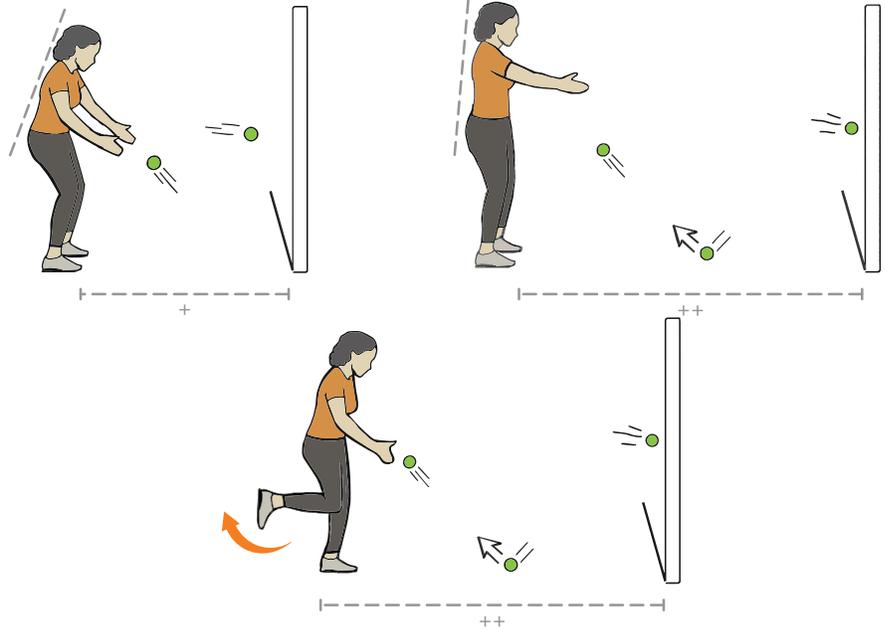
**Reactive Control Exercises:** These movements work on quick balance adjustments and coordination. They can be done with a partner, but can be modified for you to do on your own as well. Move through Levels 1 to 3 as able.

## Exercise

## Demonstration

### Ball Throw / Catch

Improve your balance and reaction time. This is important for staying steady during unexpected movements.



### Clock Exercise

Helps you move and react in different directions. It prepares you to respond to sudden changes in direction – similar to avoiding obstacles or regaining balance after a trip.



<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p>Stand with feet shoulder width apart facing a wall or partner. Gently toss a soft ball in the air or against the wall and catch it, or have your partner toss it slowly to your chest. Keep movements slow and controlled. Aim for 10 catches.</p>	<p>Stand without support. Use a slightly smaller or lighter ball. Increase the distance from the wall or your partner. Try catching with one hand at a time or changing the direction (left / right). Do 15-20 catches.</p>	<p>Stand on one foot while tossing and catching the ball (switch legs every 5-10 throws). Have your partner throw the ball at random speeds or directions. Try using a bounce (off wall or floor) to increase challenge. Focus on quick reactions while keeping balance.</p>
<p>Stand in the center of an imaginary clock (12 in front, 6 behind, etc.). Have a partner call out a clock number (e.g. “3 o'clock”) and slowly reach your foot out in that direction, then return to center. Hold onto a chair or counter if needed. Try 6-8 calls.</p>	<p>Do the same without holding on. Increase the speed of the number calls slightly. Reach your foot a little farther each time. Use an app or audio recording that calls out random clock directions. Try 10-12 reps.</p>	<p>Stand on a foam pad or uneven surface. Respond to faster or more unpredictable clock calls from a partner or app. Try reaching your arm instead of your foot for some reps. For a real challenge, try standing on one foot while responding (alternate feet).</p>

# Concern of Falling

**Are you or someone you know concerned about falling?** Fear of falling is very normal; approximately 50% of older adults around the world have this concern.

**Falls may become more likely as we age, but they *can* be prevented.**

**Concern of falling** can lead to decreased participation in activities, decreased physical abilities, increased social isolation, can impact mental well-being, and cause more difficulties with everyday living.

There are risk factors that increase the risk of falling, but there are also many strategies that can alleviate and decrease this concern.

Some risk factors that may increase the risk of a fall include:

- Previous fall
- Balance issues
- Frailty
- Decreased mobility
- Being female
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Increased age
- Living alone
- Poor quality sleep

**Relaxation techniques can help to reduce anxiety, decrease concerns about falling, and improve confidence when doing activities and working through challenges.**

If you identify with any of these risk factors and are concerned about falling here are some practical strategies to help:

- **Talk to a health provider** or service provider about this concern of falling. They can help you or refer you to the right person to explore thought patterns around concern of falling, discuss adaptive equipment, fall prevention resources, relaxation techniques, return to physical activity, exercise options, and more.
- Other techniques to address concerns around falling such as **cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)**, can be helpful in addition to relaxation techniques. CBT can help with changing the thought patterns that contribute to anxiety.
- **Implement practical strategies to improve safety and confidence.** This can include equipment such as ice cleats for shoes, hip protectors, hiking poles, a cane, or a walker, to name a few. Not only can equipment reduce your risk of falling and decrease the chance of injury if you do experience a fall, the use of safety equipment can also help you feel more confident, which is more important than we may realize, as fear of falling actually increases fall risk.

## Concern of Falling

- **Break it down into smaller tasks** to build your strength, balance and confidence as you return to activity after a fall.
    - Choose environments where you feel safe and secure, such as walking indoors on a track or at a shopping centre.
    - Start with shorter bouts of activity to help you feel more confident and strong.
    - Go out together with a friend or support person rather than venturing out alone as you build your confidence.
  - **Practice relaxation techniques.** Try these things that you can do [in the moment](#):
    - Breathe
    - Consciously relax your muscles
    - Use calming self-talk
- [Take the time](#) to try this relaxation technique:
- Find a comfortable space to sit or lay down.
  - Take a deep breath in, and as you breathe out, lower your shoulders. Breathe slowly in, and as you exhale, relax your neck. Breathe in, and relax your arms and hands as you breathe out.
  - For a few moments, breathe slowly, and repeat silently in your mind, **“I am safe. I am secure.”** Including additional calming self-talk statements such as, **“I have measures in place to stay safe,”** and **“I move safely and with confidence,”** can be helpful. Find and use phrases that are meaningful to you and repeat the calming self-talk in your mind as you breathe slowly.

Regularly practicing relaxation techniques can help build the skill of relaxing on purpose and lead to a variety of health benefits such as decreased muscle tension, lower blood pressure, and reduced anxiety.

It can be helpful to follow a guided relaxation exercise such as this written relaxation script and audio recording, which are specific to overcoming concerns about falling. Scan the QR code to access the recording.



# Actively Aging Checklist

We invite you to use the Actively Aging Checklist and consider how you will integrate these tips and steps into your daily routine and lifestyle.

- Take the *Are You at Risk of Falling* checklist
- Fix and remove fall hazards in your home
- Speak to an exercise specialist if you are concerned about your balance
- Practice the *Challenge Your Balance & Build Your Strength* exercises daily (**Beginner**, **Intermediate**, **Advanced**)
- Do 30 minutes of brisk activity 5 times per week
- Move more and sit less
- Walk daily
- Be active every day
- Practice Relaxation Techniques
- Get an annual eye exam
- Consult a podiatrist for foot issues and / or foot pain
- Wear supportive footwear inside and outside of the home
- Review your medication annually and / or as needed with your Doctor or Pharmacist
- Follow Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines
- Take the Nutrition Check-Up
- Stay hydrated
- Have your hearing checked
- Get a good night's sleep
- Stay socially connected
- Do brain-stimulating activities

**We wish you well on your Actively Aging journey!**

## Finding Balance & Other Resources

Looking for additional resources? Scan the QR code for **exclusive access** to our Actively Aging resources page where you can find *Finding Balance* resources to download or order (with free shipping!), as well as others.



Or visit:

[findingbalancealberta.ca/Actively-Aging-Resources](https://findingbalancealberta.ca/Actively-Aging-Resources)

### Need more information?

email: [info@findingbalancealberta.ca](mailto:info@findingbalancealberta.ca)

phone: **1.780.492.6019**

### What is a QR code?

QR codes are like smart barcodes that you can scan with a smartphone camera. They are the little squares with a jumbled pattern of marks. When you point your smartphone camera at one, it acts as a direct link to a website, a menu, or a set of instructions, so you don't have to type anything.

**A quick safety tip:** Be careful about where you scan a QR code. Just like you wouldn't click on a strange link in an email, you should only scan QR codes from trusted sources, like a restaurant menu or a business's official advertisement. This helps protect you from scams and unwanted websites.





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## To order free resources or to provide feedback:

visit: **[www.findingbalancealberta.ca](http://www.findingbalancealberta.ca)**

email: **[info@findingbalancealberta.ca](mailto:info@findingbalancealberta.ca)**

phone: **1.780.492.6019**

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Funding provided, in whole or in part, by Lifeline and Alberta Health. Provision of funding by Alberta Health does not signify that this project represents the policies or views of Alberta Health.