

# KEEPING WELL THIS WINTER



*“We want to make sure every older Albertan has the information and advice they need to keep safe and well, especially during COVID-19. This booklet is designed for older people so that they can stay active, healthy and safe this winter and I’d encourage you to have a look at the advice and information, and maybe try an activity or two.”*

**Dr. Don Voaklander, Director, Injury Prevention Centre within the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta**

By following Government guidelines we are protecting ourselves, our families and our communities. No matter who we are, we are all in this together and can help and support each other this winter.

At this time of year, shorter days and colder weather mean it's normal to stay in more and be less active. We're more likely to become ill from flu and colds, and to feel a bit down. Due to COVID-19, this year it is especially important for those who are older and those with pre-existing health conditions to take extra care and be prepared. Together we can support and protect each other by keeping in touch and looking after ourselves at this time.

This booklet has lots of ideas and suggestions to help keep active and connected, stay safe and well, and lower our risk of falling.

It is written for those with little to no access to on-line resources and includes a list of useful contact numbers. There are also lots of on-line resources available to support the information provided here. Ask a friend, family member or volunteer to help find and print additional resources if possible.

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# A reminder – what have we been asked to do?

Keep up to date and follow Government recommendations to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

## Even in lockdown - we can still...



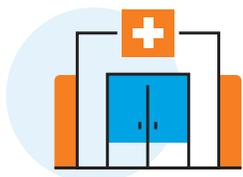
Shop for basic necessities, such as food or medicine or to access money.



Go for a walk or to exercise, either with members of our household or one other person.



Go to a medical appointment, or provide care for another person, or help someone in need.



Seek help if you have a medical emergency.



Travel to and from work if you are a healthcare worker, or if working at home is not possible.

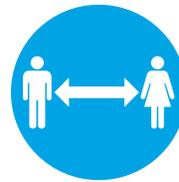
## Albertans should follow these simple measures to keep everyone safe



**Hands:** Practice good hygiene: wash your hands often and cover coughs and sneezes.



**Face:** Masks are mandatory in all indoor public spaces and workplaces.



**Space:** Stay 2 metres apart when you can, wear a mask when you can't.



**Monitor your symptoms:**  
[www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx)

For some of us, putting up a small sign in our home to remind us of these things will be helpful.

## We all need to look after ourselves this winter, especially if we have pre-existing health conditions and may need to self isolate.

With everything going on, and the changes to day-to-day life, many of us may feel worried or sad. At this time, it can be hard to know what to do if you are unwell or have a concern about your health. It's good to remember that changes have been made by doctors and hospitals to make sure it's safe for us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's still important to:

- Get medical help if you think you need it.
- Keep any appointments or procedures you have booked – unless you're asked not to attend.
- Go to hospital if you're advised to.



*I am a live-in caretaker for my mother who is in her 90s. I have learned I also need to look after myself as well by listening to music or going for a walk."*

**Harry**

# MIND MATTERS

**Our mind matters and keeping our mind active is important. We all need to think about our mind in the same way that we need to think about our bodies, especially in times of change.**

Where possible, try to keep up with normal everyday activities and interests, especially by staying connected and keeping in touch with friends, family and neighbours. Keeping active with interests and hobbies we enjoy helps keeps our mind well, as does getting out for exercise or a walk. Using a calendar can help remind us of important events and to connect with others.



***“Even at this time community grows, even by a phone call, life becomes a bit easier and worthwhile.”***

**Elaine**

There may be times when things change for us, so knowing what to do if something does change will help us cope better. It is important to keep in touch and remember others are likely to be feeling similar so sharing and being kind will help. For most of us, these feelings will pass. We’ve all faced challenges over the past year. You may have found your own ways of coping, but it’s also natural to feel anxious or even overwhelmed by the situation we are in. You are not alone. There are helplines and local organizations who are here to listen and support. Have a look at the helpful contacts page at the back of this booklet for more information.

Finding joy each day can really help, such as noticing the things we appreciate like nature, a call or a walk with a friend or family member, a good cup of tea or coffee, completing a word search, baking, trying something new, or seeking out the winter sun. It’s good to keep the big picture in mind.

# Take time to focus on activities you enjoy at home



## Stay connected with others

- Stay in touch with friends, family, neighbours, clubs, and your community by phone or meeting for a walk if permitted. It can be useful to keep a list of these phone numbers to remind us to call.
- Asking for help with shopping and running errands.
- Volunteer to become a phone pal to others.



## Plan practical things

- Keep up with usual everyday activities and interests at home.
- Make a 'to do list' for each day: writing shopping lists, making calls, order repeat prescriptions.
- Continue accessing treatment and support for health conditions from your healthcare provider.



## Stay on top of difficult feelings and worries

- Try to focus on things in your control.
- Limit how much news you watch or listen to and use trusted sources.
- Take time to chat about how you're feeling with others, it can really help.



## Take time to notice and feel joy

- Take time to focus on activities you enjoy at home.
- Remembering important people and better times can be helpful, such as looking at holiday photographs.
- Set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a challenge.
- Take note of things that bring you joy and share with others or record in a diary.

### If you start to feel overwhelmed, some simple breathing exercises can help:

1. Sit or lie down in a way that's comfortable for you.
2. Take a deep breath in and hold it, at the same time raising and tightening your shoulders, and clenching your fists.
3. Count slowly to five as you breathe out.
4. Do this several times.

# MOVING MORE

## Why being active and moving is important.

Our everyday activities such as attending clubs, exercise classes, appointments, meeting friends and family or volunteering have temporarily changed.

For some of us, we may notice that we are not as mobile as we were before the pandemic and our joints and muscles feel a little stiff. The following exercises will really help us in regaining our strength, balance, and flexibility. All of which will help us to continue doing activities of daily living such as washing, getting dressed and preparing food, as well as doing the things we enjoy. Moving around regularly, even if a little and often will really help keep our joints flexible.

As indoor activities such as cooking, eating, getting dressed, reading and watching television make up much more of our day. Finding ways of being active at home will help us feel better. It will also help our bodies be better protected for fighting infection and illness.

Going for a daily walk is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and get some fresh air. Even in lockdown we can do this with someone outside of our household, as long as we ensure we are two metres apart.

If you are not able to go outside, standing by an open window or on a doorstep to get some fresh air can feel good too. There are also exercises we can do in our homes, that will help us to carry on doing the things we enjoy.

### Being active every day helps us to:

- Keep our spirits up.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Have a good appetite.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Keep our bowels healthy.
- Keeps our muscles and bones strong.
- Prevent health conditions from getting worse.

### Being active every day helps to reduce:

- Risk of falls and fractures.
- Risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and some cancers.
- Risk of weight related issues.

# Quick safety check before exercising

Being active is safe for the majority of people and it has many benefits for our health and wellbeing. There are some small steps you can take to reduce the chance of problems occurring.



Speak to your healthcare provider before exercising.



Prepare your exercise space by clearing away unnecessary clutter.

- Keep something sturdy and solid nearby for support (for example a kitchen counter or sturdy chair).
- Have a glass of water ready to sip as you exercise.
- Wear well fitting and supportive non-slip shoes.
- Wear loose clothing.
- If you are exercising on your own, keep a telephone nearby, just in case you need it.



Set the pace, always warm up and start exercising at a level you find easy and build up gradually.

- Remember, it is not unusual to feel some aching or discomfort if you are moving body parts that are stiff and not used to exercise.
- It is common to feel a bit stiff for a few days after exercising in the muscles you have used more than usual. This is normal and shows that your body is responding to the increased movement.
- Try not to hold your breath as you exercise, breathe normally throughout.

No matter what your abilities are today, you can improve your strength and balance.



*"Just because I'm older doesn't mean I can't be a volunteer. From home I can volunteer to call someone and have a chat. We probably can help each other just by talking and I might even make some new friends in the process."*

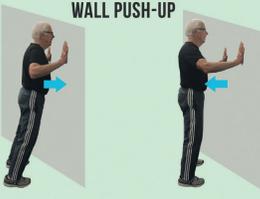
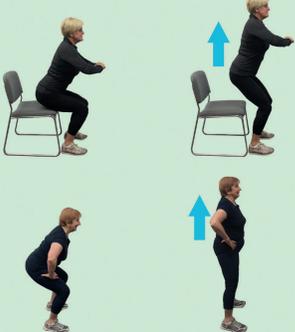
Gill

If you experience severe pain anywhere or dizziness, stop and rest.

# BE ACTIVE - WARMING UP FOR YOUR DAILY LIFE!

Keeping your legs strong and maintaining good balance is the best way to reduce your chances of having a fall. If you are just starting to be physically active, consult with a healthcare professional to make sure these activities are right for you. Start with a few exercises and build up endurance, strength and balance over time. A good warm up includes a variety of movements that get you prepared for physical activity.

Start with 2-4 activities from the “Getting Ready to Move” column, then add on 1-2 from “Challenging Balance” and/or “Building Strength” to progress. Start with 4 repetitions and increase to 12 as you progress. Balance exercises can be held for 10 -15 seconds per side.

GETTING READY TO MOVE CHOOSE 2 - 4	CHALLENGING BALANCE CHOOSE 1 - 2	BUILDING STRENGTH CHOOSE 1 - 2
<p><b>SHOULDER ROLL</b></p> 	<p><b>WALKING A LINE</b></p> 	<p><b>LEG CURL</b></p> 
<p><b>REACHING UP</b></p> 	<p><b>SIDE TO SIDE STEP</b></p> 	<p><b>SIDE LEG LIFT</b></p>  <p><b>HEEL RAISE</b></p> 
<p><b>SIDE TO SIDE ROTATION</b></p> 	<p><b>STAGGERED STANCE</b></p> 	<p><b>TOE AND HEEL TAPS</b></p> 
<p><b>WALKING</b></p> 	<p><b>LUNGE</b></p> 	<p><b>WALL PUSH-UP</b></p> 
<p><b>FOOT ALPHABET</b></p>  <p><b>MARCHING</b></p> 	<p><b>SINGLE LEG BALANCE</b></p>  <p><b>SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH ARM REACH</b></p> 	<p><b>SIT TO STAND</b></p> 

REMEMBER TO: HAVE SLOW AND CONTROLLED MOVEMENT, GO AT YOUR OWN PACE/SPEED/ABILITY, AND BREATHE THROUGHOUT.



# MOVING WELL AT HOME

Any movement is good, particularly if it makes us feel a little bit warm and makes us breathe a little faster. For almost everyone exercise is safer than not moving! Small chunks of movement every day helps increase energy. There are ways we can move well at home:

- Strength and balance exercises that will help to keep you strong and steady on your feet.
- Movements that warm you up and get you breathing slightly harder to help keep you fit and well.
- Breaking up periods of inactivity, such as sitting or lying down throughout the day with movement and activities.



# Building Strength and Challenging your Balance

**Our muscles, bones and joints like to be moved. Lack of movement is bad for our bodies. Just like a car, the body needs to be moved regularly or it will get stiff and rusty.**

These exercises will help us stay strong and active. Aim to do these regularly throughout the week, maybe splitting them up and doing them a few at a time during the day, after breakfast or before lunch, while boiling the kettle or speaking on the telephone.

It's always good to 'warm up' your muscles and joints and to 'cool down' after any exercise.

## Set up your area:

Use a safe, clutter-free space.

Have a wall or sturdy chair for support and balance.

[findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/Warm-Up-Poster.pdf](http://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/Warm-Up-Poster.pdf)

## The 'warm up'

Always begin with a warm up to prepare for the main exercises. There are four warm up exercises. Complete them all if doing the exercises in one session.

If spreading the exercises over the day, do the seated march first to warm up. You can also do these warm up moves throughout the day to help mobilize the joints, especially after sitting for an hour or so.



*"I used to go to a class every week but now I'm doing my exercises at home they really help me to keep mobile and it helps me to think about how to structure my day!"*

**Christine**



## Seated march or walking march

*Warms muscles and prepares for movement.*

### What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- March with control.
- Build to a rhythm that feels comfortable.
- Continue for 1-2 minutes.



## Shoulder roll

*Warms muscles and prepares for movement.*

### What to do

- Sit tall with arms at your sides.
- Lift both shoulders up to ears, draw them back then press them down.
- Repeat slowly five times and feel the shoulder joints loosen.



## Foot alphabet

*Loosens ankles, improves heel to toe walking action, keeps us stable.*

### What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- Place the heel of one foot on the floor then lift it and put the toes down on the same spot.
- Repeat five times on each leg.



## Side to side rotation

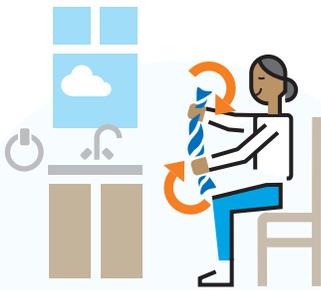
*Loosens spine, helps looking over shoulders, turning in bed.*

### What to do

- Sit very tall with feet hip width apart.
- Place your right hand on left knee and hold the chair back with the left hand.
- Twist the upper body and head slowly to the right, back to the middle, and round to the left.
- Repeat four more times slowly each way.

## Seated Movements

Make sure that the chair you use is sturdy and stable, so it doesn't move around when you're getting in and out of it. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.



### Wrist strengthener

*Improves grip strength, helps opening jars.*

#### What to do

- Fold or roll a hand or tea towel into a tube shape.
- Sit tall then squeeze the towel tightly with both hands, hold for a slow count of five then release.
- Repeat this exercise 6-8 times.

#### More challenging option

Squeeze then twist your towel before holding for 10 seconds.



### Arm swings

*Helps with stamina and endurance.*

#### What to do

- Sit tall away from the chair back.
- Place both feet flat on the floor below knees.
- Bend elbows and swing arms from the shoulder.
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable.
- Continue for 30 seconds.

#### More challenging option

Increase pace and time to 1-2 minutes.



*“These days I think it’s good for me to watch the amount of alcohol I’m drinking and also have days without.”*

**Don**



### Pelvic floor strengthener

*Helps reduce ‘leaking’ when coughing and laughing.*

#### What to do

- Tighten the muscles as if you were trying to stop passing urine and wind at the same time and hold.
- Try to hold for 10 seconds.
- Rest for four seconds, then repeat.
- Perform this 10 times.

#### Avoid

- Squeezing legs together.
- Tightening buttocks.
- Holding breath.

#### More challenging option

10 quick contractions by drawing up the pelvic floor.



### Front knee strengthener

*Strengthens the knee for walking and bending.*

#### What to do

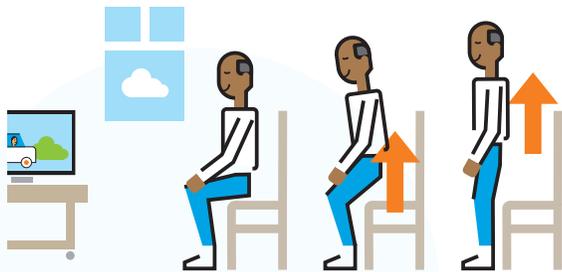
- Sit back in the chair, back supported and feet under knees.
- Brush one foot across the floor then lift the ankle slowly and straighten (do not lock) the knee.
- Lower the foot with control.
- Aim to lift for a slow count of three and lower for a slow count of five each time.
- Repeat 10 times on one leg then swap legs.

#### More challenging option

Sit away from the back of the chair so more of your leg is off the chair when you lift. Keep the back strong while you lift the leg.

## Strength and Balance Exercises

**Make sure that you are near a sturdy and stable counter, and that any chairs used will not move during the sit to stand exercise. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.**



### Sit to stand

*If repeated regularly and slowly will improve lower limb strength and stability.*

#### What to do

- Sit tall near the front of the chair.
- Place feet slightly behind knees.
- Lean slightly forwards.
- Stand up (using hands on the chair for support if needed. Progress to no hands over time).
- Step back until legs touch the chair, then stand tall, bend knees and slowly lower bottom back into the chair.
- Repeat 10 times.

#### More challenging option

Try doing the exercise extra slow and hover for a few seconds just before finally sitting.



### Heel raises

*Help strengthen muscles at the front of the foot, improves balance.*

#### What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, chair or even the sink.
- Raise heels taking your weight over the big toe and second toe, hold for a second.
- Lower heels to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

#### More challenging option

Repeat the exercise, doing it slowly and hold for a second or so just before putting the heel down again.



*“Drinking a glass of water before meals and a balanced diet are vital ingredients in keeping our body and mind well while staying at home.”*

**Bhim & Yogesh**



### Toe raises

*Helps strengthen the muscles that lift the toe up, important for when stepping and for balance.*

#### What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, chair or even the sink.
- Raise toes taking weight back onto heels and without sticking bottom out.
- Hold for a second.
- Lower toes to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

#### More challenging option

Repeat the exercise, doing it slowly and hold for a second or so just before put the toe down again.



### Marching on the spot

*Helps maintain bone density at the hip and spine.*

#### What to do

- Stand to the side of the chair holding on with one hand.
- Stand tall.
- March on the spot swinging the free arm.
- Keep marching for 30 seconds.
- Turn slowly around then repeat using the other arm.
- Repeat three times.

#### More challenging option

If balance is good then bring in both arms and march with more effort.

## Main exercises – standing

Make sure that you are near a sturdy and stable countertop, and that any chairs used will not move during the sit to stand exercise in particular. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.



### Standing Leg Curl

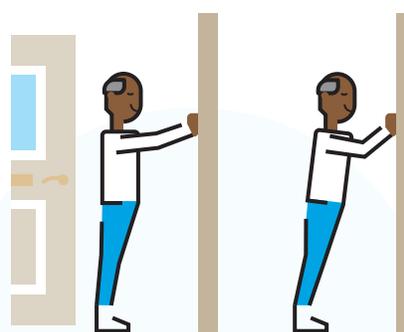
*Helps improve strength on the straight leg, improves balance and stability.*

#### What to do

- Hold on to back of chair.
- Stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Shift weight onto one leg.
- Bend other knee.
- Raise heel toward buttocks as far as it is comfortable.
- Return to starting position.

#### More challenging option

Raise the knee up higher to the front and make the movement slower.



### Wall push-ups

*Helps improve upper body strength, helps maintain bone density at the wrist.*

#### What to do

- Stand at arms length from wall.
- Place hands on the wall at chest height, fingers upwards.
- Keeping back straight and tummy tight, bend elbows lowering body with control towards the wall.
- Press back to the start position.
- Repeat 8 times.

#### More challenging option

Perform the movement more slowly or start further away from the wall.

## Focus on your ABCs

- **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 4 repetitions and increase to 12 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.



### One leg stands

*Helps improve walking stability.*

#### What to do

- Stand close to support surface and hold on.
- Balance on one leg, keeping the supporting leg straight but knee soft.
- Stand tall and look ahead.
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- Repeat with the other leg.

#### More challenging option

Try to use the support surface less and hold the position for longer, up to 30 seconds.

## Cool down

Finish by marching at a relaxed pace for 1-2 minutes. Then try to perform all of the following stretches. They will help with posture, walking and stability.



### Back of thigh stretch

*Helps with putting on shoes and socks, lengthens stride when walking.*

#### What to do

- Sit at the very front of the chair.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Place both hands on the other leg then sit really tall.
- Lean forwards with a straight back and feel the stretch in the back of the thigh.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Relax and repeat on the other leg.



### Chest stretch

*Help improve posture, makes reaching backwards easier.*

#### What to do

- Sit tall away from the back of the chair.
- Reach behind with both arms and grasp the chair back.
- Press your chest upwards and forwards until you feel the stretch across your chest.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.



*“Getting out of the house and walking definitely lifts my spirits.”*

Viv



## Calf stretch

*Helps ensure toes are lifted when walking and for getting shoes and socks on easier.*

### What to do

- Sit forwards in the chair and hold the sides.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Pull your toes up towards the ceiling.
- Feel the stretch in the calf.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other leg.

## Activity tracker

### Monday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Tuesday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Wednesday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Thursday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Friday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Saturday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

### Sunday

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_  
Strength   
Balance

# KEEPING NOURISHED

**What we eat and drink is really important for our health. It keeps our immune system strong and resilient as well as enabling us to have the energy to do the things we enjoy.**

Planning for and preparing meals and cooking is also a good way to keep up our daily routine, for many it can be an enjoyable part of the day.

## Here are some top tips:



**Enjoy your food** – why not try some new foods or go back to old favourites? Dig out some old and new recipes to try.



**Have plenty of variety in your diet** – to help you get all the nutrients you need and maintain a healthy weight.



**Keep an eye on yourself** – if you think you are eating less than usual or don't have much appetite keep track of your weight or check if your clothes, jewellery or belts are looser than usual.



**If you have a poor appetite** – have you been losing weight without trying or have a low body weight? You should try to increase the amount of energy and protein you get each day. You may find it useful to:

- Eat meals and snacks.
- Use full-fat food and drinks (for example, full-fat milk, yogurts, cheese).
- Eat more protein such as meat, fish, eggs, chickpeas or nuts.
- It may help to speak to your healthcare provider.



**Keeping your kitchen cupboard and freezer stocked** – keep some simple, tasty foods and long-lasting foods, such as dried milk powder, canned soup, rice pudding or frozen meals.



**Make meal preparation easy** – ideal for when you need something quick and simple, for example, ready meals, snacks, finger food and meal delivery services.



**Think about how you will get your groceries** – ask a neighbour or family member to help.



**Stay well hydrated** – we need about 6-8 drinks per day to stay well hydrated. This reduces infections and improves concentration, energy and mood, so we can keep our minds active.



**If you drink alcohol** – it is recommended. If you're a man, have no more than 3 drinks a day and 15 drinks per week. If you're a woman, have no more than 2 standard drinks a day on most days and no more than 10 drinks a week.

Try to spread this out and have alcohol free days. Alcohol does dehydrate you, so if you can, have water in between. Alcohol can also interfere with some medication.

# Keeping well at home daily goals checklist

**Setting daily goals, routine and structure help to provide purpose and a sense of achievement.**

This might include working through that list of the things you keep meaning to do but never get around to or to help you work through the information and ideas that have been shared in the booklet.

## Keeping in touch

- Talk to family and friends via the phone or socially distanced over the fence.
- Talk to others about how you feel or help you may need. We all need advice and reassurance and others likely feel similar to us.
- You may want to chat with a friend or you could consider volunteering yourself.

## Moving more

- Try to move more throughout your day, if possible getting out in the fresh air for a walk, or in the yard, or standing on your doorstep.
- Try adding seated and standing activities into your daily routine around your home.
- Break up long periods of inactivity with chunks of movement.

## Eating and drinking

- Drink plenty of liquids including water.
- Stick to regular meal times but if your appetite is poor have healthy snacks in addition to your meals.
- Eat a balanced diet of high protein (meat, eggs and nuts) foods, dairy products, starchy foods (bread cereals, potatoes, pasta or rice) and plenty of fruit and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juice).
- Eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.

## Keeping busy

- Plan your day – try to get up and go to bed at a similar time each day.
- Do activities you enjoy, such as watch a film, read a book or do some puzzles.
- Try to do new things each day or start that project you've been meaning to.

## Feeling joy

- Find a window with a view to take in the 'outside world'. Appreciate the nature around you.
- Listen to some music.
- Try something different, or something you have done in the past that you have time to do again. Talk about it with friends.

# KEEPING SAFE

## What to do if you fall

**If you do have a fall, lie still for a minute, try to stay calm and check yourself for injuries. Even if you are unhurt, make sure that you tell a healthcare professional, family member or health care practitioner that you have fallen.**

If you know you can't get up, or feel pain in your hip or back, then try to call for help by using your phone or pendant or by banging on radiators or walls.

Try to keep warm by covering yourself with whatever is close by and try and keep moving your limbs and roll from side to side if you are able to.

1.



Roll onto your side, and then push up onto your elbows.

2.



Use your arms to push yourself onto your hands and knees.

3.



Crawl towards a very stable piece of furniture (a sturdy chair or bed) and hold onto it for support.

4.



Slide or raise the foot of your stronger leg forwards so it's flat on the floor.

5.



Lean forwards and push up using your arms and front leg, slowly rising to a standing position.

6.



Turn around and sit down. Sit for a minute or two and catch your breath.



*"I've been advising friends and family not to get hooked on watching, listening to and reading too much news. It only encourages negative feelings."*

**Don**

**It's important to ensure our home is safe, especially if we are doing more exercise and activities in it.**



### Create a trip-free home

- Keep floors and pathways clear of furniture, cords and clutter.
- Remove scatter rugs and mats.
- Use non-slip mats on slippery surfaces (e.g. bathroom floors, entrance ways).
- Keep a cordless phone or cellular phone nearby, so you don't have to rush to answer a call.



### Steady on the stairs

- Use handrails when walking up and down stairs.
- Keep stairs well lit and install light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Keep stairs free of clutter.



### Bathroom safety

- Install safety grab bars by your shower, tub and toilet.
- Use non-slip mats inside and outside the bathtub and shower.
- Keep floors dry.
- Keep a nightlight on in the bathroom.



### Light your way

- Give your eyes time to adjust to changes in light.
- Keep all areas well-lit.
- Use nightlights and motion sensors in halls and bathrooms.

# Winter in Alberta

## Adapting the way you walk on icy, snow-covered surfaces can help you prevent falling.

### Walk Like a Penguin

- Bend slightly and walk flat footed.
- Point your feet out slightly like a penguin.
- Keep your centre of gravity over your feet as much as possible.
- Watch where you are stepping.
- Take shorter, shuffle-like steps.
- Keep your arms at your sides (not in your pockets!).
- Concentrate on keeping your balance.
- Go S-L-O-W-L-Y.
- Visit Alberta Health Services at: [www.penguinwalk.ca](http://www.penguinwalk.ca)

### Tips to walk safely in winter:

- Take your time and avoid rushing.
- When possible, avoid walking on snow and ice.
- Wear shoes or boots with a wide, flat heel.
- Make sure footwear has the proper amount of grip - not too much and not too little. Wear ice grips over your shoes or boots to get better grip on ice.
- Choose footwear with soles that stay flexible in the cold.
- If you use a cane, put a retractable ice pick on the end of it.
- Carry a small bag or container of sand to sprinkle on icy spots you cannot avoid.
- Keep your hands free for gripping handrails or supports.
- When going indoors, stomp the snow off of your footwear and remove ice grips.



# HELPFUL NUMBERS AND CONTACTS

## Getting online - using a mobile device, computer, iphone Connecting Virtually:

There's help available if you want to get on the internet for the first time or learn how to do more things online. The internet is like a giant library of information. There are many benefits to using it such as:

- Keeping in touch with family and friends, like using email, Facebook or Zoom. You'll also need a device, such as a computer or mobile smart phone.
- Save money by downloading or printing resources.
- Learning more about things that interest you.

To access the internet you need to be connected to it. This can be set up through your landline or your mobile phone. You'll also need a device, such as a computer or mobile phone. Many devices that access the internet have a screen you can touch which is often easier than using a keyboard for some of us.

There is support on how to access the internet from local libraries or seniors centres. Contact them to find out more.



## Helpful Websites:

If you do not have access to the internet ask a friend, family member, neighbour or community contact to print documents for you.

- **COVID-19 info for Albertans** - [www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx)
- **Finding Balance – Stay Independent. Prevent Falls** - [www.findingbalancealberta.ca](http://www.findingbalancealberta.ca)
- **CORE Alberta - Collaborative Online Resources - Healthy Aging** - [www.corealberta.ca](http://www.corealberta.ca)
- **CMHA National - Canadian Mental Health** - [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)
- **Seniors Health - Alberta Health Services** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page16426.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page16426.aspx)
- **Seniors Wellness in Challenging Times (AHS)** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-seniors-wellness-in-challenging-times.pdf](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-seniors-wellness-in-challenging-times.pdf)
- **Indigenous Health** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page11949.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page11949.aspx)
- **Mental Health & Coping with COVID-19 (CDC)** - [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html)
- **Mobile Tools to Promote Mental Wellness (AHS)** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-mobile-tools-mental-wellness.pdf](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-mobile-tools-mental-wellness.pdf)
- **Seniors Wellness in Challenging Times (AHS)** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-seniors-wellness-in-challenging-times.pdf](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-seniors-wellness-in-challenging-times.pdf)
- **Virtual Mental Health Supports** – [www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page17137.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page17137.aspx)  
Learn more about virtual mental health support, including Togetherall a free, online network that offers anonymous, peer-to-peer mental health services 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- **Parachute Canada- videos and caregiver information** - [www.parachute.ca/en/](http://www.parachute.ca/en/)
- **Public Health Agency of Canada** - [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/injury-prevention-seniors.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/injury-prevention-seniors.html)
- **Alberta Seniors Resource Guide** - [www.open.alberta.ca/publications/seniors-programs-and-services-information-guide](http://www.open.alberta.ca/publications/seniors-programs-and-services-information-guide)
- **Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS)** - [www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/page11975.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/page11975.aspx)



## Helpful Contacts for Older Adults in Alberta

Here is a list of helpful contacts and phone numbers

**Addiction Helpline** - 1-866-332-2322

**211 Alberta Call** - text or live chat help for community information, resources and supports

**Crisis Text Line** - Text CONNECT to 741741

**Elder & Family Abuse** - For 24 hour support and referral, call Family Violence Info Line 310-1818

**Mental Health Helpline** - Offers help for mental health concerns for Albertans. 1-877-303-2642

**MyHealth.Alberta.ca** - Healthlink call 811

**Dementia Advice** - Advice and support for people who have problems with thinking, reasoning, or remembering (e.g., dementia) or the people who care for them. Call 811.

**Toll Free Crisis Line / Distress Centres** - 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

**Finding Balance Falls Prevention Website** - (IPC): 1-780-492-6019

**Poison & Drug Information Service (PADIS)** - 1-800-332-1414 - PADIS offers free and confidential telephone advice 24/7 to the public and health care professionals on poisons, chemicals, medicines, and herbal supplements.

**Income Support Contact Centre** - Financial help for Albertans who don't have resources to meet their basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter). 1-866-644-5135

**Alberta Supports Contact Centre** -

Toll-free at 1-877-644-9992 Deaf or hearing impaired with TDD/TTY units, call 1-800-232-7215

**Home Care**

Have questions? A Registered Nurse can provide you with resources and supports available in your community. They are happy to discuss your healthcare needs, complete an assessment and send a referral to the most appropriate AHS healthcare provider or service. Anyone can call for information.

Contact information by zone:

**North**

1-855-371-4122

**Edmonton**

780-496-1300

**Central**

1-855-371-4122

**Calgary**

403-943-1920 (or) 1-888-943-1920

**South**

- Bow Island 403-545-2296
- Brooks 403-501-3244
- Lethbridge and Area 403-388-6380 or 1-866-388-6380
- Medicine Hat 403-581-5750
- Oyen 403-664-3651

**Meals on Wheels** - Contact your local program for daily or frozen meals or to volunteer.

## Helpful resources:

### Self-Assessment Checklist -

[https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019\\_FB\\_Fall-Assess-Tool-FI](https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019_FB_Fall-Assess-Tool-FI)

### Walk Like a Penguin - Winter Walking -

[www.penguinwalk.ca](http://www.penguinwalk.ca)

### Caregiver resources (bilingual) -

<https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/fall-prevention-for-seniors/>

### How to Get Up from the Floor - 15 different languages FB How to Get Up 2017 -

<http://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB-How-to-Get-Up-2017-English.pdf>

### Strength and Balance - FB Exercise Poster -

<http://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB-Exercise-Poster-2018-en.pdf>

### Exercise for Strength & Balance Poster Cards -

<http://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB-Exercise-Cards-2017.pdf>

### Warm-Up Poster -

<https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/Warm-Up-Poster.pdf>

### Activity Tracker Calendar -

[https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB\\_General\\_Activity\\_Tracker.pdf](https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB_General_Activity_Tracker.pdf)

### In Your Home Information Sheet -

<http://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/FB-At-Home-Handout-2017.pdf>

### Are you at Risk of a Fall? -

[https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019\\_FB\\_Fall-Assess-Tool-FINAL.pdf](https://findingbalancealberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019_FB_Fall-Assess-Tool-FINAL.pdf)

### Low Risk Drinking Guidelines -

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=abj7553>

### Government of Canada -

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/diseases-conditions/prevalence-chronic-disease-risk-factors-canadians-aged-65-years-older.html>

# KEEPING WELL THIS WINTER



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Comments or feedback? Email: [info@findingbalancealberta.ca](mailto:info@findingbalancealberta.ca)  
IPC phone number - 1-780-492-6019

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