

## Stay Steady: Fall Prevention! (Aging, Cognition, Balance, & Gait)

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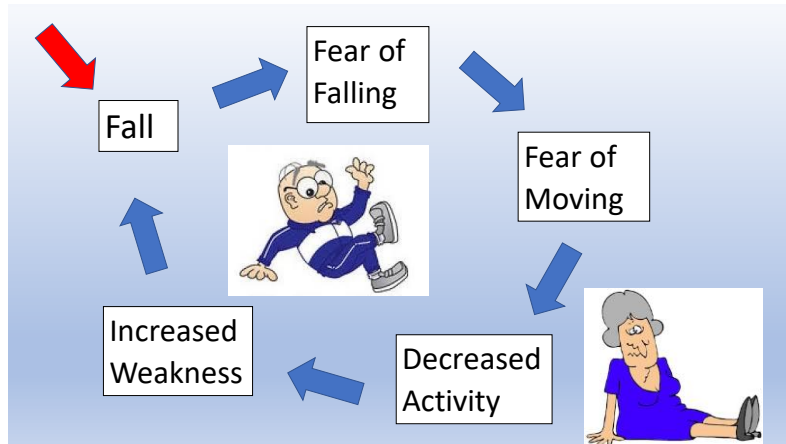


TRUE OR FALSE?  
Falls are a normal part of aging.

**FALSE!**

TRUE OR FALSE:  
Most falls are preventable.

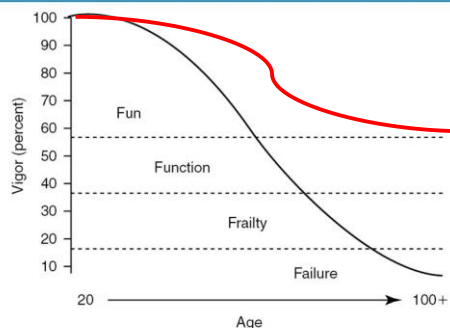
**TRUE!**



At what age do we stop **playing**... and why?



### Slippery slope of aging



The slope is NOT inevitable... You can change the slope!

Walking speed decreases with age.  
Decrease in speed is associated with:

- ↓ Cognition
- ↓ Function
- ↓ Independence
- ↑ Hospitalization
- ↑ Mortality



### 10 Reasons to Walk and How to Get Started

(Ries et al, 2022)

- Walking is good for your:
  - Brain
  - Mood
  - Heart
  - Lungs
  - Bones
  - Muscles
  - Blood sugar
  - Weight
  - Sleep
  - Longevity

Go for a walk! 😊

Some things you can do to prevent falls...

- Have doctor or pharmacist review medicines with fall prevention in mind
- Have eyes & feet checked with fall prevention in mind
- Make home safer with fall prevention in mind
- Exercise to improve balance & strength....



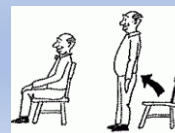
### Some things you can do to prevent falls...



- Sit less, move more
- Challenge balance (safely & often)
- Find a community-based program that brings enjoyment (lots of virtual options are available!)
- See a Physical Therapist!

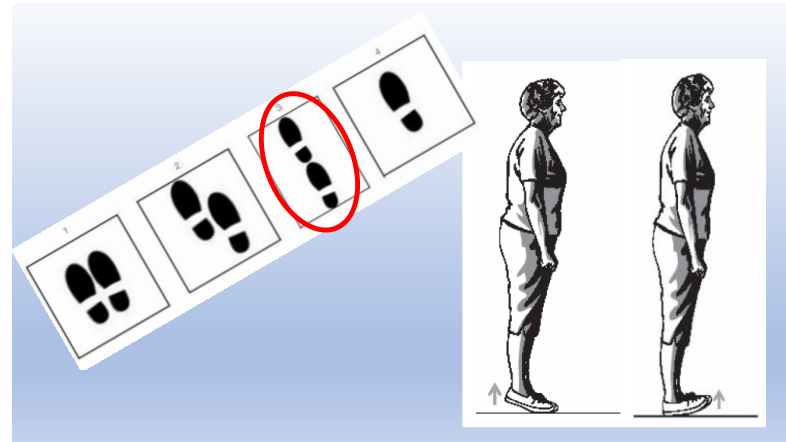
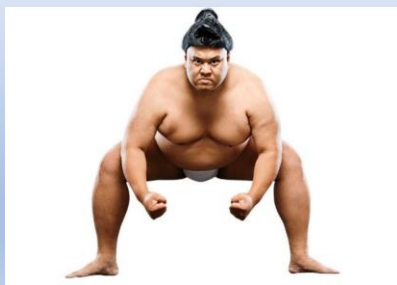
### Specific and simple things you can do....

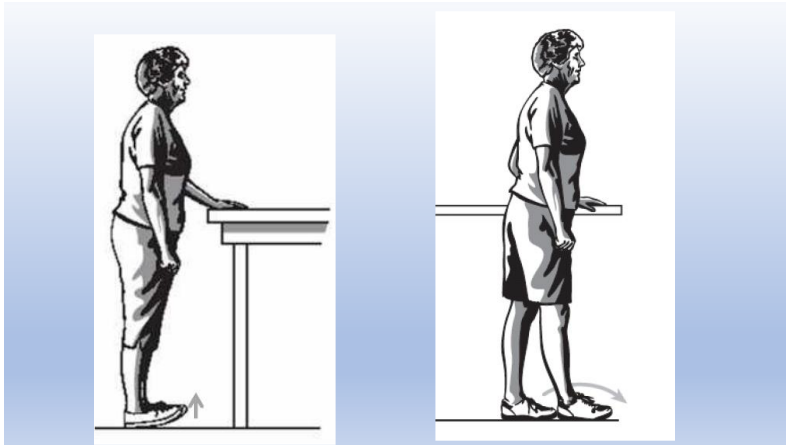
- Practice standing up and sitting down
  - No hands (if you can!)
  - Do it very slowly x 5
  - Do it quickly x 5
- Practice challenging balance in a safe environment (counter, table, chair back, corner of the room)



- Challenges can include:
  - Change in base of support
  - Change in standing surface
  - Change in visual input

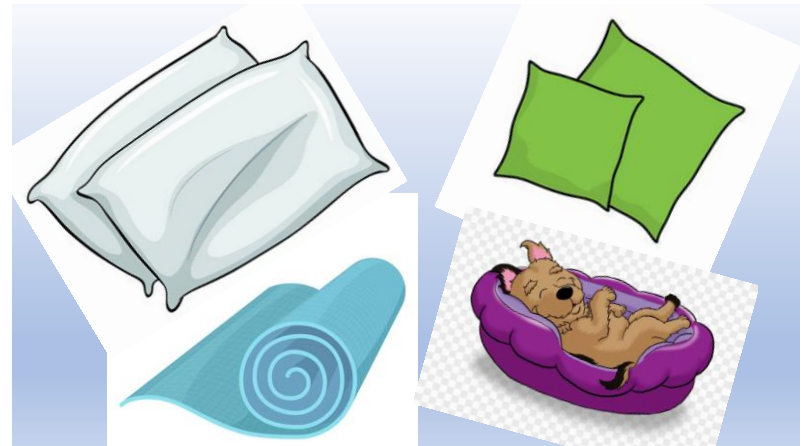
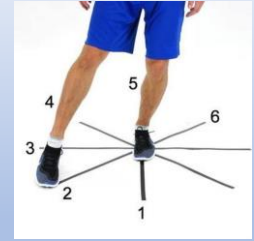
### Base of Support...



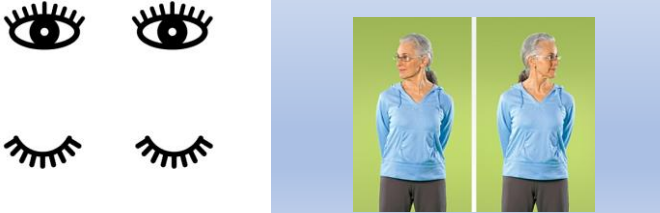


### Use it or lose it!

- Safely challenge your balance when you are otherwise passing time...
  - While brushing your teeth
  - While waiting for the microwave
  - While standing in line at the store

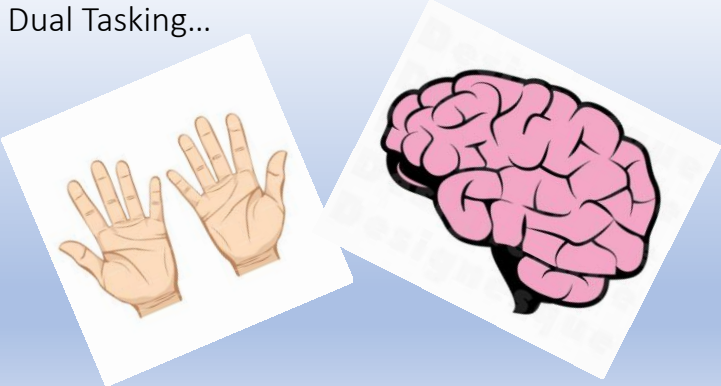


Visual Input



The slide features four icons of eyes: two with eyelashes and two without. To the right, there are two photographs of a man in a black shirt demonstrating head movements (looking left, up, and right). Below these is a photograph of a woman in a blue shirt demonstrating a balance exercise by standing on one leg.

Dual Tasking...




The slide shows two hands on the left and a pink brain on the right, both on white cards tilted at an angle against a blue background.

To improve balance, you need opportunities to **LOSE YOUR BALANCE** and to practice catching it!

Practice getting onto & off of the floor!

- A great mobility skill that requires **STRENGTH** and **RANGE OF MOTION**



The illustration shows a woman and a man sitting cross-legged on the floor, representing a mobility exercise.

## If you fall...

- Try to stay calm
- Inventory for pain / injury
- Call for help
  - Seek medical attention if necessary
  - 911, urgent care, primary doc
- Assess ability to get off floor
  - Get on hands & knees
  - Crawl to chair or couch
  - Pull self to sitting on furniture
  - Stay put for a bit!



## Our loved ones with dementia are at higher risk for falls...

- They are **at least 2-3 times** more likely to fall than their cognitively-intact, age-matched peers!
- The data tells us:
  - ↑ prevalence of falls
  - ↑ frequency of falls
  - ↑ likelihood of serious injury related to falls
  - ↓ likelihood of returning home after hospitalization from fall
  - ↑ mortality after fall

**“Excess Disability”**: Individuals with dementia often appear more disabled than they should...

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May be due to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low expectations</li><li>• Time constraints</li><li>• Over-assisting</li><li>• Lack of opportunity</li><li>• Medications &amp; other health conditions</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Combat this with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patience!</li><li>• Opportunity!</li><li>• Skillful cues &amp; guidance</li><li>• Opportunity!</li><li>• Patience! 😊</li></ul></li></ul> |
|--|---|

## Currently Recruiting!

- Currently recruiting for a study to assess feasibility of remote balance training protocol for individuals with mild cognitive impairment or dementia and their care partners

<https://sites.google.com/marymount.edu/recruitment/home>

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