



Physiotherapists:
The Body Specialists

Physio Tips

**SENIORS
FALLS
PREVENTION**

Physiotherapy Association of BC

Get a Grip, Prevent the Slip

Physiotherapists tips for reducing the risk of falling:

- Plant both feet securely on the ground before getting out of the car;
- Wear a good pair of lace-up walking shoes that will support your feet and provide necessary cushioning for your joints; this will make walking safer and more comfortable. Avoid high heels, slippers, and open-toed sandals, which can cause you to trip;
- Make sure the tips on canes and crutches are large and spiked for icy conditions;
- Sit rather than stand while dressing;
- Before you get up out of a chair or up from bed, wait 10 seconds before rising to your feet to prevent dizziness;
- Install handrails and grab-bars in the bathrooms and stairways;
- Concentrate on what you're doing while you're doing it, and move at a speed that feels comfortable;
- Avoid taking unnecessary balance risks like standing on furniture. Instead, use a sturdy stepladder.
- Avoid hyper extending the neck. Extending the neck backwards can cut off circulation to the brain, causing a black-out or even stroke.
- Be mindful around pets. Feet can get caught in leashes, dogs can knock you down or you can trip over the sleeping or wandering pet;
- Slow down. Be conscious of risky situations and hazardous areas;
- Be physically active every day to improve posture, muscle strength and balance. Enroll in Tai Chi or an exercise program to improve flexibility;

The risk of falling in older adults can be reduced dramatically when specific exercises, activities and interventions are prescribed by a physiotherapist. A targeted physiotherapy treatment program can help maintain or regain strength, flexibility and endurance in a way that still feels safe and secure.

For example, a physiotherapist will assess a senior's physical status and provide appropriate recommendations or treatment. As part of the assessment, the physiotherapist will review medical history and determine general physical condition, strength, flexibility, balance and gait (the way each person walks). After determining the primary limitation, a program of exercises and activities will be prescribed that focus on that area but with an overall goal of improving physical function and mobility.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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