



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults

Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

September 2024

Physical Therapists Can Help with Fall Prevention

Falls are a major public health concern. According to the CDC, more than one third of adults 65 and older fall each year in the United States, and 20% to 30% of people who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries. Falls can exact a toll long after the initial injury, outranking chronic kidney disease, asthma, and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in terms of effects on disability-adjusted life years, according to a 2017 Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors study.

The physical therapy profession's role in falls risk reduction and prevention is supported by a strong body of research. Physical therapists can perform specific testing and develop individual programs that can help enhance balance and decrease risk of falls by improving lower extremity and trunk strength, proprioception (your body's spatial awareness), mobility, and functional tolerance.

Physical therapists can additionally assess gait and potentially unsafe movement patterns to devise unique protocols and assistive device prescriptions (as needed) to potentially eliminate high-risk situations that can lead to a fall or injury.

While fall prevention is ideal, the harsh reality is that not all falls can be totally avoided. Physical therapists can further help decrease fall risk through techniques such as reactive balance training (RBT), which helps teach patients how to counter-react to external forces that may compromise postural stability. Learning how to react to a "trip" or fall can be crucial in preventing serious injury.

Physical therapists are movement experts. They can improve your quality of life and safety through individualized exercise and movement protocols, hands on care, and patient education. Contact a local PT as soon as possible if you start noticing balance or functional mobility deficits.

Contributed by: Jared Lovett, PT, DPT Ballad Health

Key to Fall Prevention: Exercise!

Exercise that focuses on mobility, strength, and balance helps to reduce the risk of falls by strengthening muscles used for activities of daily living.

Mobility - movements that help you move freely and efficiently

Example: Shoulder mobility exercises (June, 2024 BBB issue)

Strength - increase muscle strength by making muscles work against weight or force

Example: Bicep curls (April, 2022 BBB issue)

Balance - improve stability and ability to stay upright

Example: Tree pose (January, 2022 BBB issue)

Cottage Cheese Pasta Bake

This easy, meatless dish is packed with ingredients high in calcium and protein. The cottage cheese makes this recipe creamy and is a good source of protein. Broccoli and spinach add color, flavor, and calcium.

Source: Walder Wellness - www.walderwellness.com/cottage-cheese-pasta-bake/#recipe

Ingredients:

- 3 cups penne pasta
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups broccoli florets, chopped
- 3 cups baby spinach, tightly packed
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 2 cups marinara (or other tomato sauce)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- Salt + pepper, to taste
- 5 large leaves fresh basil, chopped (to garnish)

Instructions:

1. Cook pasta in boiling water to al dente. Drain.
2. Sauté garlic and broccoli in olive oil over medium-high heat for 7 minutes. Add spinach and continue to cook until it wilts.
3. Add pasta, broccoli and spinach, cottage cheese, and marinara sauce to a baking dish. Season with salt and pepper and stir until well-combined.
4. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella otop, coating the pasta evenly.
5. Cook in the oven for 20 minutes, or until the top layer of cheese is melted and nicely browned. Garnish with fresh basil and serve hot!

Fall Prevention Exercise: Sit to Stand

1. Begin by sitting on the front edge of a sturdy chair that will not move during exercise.
2. Lean your chest forward over your toes, shift your weight forward.
3. Squeeze your glute muscles and slowly stand up. Use support or sides of the chair, if needed.
4. Slowly return to seated position.
5. Repeat 10 times.

Resources

John Hopkins Medicine- Fall Prevention Exercise:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/fall-prevention-exercises>

Editors: April Payne, MS; Carlin Rafie, PhD, RD; Hannah Copp; Kristen Gibson, MBA

Peer reviewers: Susan Prillaman, MS; Jane Henderson, MEd; Naida Young, MS

Subscribe at: buzzbodybites-g@vt.edu

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

2024

HNFE-1119aNP