

Taking a Fall Out of Your Future

20 minute lesson to use after Fall Prevention Video (VHS-2264 & VHS-2264S)

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Falls precipitate 40% of Nursing Home Admissions. Are You at Risk?

PHYSICAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FALLS

\$ Vision Difficulties

glaucoma, macular degeneration

\$ Stroke

mobility affected

arthritis- stiff knees, walking and lifting feet hurts

Parkinson's - mobility, stalling and getting started

Blood pressure drops upon standing (orthostatic hypotension)

\$ Multiple medications

side effects include dizziness, balance, even depression - where you may pay less attention

\$ Level of activity - Are you fit?

muscle strength/flexibility

\$ Previous falls - breaks or not

RISK TAKING BEHAVIORS CONTRIBUTE TO FALLS

\$ Hold on to rail on stairs, don't stand on chair, use grab bars in tub/shower

ENVIRONMENT CONTRIBUTES TO FALLS

\$ Environment - your home and your community

The video focused on the area in and around your home

What about the sidewalks in your town?

Examples from group---

New environments require attention

What is your level of fear of falling?

FEAR OF FALLING

Jonathan Howland at Boston University has studied fear of falling for several years - He studied older people living in the community and found several groups:

\$ One group had a high fear of falling; had fallen periodically; had some injuries and were likely to fall again in the future.

The second group had high fear; had not fallen but had friends or relatives who had fallen, were no more likely to fall in future than others with less fear. This second group restricted their activities - moved less based on fear. In fact this fear was as intense as fear of forgetting an important appointment. Long term risk for falling can be increased by inactivity and loss of muscle strength.

Why is this so important to know? Because it is not just the **actual risk factors** people have that can create their future but also **fear that can affect what people do**. Fear can be useful when it causes us to exercise caution, but a person can be cautious without letting fear dictate a lower level of activity and community involvement.

USE CAUTION NOT FEAR

Keys to Reducing Fear Were:

Learn ways to avoid falls - use assistive devices properly, have them fitted properly. Increase safe behaviors, modify your environment for safety.

Learn/practice ways to get up if you should fall. Have a physical or occupational therapist show you safe ways to get up.

Have an emergency response plan: a neighbor, friend or relative who calls daily to check, discuss what the plan is if you have fallen and been hurt or use a commercial Personal emergency response system.

Increase your "recover ability" whether you are injured or not.

How to change environment and support = **What You Think:**

LASTLY....WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Assessing your home environment and making necessary changes for safety's sake is like buying a very good insurance policy. It shows how smart you are and it can save a hip and possibly your life.

HOW MANY WILL USE THE HOME ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST TO DO THESE?

Improve Safe Behaviors - Make Changes in Habits.

Sit at edge of bed/chair before rising and stand for a moment before walking off.

Use hand rails when on stairs.

Wear shoes that have firm soles.

Become "Positively Assertive." This is different from "being a burden."

Learn to ask for help in ways that others will help and gladly do so.

Ask for assistance at a curb and give thanks.

Learn that "complete independence" is not possible for anyone.

Avoid irrational ideas.

Improve your level of fitness - strong muscles and flexibility are the keys.

Live to a Good Old Age and Stay Well!