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Balance Presentation

Understanding the risk factors for falls among older adults

Falls are not an inevitable consequence of aging, but falls do occur more often among older adults because fall risk factors increase with age and are usually associated with health and aging conditions.

These risk factors include:

Biological risk factors

- Mobility problems due to muscle weakness or balance problems
- Chronic health conditions such as arthritis and stroke
- Vision changes and vision loss
- Loss of sensation in feet

Behavioral risk factors

- Inactivity
- Medication side effects and/or interactions
- Alcohol use

Environmental risk factors

- Home and environmental hazards (clutter, poor lighting, etc.)
- Incorrect size, type, or use of assistive devices (walkers, canes, crutches, etc.)
- Poorly designed public spaces

4 Main Blocks for Effective Balance Improvement

- Medication review to identify side effects or drug interactions that may contribute to falls.
 - The reviews should be conducted by pharmacists or healthcare providers.
 - Medication management—adjustments to or changes in medications—should be provided by physicians.
- Vision exams by trained healthcare professionals with vision correction by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- Home safety assessment and home modification by occupational therapists or other healthcare professionals with specialized training, to identify and modify home hazards that can increase older adults' risk of falling.
- Exercises that improve mobility, strength, and balance, and that are taught by trained, nationally certified exercise instructors or physical therapists.
 - Exercise programs include:
 - Tai Chi
 - Home exercise programs with supervision until the older adult can exercise independently



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- Individualized exercise sessions
- Group exercise classes

To be safe and effective, older adult exercise programs (one-on-one or group classes) must be taught by one or more of the following professionals:

- Nationally certified fitness/exercise instructors with specialized training in working with older adults
- Exercise science/physiology professionals with a bachelor's degree or master's degree in this field.
- Physical therapists.
- Occupational therapists.
- Recreational therapists with a bachelor's or master's degree.
- Tai Chi instructors, masters or grand masters, who have completed a Tai Chi course taught by a Tai Chi master or grand master, have a national certification in older adult physical activity, and have experience in teaching exercise to older adults.
- Physical, occupational, and recreational therapy assistants who are under the direct supervision of a physical, occupational, or recreational therapist.

Consistency and Moderation

- What you do specifically not as important as just doing and sticking with it.
 - Reduce risk of injury and/or overuse
 - Consistent with diversity
 - Body adjusts
 - Seeks less caloric use and efficiency above all else
 - Adaptation to environment for millennia & paramount for survival

Get Up and let's do some things

- Squat form
- Flamingo
 - While brushing teeth
 - standing in line at grocery store
- Core contraction
 - Belly button to lower back
 - Every movement should be initiated from the core first