



STEPS TOWARD A HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT LIFE

6 Steps to Prevent a Fall





STRIDES TOWARD A HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT LIFE

“6 Steps to Prevent a Fall” is a collaboration with the King County Fall Prevention Coalition, SOUND Generations, and the Washington State Department of Health.

Thank you.





DISCLOSURES

The information in today's presentation is not intended or implied to be a substitute for individual professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including text, graphics, images and information is for general information about preventing older adult falls.

Please consult your health care professional to diagnose your health conditions and consult a licensed health care professional before starting any health protocol or exercise program especially if you have pre-existing injuries or medical conditions.



Why are we talking about preventing falls?



One in five (20%) of older adult falls cause a serious injury.



Three million older adults are treated in ED's for fall injuries yearly.



Every 11 seconds, an older adult is seen in an ED for a fall-related injury.

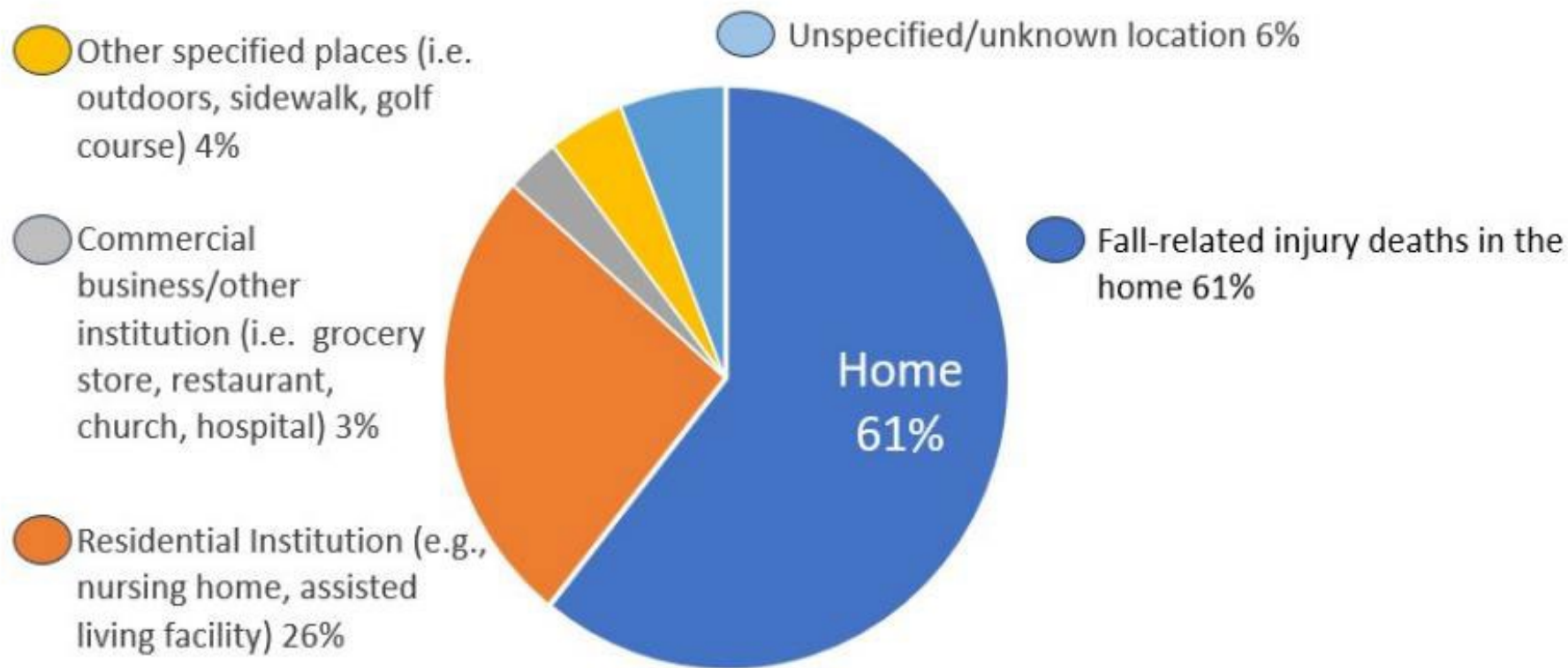
<https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html>



Accidental falls accounted for 50% of all injury-related deaths of Washington State Residents ages 65+ in 2022.

Data Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data (Data Last Updated on October 30, 2023)

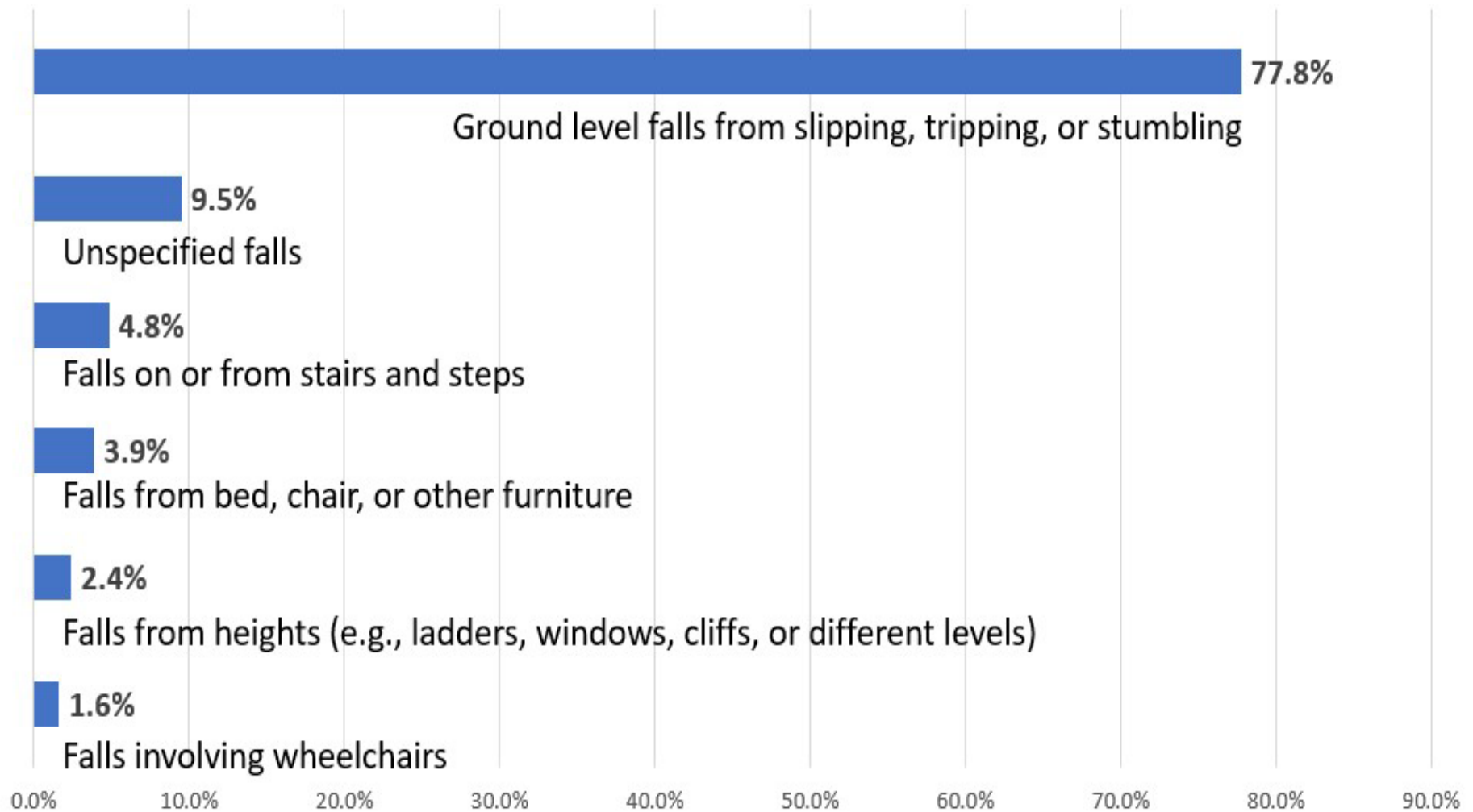
Fall-Related Deaths by Location (Ages 65+)



Data Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data for 2022 (Data Last Updated on October 30, 2023)



Types of Fall-related Deaths Among WA State Residents (Ages 65+)





What is a Fall?

Definition of a Fall: An event which results in a person accidentally coming to rest on the ground or floor or other lower level.

- **Same level falls/ground level:** Includes slips, trips, or stumbles, a step down, holes or uneven surfaces that slope or dip.
- **Elevated falls:** Falls from ladders or step ladders, from equipment or vehicles, or falls from stairs.

Does Fear of Falling Matter?

- **Yes.** Fear of falling increases future risk for falls.
- Fear of falling can lead to inactivity.



Friedman SM, Munoz B, West SK, Rubin GS, Fried LP. Falls and fear of falling: which comes first? A longitudinal prediction model suggests strategies for primary and secondary prevention. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2002;50:1329-35.



Types of Risk Factors for Falls

Most falls result from multiple risk factors.

- **Physical risk factors:** Changes in your body that increase your risk for a fall.
- **Behavioral risk factors:** Things we do, or don't do, that increase our fall risk.
- **Environmental risk factors:** Hazards in our home or community.



Steps to Creating **YOUR** Healthy and Independent Life

“6 Steps to Prevent a Fall”



6 STEPS TO PREVENT A FALL

- 1. Find a good balance and exercise program
- 2. Talk to your healthcare provider about falls
- 3. Review your medications with your healthcare provider
- 4. Get hearing and vision check ups
- 5. Keep your home safe to prevent falls
- 6. Talk to your friends or family members for support



1. Find a Good Balance and Exercise Program

Falls are preventable.

Goal: Move More, Sit Less

- ❑ At least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking.
- ❑ At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.
- ❑ Activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot.

Aim for the recommended activity level but be as active as one is able.



https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf



The Benefits of Physical Activity



Boost your mood



Sharpen your focus



Reduce your stress



Improve your sleep

https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm



Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Classes in Washington State

- **A Matter of Balance (MOB): Managing Concerns about Falls**
Focus on reducing fear of falling and introducing physical activity.
- **Tai Ji Quan: Moving For Better Balance (TJQMBB)** Improves balance through gentle movement.
- **Enhance Fitness (EF)** – Group exercise and fall prevention program with strength, cardio and balance components.
- **Otago Exercise Program** – A series of 17 strength and balance exercises well suited for frail participants and supported by a physical therapist.
- **Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)** – Centered around fall prevention education and group exercise with strength and balance components.



Additional Activities and Locations

Check with your local Senior Centers, YMCA's, fitness facilities, or City Parks & Recreation for Evidence-based Fall Prevention classes or other class options for staying active.

- Silver Sneakers, Silver & Fit
- Zumba Gold
- Water Aerobics
- Community Walking Groups

Virtual options are available for some programs.



2. Talk to Your Healthcare Provider About Falls

Falls are preventable.



How Do I Talk to My Healthcare Provider About Falls?

- Request a fall risk assessment.
- Tell your doctor if you have fallen, if you feel unsteady on your feet, or if you have a fear of falling.
- Ask about mobility aids, walkers, or simple tools that improve stability, if needed.
- Ask about how referrals to Physical Therapists (PT) or Occupational Therapists (OT) can help.



Common Medical Conditions Increase Risk for Falls

- Vertigo and dizziness
- Lower leg and foot problems
- Heart and blood vessel problems
- Bladder or prostate problems
- Cognitive impairment and dementia
- Chronic pain



3. Review Your Medications With Your Healthcare Provider or Pharmacist

Falls are preventable.



Review Medications

- Review your medications regularly with your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- When new medications are prescribed, ask about possible side effects.
- Keep an up-to-date list of current medications. Include over-the-counter medications or occasional use items, from all providers.



Medication Side Effects

- Change in vision
- Loss of balance
- Slower reaction times
- Muscle weakness or lack of coordination
- Tiredness, sleepiness
- Drop in blood pressure when standing
- Dizziness, lightheadedness



4. Get Hearing and Vision Check Ups

Falls are preventable.



Annual Hearing and Vision Check Ups

Hearing

- Loss can affect balance
- Inner ear infections, colds, allergies, and ringing in the ears

Vision

- Changes in vision, sensitivities
- Vision impairments or common eye disorders
- Update glasses
- Bifocal and Multifocal lenses can impair depth perception

Impaired vision can double your risk for falls! ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))

Harvard Medical School Guide preventing-falls.pdf

[Vision Impairment and Older Adult Falls](#) | [Feature Articles](#) | [Resources and Publications](#) | [Vision Health Initiative \(VHI\)](#) | [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)



5. Keep Your Home Safe to Prevent Falls

Falls are preventable.



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Stairs and Steps (Indoors and Outdoors)

Remove papers, shoes, books, and other objects from the stairs.

Repair broken or uneven steps.

Install lights and light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.



Stairways and Handrails

Replace stairway light bulbs or others that are burned out.

Replace loose or torn carpet on steps.

Install non-skid strips on wooden steps.

Repair loose or broken handrails and install on both sides of the stairway.





Floors

Keep walkways clear!

Keep throw rugs secured.

Keep papers, shoes, books, or other objects off the floors.

Roll or secure wires or cords from lamps, charging cables, or extension cords away from walkways.





Kitchens

Place regularly used items at waist-high level or on kitchen counter tops.

Use a sturdy step stool with a hand bar.

Keep mats and throw rugs out of the kitchen area.

Clean up messes or spills quickly.





cdc.gov

Bedrooms

Lamps and flashlights on nightstands should be easy to reach.

Illuminate pathways or hallways with nightlights.

Keep pathways clear.



Hold on to your independence.



cdc.gov

Bathrooms

Add non-stick strips to the tub or shower.

Secure grab bars are helpful when getting in and out of the tub, shower, or standing up from the toilet.

Use nightlights in the bathroom!



6. Talk to Family and Friends for Support

Falls are preventable.



Talk to Your Support System

Family, Friends, Partners, or Care Team

- Recognizing and understanding your risks for a fall will help you maintain your independence.
- If you are concerned about falling or have recently fallen, talk to your friends, family or support system.
- It's ok to ask for help.



How Do I Know if I Should Call 911?

- Do you have minor or serious injuries?
- Do you need help getting up from the floor?
- Are you in pain?
- Are you bleeding?
- Did you hit your head?

When in doubt, call them out!



Create YOUR Action Plan with these 6 Steps!

- 1. Find a good balance and exercise program.
- 2. Talk to your healthcare provider about falls.
- 3. Review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.
- 4. Get hearing and vision check ups.
- 5. Keep your home safe to prevent falls.
- 6. Talk to your friends, family or support system.



Aging &
LONG TERM
Care
OF EASTERN WASHINGTON



A MATTER OF
BALANCE
MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS



About the Class

- Taught by two Volunteer, Trained Coaches
- 8 – 12 Participants
- Participant Workbook
- Group Discussion / Video / Problem Solving / Brainstorming / Gentle Exercises / Snacks
- Guest Health Care Professional ~ Session 7
- 4 Weeks/ 2 Days per Week / 2 Hour Sessions
- FREE



Strides Toward a Healthy and Independent Life.

6 Steps to Prevent a Fall

Thank you!





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