

SENIOR ADVOCATE

Prime News for Those in Their Prime

A Lifetime of Balance

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Have you fallen down lately? Do you stumble, trip or feel afraid you might fall? Studies show that one out of every three older adults will fall each year and two-thirds of those who fall will fall again within six months. Falling can often result in a serious injury such as a hip fracture. Many hip fracture patients end up needing an assistive device such as a walker or cane for the rest of their lives. Prevention is the key to avoid falling!

Dizziness and imbalance can be caused by a number of factors; including poor posture, decreased strength, inner ear dysfunctions, some medications and central or peripheral nervous system problems. To find out if you might have a balance problem, ask yourself some basic questions. Do you feel dizzy when you turn quickly or close your eyes? Do you take more than four medications? Do you have numbness in your feet? Is it difficult for you to get up from a chair? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be at risk for a fall.

The good news is that strength can be regained at any age and balance is a skill that can be improved through practice. Specialized physical therapy can help retrain your body to keep your balance. Customized programs can address problems with the various balance systems in your body and optimize your brain's control over your body. If you think you have a balance problem, take steps now to prevent a possible injury in the future. Tell your doctor about your symptoms and ask for a referral to physical therapy. Additional information may be found on the internet at www.360balance.com, www.vestibular.org, and www.hometherapy.biz. These websites offer a wealth of information from recognizing symptoms to finding an appropriate provider in your area.