



**Evidence-Based Programs for Professionals**

# **Evidence-Based Falls Prevention Programs**

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## Key Takeaways

Learn more about the evidence-based falls prevention programs that can help older adults reduce the risk of falling.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for seniors. Connect with a community-based fall prevention program in your state.

Find proven programs <https://www.ncoa.org/ncoa-map> that can help prevent falls.

Explore the evidence-based programs that are proven to help older adults reduce their risk of falling. This means benefits for individual's health and a return on investment in preventing illness and injury. View the [Falls Prevention Programs: Saving Lives, Saving Money](#) infographic to learn more.

Each of these programs meets the Administration for Community Living's [criteria for evidence-based programs https://acl.gov/programs/health-wellness/disease-prevention](https://acl.gov/programs/health-wellness/disease-prevention) specifically for falls prevention. Older Americans Act Title III-D and discretionary grants supported by the Prevention and Public Health Fund may be used to support implementation of these programs. Programs with an asterisk (\*) meet the Osteoarthritis Action Alliance's criteria for Arthritis-Appropriate, Evidence-Based Interventions (AAEBIs). AAEBIs are programs that have been shown to improve arthritis symptoms, such as pain or limitations in function. AAEBIs can be implemented with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding.

### A Matter of Balance

[A Matter of Balance](#) is an eight-week structured group intervention that emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels for older adults. Participants learn to view falls and fear of falling as controllable, set realistic goals to



increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and exercise to increase strength and balance.

## **Bingocize®**

**Bingocize®** is a 10-week program that combines a bingo-like game with exercise and health education. The unique addition of bingo addresses many of the barriers to older adults' participation because the game is fun, familiar, and done in a group setting. The program has been shown to increase older adults' functional fitness, health knowledge, and social engagement in a variety of settings. The overall goals of the program are to help older adults improve and/or maintain mobility and independence, learn and use health information focused on falls reduction and other health-related behaviors, and socially engage with other older adults. A mobile app version is also available.

## **CAPABLE**

**CAPABLE** (Community Aging in Place – Advancing Better Living for Elders) is a five-month structured program delivered at home to community dwelling older adults to decrease fall risk, improve safe mobility, and improve ability to safely accomplish daily functional tasks. CAPABLE is delivered by an occupational therapist, who makes six visits to each participant; a nurse, who makes four visits; and a handyman, who contributes up to a full day's work—providing home repairs, installing assistive devices, and making home modifications. Participants work with the therapist and nurse to identify three achievable goals per discipline, examine the barriers to achieving those goals, and make action plans, supported by changes to the home and medication environment, to achieve those goals.

## **Enhance Fitness\***

**EnhanceFitness** is low-cost, evidence-based group falls prevention and physical activity program developed specifically for older adults. The exercises have been packaged into a formal regimen focusing on four key areas important to the health and fitness of mature participants: low impact cardiovascular; dynamic/static balance work, strength training and stretching. Classes meet three times a week, an hour each session, providing social stimulation as well as physical benefits.

## **FallsTalk**

**FallsTalk** is an individual program for anyone who has experienced a fall or regular loss of balance; regardless of walking ability, medical condition, mobility or fitness level. The program begins with a personal FallsTalk Interview in-home or community space to discuss their unique situation. The intervention consists of initial and follow-up interviews with a trained facilitator, daily personal reflection (2-3 min.), three brief weekly and then monthly check-in calls. Clinical trials and community results provide evidence that FallsTalk significantly reduces falls compared to untreated fallers.

## **FallScape**

**FallScape** is a customized program for anyone who has experienced a fall or regular loss of balance; regardless of walking ability, medical condition, mobility, cognitive or fitness level. FallScape consists of one or two training sessions with a set of brief (less than 1 min.) multimedia vignettes that are selected specifically to help an individual prevent falls in their own unique situation. FallScape is offered in-home or community space in conjunction with FallsTalk. Research shows that participants achieve maximum benefit with the addition of this multimedia training.

## **Fit & Strong!\***

**Fit & Strong!** is an evidence-based physical activity/behavior change intervention that has been successfully implemented in multiple community-based settings. Participants are older adults who have lower extremity joint pain and stiffness related to osteoarthritis. Fit & Strong! blends a multiple component exercise program with group problem solving/education using a curriculum designed to facilitate arthritis symptom management, confidence in ability to exercise safely with arthritis, and commitment to lifestyle change. Before the end of the eight-week Fit & Strong! program, participants meet with the instructor to develop individualized exercise plans that foster ongoing maintenance of a balanced physical activity routine.

## **Healthy Steps for Older Adults**



**Healthy Steps for Older Adults** (HSOA) is an evidence-based falls prevention program for adults ages 50 and over. The program is designed to raise participants' fall prevention knowledge and awareness, introduce steps they can take to reduce falls and improve their health and well-being, and provide referrals and resources. Two 2-hour workshops are offered to interested individuals in the community at facilities such as senior community centers and health care organizations. HSOA was developed by the Fall Prevention Initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

## **Healthy Steps in Motion**

**Healthy Steps in Motion** (HSIM) is an exercise program designed for people of all fitness levels. The program is a one-hour session twice a week for eight weeks, and is taught by certified instructors; it starts with a warm-up, followed by strength and balance exercises and ends with a cool down-stretch. There are three levels so participants can continue HSIM as long as they like. HSIM strives to reduce the risk of falling by building body strength, increasing flexibility, and improving balance. HSIM can be offered at senior centers, older adult living centers, recreation centers, hospitals, YMCAs/YWCAs, and more.

## **Home Hazards Removal Program**

The **Home Hazards Removal Program <<https://www.ncoa.org/article/evidence-based-program-home-hazard-removal-program-harp>>** (HARP) is a 1-5 session behavioral intervention that targets falls risk behaviors and home hazards for older adults at high risk for falling. The elements of the intervention include a comprehensive assessment by an occupational therapist of the older adult, their behaviors, and the environment, as well as working together to identify a home hazard removal plan including remediation of hazards that increase the older adult's risk of having a fall. HARP has been proven to reduce the number of falls, reduce fall hazards in the home, and improve the ability of older adults to manage their fall risk. This program is delivered in-person at the home of the older adult, and the primary mechanisms for resolving home hazards are minor home repair (e.g., grab bars), adaptive equipment, task modification, and education and self-management strategies to improve awareness of falls risk. After three months, a booster session is held. HARP is a cost-effective program that can help address fall hazards through simple modifications and is tailored to each older adult's needs and home.

## **The Otago Exercise Program\***

**The Otago Exercise Program** (OEP) is a series of 17 strength and balance exercises delivered by a Physical Therapist or a Physical Therapy Assistant in the home, outpatient or community setting that reduces falls between 35 and 40 percent for frail older adults. This evidence-based program calls for Physical Therapists to assess and progress older adults through an eight-week clinical phase and then the older adult is transitioned to a self-management phase for four to 10 months. During this time, the older adult is supported by monthly phone calls and check ins at months six and 12, if needed. There are opportunities for Physical Therapists to collaborate with community providers to support dissemination and implementation of the OEP.

## **Stay Active and Independent for Life\***

**Stay Active and Independent for Life** (SAIL) is a strength, balance and fitness program for adults 65 and older. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance, and fitness are the single most important activity that adults can do to stay active and reduce their chance of falling. The entire curriculum of activities in the SAIL program can help improve strength and balance, if done regularly. SAIL is offered three times a week in a one-hour class. SAIL exercises can be done standing or sitting. The primary target audience is community-dwelling older adults (65+) and people with a history of falls. The SAIL program is able to accommodate people with a mild level of mobility difficulty (e.g. people who are occasional cane users).

## **Stepping On**

About 30 percent of older people who fall lose their self-confidence and start to go out less often. Inactivity leads to social isolation and loss of muscle strength and balance, increasing the risk of falling. **Stepping On** aims to break that cycle, engaging people in a range of relevant falls prevention strategies.

## **Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention\***

Many studies have shown Tai Chi to be one of the most effective exercises for preventing falls. **Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention** helps people with arthritis to



improve all muscular strength, flexibility, balance, stamina, and more.

## **Tai Chi for Prime**

**Tai Chi Prime** is a six-week class series proven to reduce the risk of falling. Classes feature instruction in tai chi and qi gong basics, home practice coaching, home practice, and exercises to embed into activities of daily living.

## **Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance\***

**Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance**<sup>™</sup> is an evidence-based falls prevention program delivered in two one-hour sessions each week for 24 weeks. Each session consists of warm-up exercises; core practices, which include a mix of practice of forms, variations of forms, and mini-therapeutic movements; and brief cool-down exercises.

## **YMCA Moving For Better Balance**

**Moving For Better Balance** is a 12-week instructor-led group program designed to improve strength, mobility, flexibility, and balance for enhanced overall physical health and better functioning in daily activities. Participation in the program may also result in better mental health, reduced stress, improved memory and cognition, and increased self-esteem. The program, based on the principles of Tai Chi, teaches eight movements modified especially for falls prevention. The program is targeted toward individuals 65 years or older who are physically mobile with impaired stability and/or mobility, or individuals 45 years or older with a condition that may impact stability and/or mobility. A YMCA membership is not required to participate in the program.

