



## Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults  
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences  
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### Falls – Not a Part of Getting Older

Falls are the leading cause of injury amongst older adults. However, falls do not discriminate based on age and are not a normal part of aging. As one of the Master Trainers for our Falls Prevention programs, I have led numerous workshops, for such programs as A Matter of Balance and Bingocize, to help older adults realize there are ways they can prevent falls.

There are four main things you can do to help prevent falls which include:

1. review your medications with your healthcare provider,
2. exercise to improve both your strength and balance,
3. have your eyes checked regularly, and
4. do simple home modifications to make your home safer.

The first three are self-explanatory, but the last may need some clarification.

Here are a few easy steps you can take to prevent falls in your home. First, avoid clutter to create wide passageways or walkways in the home. Tie back any loose cords or wires. If you have poor vision, make sure that your house is well lit by using automatic sensor lights. Install these at both the top and the bottom of staircases. Get rid of throw rugs, if possible, as these are tripping hazards. If you can't, make sure they are slip resistant and that the corners face down preventing them from rolling up.

When doing work around the home, pace yourself and take frequent breaks to prevent overexertion. When getting dressed, it's a lot easier and safer to do so seated. If you have to frequently use the restroom at night and have mobility issues, use a bedside toilet or urinal to avoid those frequent trips and for convenience. In the kitchen, make sure to organize the items in your cabinets at eye level to avoid having to use step stools or chairs. Grabbers are a great tool to use instead of having to bend down to pick up items off the floor.

Finally, we reach the bathroom, the most common place for falls. Make sure to properly install grab bars. Avoid grabbing onto towel racks, soap dishes, shower curtain rods, or door knobs as these items are not strong enough to support your weight. Use non-skid strips in your shower and make sure bath mats are non-slip and are not rolling up in the corners. If there is ample space, place a chair in the bathroom, so you can dry and dress yourself while seated. Raised toilet seats are also a great way to increase the height on normally low toilets to prevent having to get up from such a low point.

As you can see, falls aren't a part of getting older and there are measures you can take to prevent falls in your life. We here at Piedmont Senior Resources are here to help in your Falls Prevention journey.

Contributed by: Nikki Dean, Nutrition Program Coordinator for Piedmont Senior Resources, Area Agency on Aging

### Falls Risk Checklist

Write 'yes' next to true statements, and 'no' next to false statements. If you answer yes to one or more statements, you should speak to your doctor about how to reduce your risk of falling.

- I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.
- Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.
- I have fallen in the past year.
- I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.
- I am worried about falling.
- I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.
- I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.
- I often have to rush to the toilet.
- I have lost some feeling in my feet.
- I take medicine to help e sleep or improve my mood.
- I often feel sad or depressed.

For more information about fall prevention go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html>

## Cheesy Chicken Pasta

If you like pasta, you will like this simple, easy- to-prepare recipe. Smart ingredient choices increase the fiber and decrease the sodium and fat in this traditional favorite.

Source: [dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/cheesy-chick-en-pasta](http://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/cheesy-chick-en-pasta)

### Ingredients:

- 12 ounces whole wheat penne pasta, dry
- 10.75 ounces cream of chicken soup reduced sodium
- 10.75 ounces cream of mushroom soup reduced sodium
- 10 ounces diced tomatoes with green chiles
- 1 red bell pepper diced
- 1 green bell pepper diced
- 1/2 white onion diced
- 4 ounces canned sliced mushrooms drained
- 2 cups chicken breast chopped
- 2 cups reduced fat shredded cheese

### Instructions:

5. Boil pasta in water for 5 minutes. Drain and place in slow cooker.
6. Place all other ingredients in slow cooker. Combine well.
7. Cook on Low for 2-3 hours. Stir before serving.

## Stretching Exercises: Tree Pose

This is the last in a series of four stretching exercises to promote flexibility and balance. Strengthens the core and improves balance.

DO:

- Engage your core and press the foot you will stand on into the ground.
- Lift your hips upward toward the ceiling and bend the opposite leg, bringing the sole of the foot toward the standing leg.
- Press the standing leg toward the foot of the bent leg.
- Hold a chair for balance if you are unsteady.
- If you feel balanced with the heel of the bent leg off the floor, move it up the calf.
- Hold position for 15 seconds. Repeat on alternate leg.

DON'T

- Place your foot on the opposite knee.

- Arch your back.

## Fall Prevention Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

```

R Q J Y C Q H S F M B W B F D
K E A X W F P E S N P Q A A S
N R B Y K R E T T U L C L L C
F G C B E D D G E Z P P A L M
Q Q V V A V J M T Y A V N I V
F M E X B R S H O E S Q C N Z
E N A Z L R G D S A M B E G S
T Y Q H L B D I P E X Z R T E
S F E I S I T K Q T H N H X G
B B N D J T E S T E M G E A E
E I R E O O V N H U I R V M X
M K D B E C C O T L C W E S I
F B W G I J T N D I Y P G X D
T J C T G R H O S U P Z D Q I
L W X T E P I E R I E G Z O L

```

### Find the following words in the puzzle:

- Balance
- Eye doctor
- Lights
- Shoes
- Clutter
- Falling
- Non skid
- Exercise
- Grabber
- Prevent

Source: <https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/word-search>

## Resources

CDC Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults

[www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check\\_for\\_safety\\_brochure-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check_for_safety_brochure-a.pdf)

National Council on Aging - National Falls Prevention Resource Center

[www.ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-prevention-awareness-week](http://www.ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-prevention-awareness-week)

Dinner Tonight - Texas A&M Agrilife Extension  
Find simple healthy recipes with nutritional information at  
[www.dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipes](http://www.dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipes)

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