



Suggestions for *Finding Balance* and Falls Prevention Displays

Here are some suggestions for what can be included in a *Finding Balance* display. For each of the 4 key messages, links are included for resources for seniors as well as ideas for interactive activities.

To download *Finding Balance* artwork and photos, click [here](#) or go to 'Display Artwork' in the Tool Kit.

1. Check your medications! Talk to your doctor or pharmacist

The Facts:

Anyone can fall, but as you age the risk increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to *prevent falls*.

- Have your doctor or pharmacist review all medications that you are taking each year.
- As you age, the way some medications affect you can change and increase your risk of falling.
- Medications include prescription, over-the-counter pills, vitamins and herbal supplements.
- Medications that relax you, help you sleep or improve your mood can increase your risk of falling.
- Alcohol affects medications – *be careful*.

Handouts for Seniors

- *Finding Balance* [brochure](#)
- A Million Messages – [Check your Medications](#)

Ideas for Display

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)
- Examples of various medications, i.e. prescriptions, ibuprofen, cough syrup, herbal supplements and vitamins
- Examples of sources of calcium (supplements – pills, chews, etc.) Food sources high in calcium milk, fortified beverages, almonds, dried figs, and tofu.
- Examples of sources of vitamin D.
- [Images with medications](#)
- [Medication Record Book](#)



Ideas for active participation

- Run a Health Check Day – Simple checks on blood pressure, medications, vision, and balance and gait can provide an excellent way of engaging with seniors on the topic of falls. Contact your local pharmacy to see if they can help host the event. Involve the various professionals in your community.
- Have a pharmacist available to conduct medication reviews. Could discuss use of medication passport with interested seniors.
- Provide samples of flavored tofu for seniors to try (many have not had an opportunity to try it).
- [“What do all of these have in common?”](#) photos and quiz. You could provide these as a poster on your display, or print the question and text back to back. Leave the question and pictures face up. Participants can look at the page and try and guess what the common element is then turn over the page for the answer.
- [Medication Side Effects Quiz](#). Print the slides from the PowerPoint presentation and place pages back to back. The first page asks the participant a question about medications they are taking. The back page identifies possible side effects that may increase risk of falling and provides recommendations to minimize the risk of falling.

Additional Resources

- [Calcium information](#)
- [Calcium Intake Calculator](#)
- [Vitamin D Calculator](#)
- [Good Sleep Hygiene](#) information sheet
- [Knowledge is the best medicine](#)

2. Keep Active! Exercise for strength and balance

The Facts:

Anyone can fall but as you age the risk increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to *prevent falls*.

- Regular physical activity and exercise can increase muscle strength, improve balance and help prevent falls.
- Ask your doctor or health care provider about the best type of exercise program for you.
- Do at least 30 minutes of activity every day.
- Walk, dance, swim or take an exercise class.

Resources: (links)

- [Finding Balance brochure](#)
- A Million Messages – [Physical Activity](#)



Ideas for display

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)
- Provide a variety of equipment for participants to try (i.e. Bocce balls, badminton racquets, skipping ropes).
- Information on different types of activities
 - Endurance activities (swimming, walking, cycling)
 - Flexibility activities (stretching, Tai Chi, golf, yoga)
 - Strength and balance activities
- Information on locally offered activity programs i.e. Tai Chi, water aerobics, yoga, dancing, mall walking, etc.
- Images of [active seniors](#)

Ideas for active participation

- Set up an area to allow participants to evaluate their risk of falling:
 - [Timed-Up-and-Go Test](#)
- Display examples of pedometers for participants to try.
 - A [pedometer toolkit](#) for loan is available from the Alberta Centre for Active Living
 - Information on [how to use a pedometer](#) is available at
- Offer an exercise class, bowling, Wii Challenge. Check [here](#) for more ideas.

Additional Resources

- Often people find it difficult to find time to exercise or find reasons not to stick with it. Using a daily [physical activity log](#) might be helpful. You can use a log to schedule times for activity or you can use it to monitor your progress.
- [Strength and balance activities](#)
- Handouts, takeaways
 - [Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Health Living for Older Adults](#)

3. Watch your step! Wherever you are

The Facts:

Anyone can fall, but as you age the risk increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent falls.

- Keep pathways, halls and stairways well-lit and free of clutter.
- Watch out for ice, cracks and uneven surfaces while walking.
- Have your eyes checked every year.
- Wear shoes that support your feet and help you keep your balance.
- Avoid rushing and doing too many things at once.



Resources:

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)
- A Millions Messages – [In Your Home](#), [In your Community](#), [Footwear and Foot Care](#), [Transportation](#)

Ideas for display

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)

Footwear

- Examples of real appropriate and inappropriate footwear, tubular socks with grips. Information about tubular socks with grips is available [here](#).

Vision

- Photographs depicting [vision with different eye conditions](#)
- Examples of night lights (motion activated, wall outlet plug in)
- Examples of sun blocking sunglasses, sunglasses that fit over regular eyeglasses

Winter Safety

Bring examples of:

- Ice grippers (i.e. Yaktrax Walker[®], others)
- Appropriate snow boots
- Ice melters
- Information on local resources available to shovel sidewalks – e.g. “Snow Angel” volunteers
- Information on locations to walk inside – mall walking, walking tracks

Other

- Examples of mobility aids – walkers, canes
- Examples of hip protectors such as Hip Safe and Safe Hip
- Model to depict hip fracture

Ideas for active participation

- [“Can You Spot the Good Shoes?”](#) Appropriate footwear activity. The presentation can be printed out one slide per page. Match the appropriate slides back to back and either laminate or place in page protectors. Leave the pictures of the shoes with no labels or explanation showing. Ask participants to pick appropriate shoes. They can turn the cards over to determine if they made a good choice or to find out what is wrong with the shoe.
- “Can Your Shoes do the Twist?” Provide a chair for participants to sit in so they can remove a shoe. Have the participant grab their shoe with one hand holding the toe box and the other hand grasping the heel. Ask the participant to try twisting their shoe (the action is similar to wringing out a wet cloth). If the shoe does twist, use this opportunity to point out the lack of support structure. To ensure good balance, heel should be wide and rounded to give more contact with ground; sole should provide good grip and stability, back of shoe covers heel, etc.



- [Fitting a cane properly](#). Poster for Measuring Canes can be obtained by contacting the [Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists](#) (CAOT).
- Provide copies of [Public Health Agency of Canada's Stay Safe Poster](#) and challenge participants to find all 14 hazards.
- Sloppy Slipper Exchange – Foot problems and foot pain can have a major effect on mobility, balance and stability. One way to highlight the associated problems is by hosting a Sloppy Slipper exchange. For a small fee seniors can exchange their old, loose slippers for a properly-fitting pair. You could even obtain a sponsor to provide the slippers for free.

Additional Resources

- Brochures:
 - [Hip Protectors](#)
 - [Avoid falls while travelling](#)
 - [Have a safe home](#)
- [Check for Safety](#) – A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults

4. Speak up about dizziness! Tell your doctor and take action

The Facts:

Anyone can fall, but as you age the risk increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent falls.

- Tell your doctor if you often feel dizzy or lightheaded. There are many different causes of dizziness, including some medications.
- Ask your healthcare provider to test your blood pressure with you lying down and standing up. You may feel dizzy if your blood pressure drops quickly when you get up.
- After lying in bed or sitting in a chair, clench your fists and circle your ankles 10 times, then take your time and get up slowly.
- Dehydration can make you dizzy. Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids including water each day, or as directed by your healthcare provider.

Resources:

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)

Ideas for display

- *Finding Balance* [photos and artwork](#)
- Images of seniors having their postural blood pressure being taken



Ideas for active participation

- Run a Health Check Day- Simple checks on blood pressure, medications, vision, nutrition, hydration, and balance and gait can provide an excellent way of engaging with seniors on the topic of falls. Contact your local pharmacy to see if they can help host the event. Involve the various professionals in your community.

Offer screening for:

- Vision exams
 - Balance & gait testing
 - Blood pressure checks-postural preferred
 - Foot exams
 - Medication review
- Organize Medication Take Back Events-Host an event in which seniors can bring in old or out of date medications and receive educational information.

Additional Resources

- [Managing Postural Hypotension](#)
- [Drugs and The Risk of Falling](#)