

### Materials

- Trace a human body on a large poster board (portrait orientation).
- Markers, 5 pieces poster board

### Introduction

Ask how everyone's week went. Did they do the daily dose? Did they meet their SMART goals?

Today's topic is on fall prevention. Did you know, every year, **one in three** Canadian seniors will fall at least once (Health Canada, 2006). Anyone can fall, but the risk of falling increases with age. Remember, falls don't "just happen" and people don't just fall because they get older!

### Active Warm up (5 min)

- Chest Stretch: targets chest muscles also good for posture, can be done at home
  - o Feet flat on floor, shoulder width apart
  - o Hold arms to your sides at shoulder height, with palms facing forward
  - o Slowly move your arms back, while squeezing your shoulder blades together. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort.
  - o Hold the position for 10-30seconds
  - o Repeat 3-5 times. *For the class you may just want to repeat it once or twice*

### Activity (7-10min) *Tape the tracing of the human body on a wall. Bring markers.*

This activity is going to teach us about risk factors for falling. Does anyone know what a risk factor is? "A risk factor is something that increases a person's risk or susceptibility to a medical problem or disease" (National Institutes of Health).

Using this outline of the human body we are going to identify potential risk factors and which body part it influences. For example, muscle weakness in the leg is a risk factor for falls because those with weaker leg muscles are more likely to fall than those with stronger muscles. *Mark the leg with a star. The list below is not exhaustive and they can add their own. Encourage them to come up and mark different body parts with a star and why it could be a potential risk factor. The goal is to just make them more aware of the changes that happen to their body that put them at greater risk for falling.*

- LEG:
  - o Muscle weakness especially in the leg: One of the most important risk factors! Those with weak muscles are more likely to fall than those with good muscular strength.
  - o Balance and gait (how you walk): Poorer balance and difficulty walking increases the chances of you falling.
  - o Slower reflexes: As you age, our reflexes slow down and this makes it harder to catch your balance if you start to fall.
- FOOT:
  - o Wearing unsafe footwear: Ex. Backless shoes and slippers, high heels, shoes with smooth leather soles

## Consultant Copy

- Sensory problems: Your senses may not be as sharp. Biggest example is numbness in your feet may mean you don't sense when you are stepping
- EYES:
  - Poorer vision
- EARS:
  - Poorer hearing
- MOUTH:
  - Taking many kinds of medication
- HEAD (?):
  - Blood pressure that drops too much when getting up from lying down. Also known as postural hypotension that may result from dehydration, medications, diabetes or Parkinson's disease.

## Daily Dose (5 min)

- "Daily Dose" is a way to make physical activity into your daily routine. How it works is you attach a physical activity to a daily routine and location. Everybody stands up for this and does it together while you demonstrate first.
- Today's daily dose is the **single arm wall stretch**
  - Done in the bedroom when getting dressed
  - With a straight arm, put your right hand on the wall at shoulder height
  - Slowly turn your body away from the wall to gently stretch the chest.
  - Hold for 15 sec.
  - Alternate arms, perform this twice on each side (*you may just do it once for today*)

## You CAN prevent falls! (15 min) *Will need paper/poster board and markers*

Seniors are injured **at home** more than any other location. The bathroom and stairs are particularly dangerous.

*Split them up into 5 groups. Each group will cover an area of the home. Ask them to write down ways they can minimize their risk of falling in the area. They have 5 minutes to brainstorm and each group will present their tips to the entire group afterward:*

1. Bathroom
2. Living room and bedroom
3. Kitchen
4. Around stairways
5. Exterior home

*Distribute handout afterward and they can add on to section "you can prevent falls!"*

## Closing (5 min)

- You can prevent falls by making adjustments to your home and lifestyle, making sure you eat well, stay fit, and use whatever devices you may need to help you keep safe.
- Remember to keep up with your SMART goals
- When you get home, "fall-proof" your home and surroundings based on what you learned.
- Do the daily dose every day!
- Date for next session