

Pennsylvania's Healthy Steps for Older Adults



A Guide to Preventing Falls

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF
AGING



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

**A Special Message from Governor Edward G. Rendell
& Secretary of Aging Nora Dowd Eisenhower**

Congratulations! Your choice to enroll in Pennsylvania's Healthy Steps Program is a step to remain independent for as long as you can. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospital stays for older adults in Pennsylvania, and completing this program's training sessions reinforces your desire to stay active and healthy.

Through the Healthy Steps Program, the staff of our Area Agencies on Aging will provide you valuable information about health care, exercise programs, home safety resources and other available services you will find beneficial.

Pennsylvania's Healthy Steps Program will help answer your questions about how to stay active, how to make your home safer, how to manage your medications or how to talk with your doctor. By actively participating and using this program guide to learn how to prevent falls and related injuries, you are taking the first of many "Healthy Steps" to an active and independent future.

Handwritten signature of Edward G. Rendell in black ink.

Edward G. Rendell
GOVERNOR

Handwritten signature of Nora Dowd Eisenhower in black ink.

Nora Dowd Eisenhower
SECRETARY OF AGING

Index

Blue page numbers have the most information on a topic

A lcohol	22–23, 55	K egel exercises	19
Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)	9, 23, 27, 54	kitchen safety	12–13
arm, wrist and hand exercises	40–41, 48	L eg exercises	41, 46–47, 51
B alance, exercises to improve	42–43	lifting and carrying safely	29
bathroom safety	8–9	lighting	6–7, 10, 11, 14
bed, getting out of	28	M edical alarms	30, 31
bedroom, safety tips	7	medical conditions and exercise	34, 35
blood pressure, high or low	19	medicine safety	20–21, 23, 56
C anes and walkers	29	mental health care	22, 24–25, 58
carts, wheeled	13, 15	O rthotics	39
chair, getting out of	28	osteoporosis	18, 28
climbing, safety tips	13	P ain, joint or muscle	35, 45
clothing for exercise	35, 45	physical/occupational therapy	28
D ay care and long-term care	55	podiatrists	39, 45
dental care	55	R eaching safely	13
depression and stress	22, 24–25	rugs and mats	7, 11, 13
dizziness	20, 35	S afety, exercise	34, 35, 42, 45
doctors, talking to	18–19, 27, 35	senior centers	27
E ating well	12, 25, 26–27, 55	shoes	35, 38–39, 44
elder abuse	25, 56	smoke detectors	15
energy, strength training for	46–49	smoking (tobacco)	22–23, 55
exercise, benefits and guidelines	5, 34–35, 52	stairs, safety tips	10–11, 14
F alling, about	4–5, 20, 29, 30–31	strength training	5, 46–49
feet and ankles, strengthening	36–37, 42–43, 46	stretching	34, 41, 50–51
financial assistance	14, 56	T elephones	7, 15, 31
floor, getting up from	31	transportation	59
floors and walkways	7, 10, 11, 13, 14	U pper body and back exercises	40–41, 48–49, 50
food delivery services	27	V ision	15, 21, 57, 58
foot care	38–39, 45	volunteer, ways to	59
G rab bars and handrails	8, 9, 10, 11, 14	W alking	44–45
grabber tools	13	warm-up exercises	34, 40–41
H earing	15, 29	water, drinking enough	35, 45
heat stress	35	weight control	26–27
home safety	6–15, 57	weight training	40, 48–49
I ncontinence	19		

What's in the Guide

Page

1 Letter

2 Index

Part 1: Fall Prevention

4 You Can Prevent Falls

6 Home Safety

8 Bathroom Safety

10 Safety on Stairways

12 Kitchen Safety

14 Make Your Home Safer

16 Take a Wiggle Break:
Everyday Activities

18 Talk with Your Doctor

20 Medicine Safety

22 Alcohol and Tobacco

24 Depression and Stress

26 Eating Well

28 Doing Things Safely

30 If You Have a Fall

32 Next Steps

Part 2: Staying Active

34 Fit for Life

36 Take a Wiggle Break:
Feet and Ankles

38 Foot Care and Foot Wear

40 Warm-Ups

42 Balance Basics

44 Walking

46 Build Strength and Energy

48 Build Strength in Your Upper Body

50 Stretching

52 Next Steps

Resources

54 Area Agencies on Aging

55 Resources

60 Notes

64 Acknowledgments

You Can Prevent Falls

This program is about how to prevent falls and stay healthy and active. You will learn how things you may be doing already can help prevent falls. And you will learn new tips that will fit easily into your daily routine.



Keeping Active at Home

Tom and Maxine love gardening. And it helps them stay fit.

Fall Facts

- Falls are the most common cause of injury for older adults.
- One out of 3 people over age 65 fall at least once each year.
- Half of the people who break a hip do not recover fully.
- Almost half of the people who enter nursing homes do so because of a fall. After the fall, they cannot stay at home on their own.
- Most falls occur in people's own homes, as they do their regular daily activities.