

Falls are such common events for older people that it is easy to overlook their very serious consequences for the person and their considerable cost to the health care system. Falls seem such simple events that the solutions might also appear to be simple. Unfortunately this is not so. Impaired strength and balance contribute to most falls. Improving stability requires a specific, fully tested and safe exercise program and ongoing commitment by the older person.

## Research tested

- The Otago Exercise Program was developed and tested in four controlled trials by a research team at the University of Otago Medical School, New Zealand, led by Professor John Campbell.
- The program has been evaluated in both research and routine healthcare services in 1016 people aged 65 to 97 living at home.
- Overall the exercise program was effective in reducing by 35% both the number of falls and the number of injuries resulting from falls. It was equally effective in men and women.
- The program improved participants' strength and balance and maintained their confidence in carrying out everyday activities without falling.



**BASED ON THE INTERNATIONALLY SUCCESSFUL  
OTAGA FALLS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

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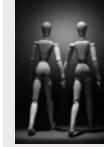
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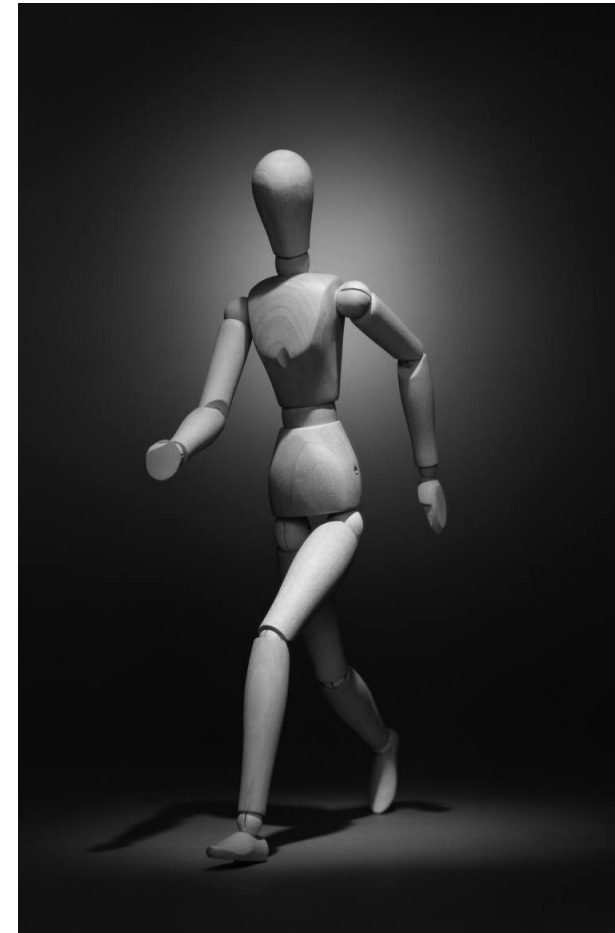
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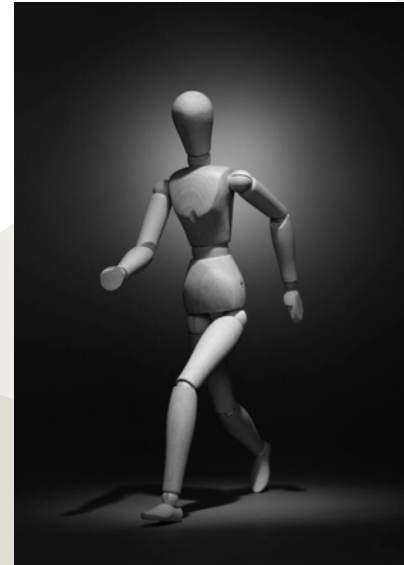
An Evidence-Based Program  
Approved by the  
NJ Dept of Health & Senior Services

## Good Steps Falls Prevention Program



- The program was designed specifically to prevent falls. It consists of a set of leg muscle strengthening and balance retraining exercises progressing in difficulty, and a walking plan.
- The exercises are individually prescribed and increase in difficulty during a series of five home visits by a Registered Nurse who is specially trained as an Otago instructor.
- Each person receives a booklet with instructions for each exercise prescribed.
- The exercises take about 30 minutes to complete. Participants are expected to exercise three times a week and go for a walk at least twice a week.
- To help them adhere to the program, participants record the days they complete the program and the instructor telephones them each month between home visits.

## Exercise to Prevent Falls.




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- 5 leg muscle strengthening exercises with up to 4 levels of difficulty

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- 12 balance retraining exercises with up to 4 levels of difficulty

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- Advice about walking

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- Comprehensive Assessment of falls risk

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The frequency and serious consequences of falls in older people led the Falls Prevention Research Group to develop and test programs specifically designed to prevent falls.

One successful intervention, the Otago Exercise Program, is a muscle strengthening and balance retraining program delivered at home by a trained instructor. The rationale behind it is that muscle strength, flexibility, balance and reaction time are the risk factors for falls considered the most readily modified.

Both leg muscle strength and balance must be maintained above the threshold level required to achieve stability. Even people in their 90s can improve their strength and balance sufficiently to avoid falls.

### OTHER BENEFITS

Other potential benefits of moderate physical activity are lower death rates and improved physical health, physical function, health-related quality of life, sleep, and sense of wellbeing

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The program consists of an initial assessment visit by a specially trained Registered Nurse.

Thereafter an RN will visit 4 to 5 times to individually prescribe and develop the flexibility exercises, the strength and balance exercises, and a walking plan.

Home exercise visits will take place weeks 1,2,4, and 8.

There will be follow up visits after 6 and 12 months.

Telephone follow up will occur during months 3,4, and 5.

The initial visit may take an hour and subsequent visits should be approximately 30 minutes.

### HOME CARE OPTIONS

HomeCare Options is a non-profit, Nationally Accredited, community Agency that has been serving the older citizens of Passaic County since 1954.

Its 300 member staff provides a variety of home and community based services designed to keep people independent and at home in their advanced years.

Call for pricing. If you are eligible, Good Steps services may be paid for by a grant from the Passaic County Department of Senior Services, Disability & Veteran's Affairs. For more information please visit us at:

[www.homecareoptions.com](http://www.homecareoptions.com)