

# Injury Prevention Newsletter

## Colorado Trauma Network



### Frequently Asked Questions:

As health educators, we hear a lot of questions about older adult falls. Here are a few we hear quite often!

**Q: Are older adult falls actually a problem?**

**A:** Yes! In the United States, one in four adults age 65 and older report falling each year. Coloradoans have an even higher fall rate.

**Q: When should I start thinking about fall prevention?**

**A:** The earlier the better! You can reduce your risk of osteoporosis, balance issues, weakness, or poor general health by participating in prevention early, before you have a problem.

**Q: Do fall prevention classes really work?**

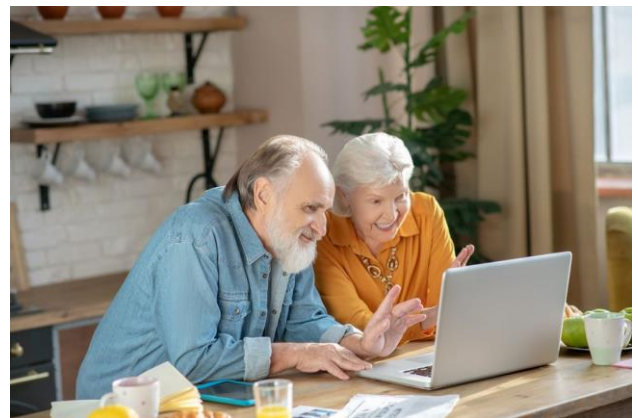
**A:** Absolutely! Research shows that fall prevention classes are shown to reduce the fear of falling and the risk of falling by increasing strength, flexibility, balance, and confidence.

**Q: I use an assistive device and/or oxygen; can I be in a fall prevention class?**

**A:** You can! There are fall prevention classes for every level of fitness. Call the instructor or organization to see if a class is right for you.

## Virtual Fall Prevention Classes

Many of the members of the Colorado Trauma Network have been working on virtual fall prevention courses to fit your needs. Please contact: Angela Kedroutek at 909-896-4911 [angelakedroutek@centura.org](mailto:angelakedroutek@centura.org) OR Laurie Lovedale at 720-848-5165 [laurie.lovedale@uchealth.org](mailto:laurie.lovedale@uchealth.org) for more information.



## Ask a Physical Therapist

**Question:** How can we keep masks from creating a visual barrier?

**Answer:** I would stress to try different masks until a well-fitting one is found. A good mask needs to have a solid seal at the nose bridge via a flexible wire and fit close to the face, rather than "bowing" out like many homemade ones do. I pull my mask up far enough that I can rest my glasses over it to further seal the air from coming up. I feel that a well-fitting mask could eliminate the need to look down so much.

*Glasses still fogging up?* Take dish soap and rub it onto both sides of each lens. Then rinse off. This will leave a transparent layer that will reduce temperature changes to your lenses that cause clouding.



# Staying Happy and Healthy



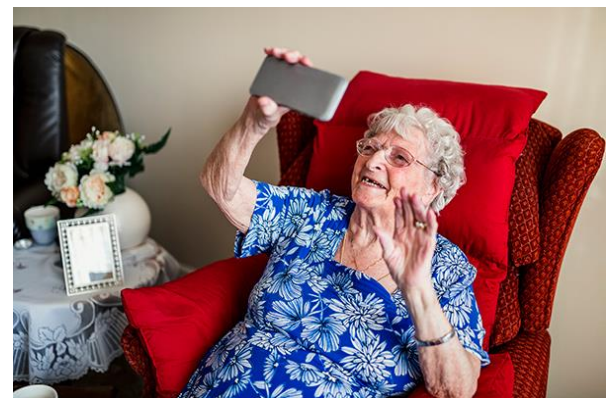
Winter brings many joyful holidays, but can also be a difficult season of feeling lonely or being less active. Finding ways to remain connected and active are important to stay safe from falling, but also to keep your mind and spirit healthy.

You may be thinking that the winter months prevent you from doing things you know and enjoy. There are many activities that you can do from the comfort of your home, virtually, or socially-distanced. Check out this list and try something different each week!



- ✓ **Try a new hobby!** Winter-friendly hobbies include painting, playing a musical instrument, singing, writing, baking, photography, scrapbooking, learning about your family history, reading.
- ✓ **Practice mindfulness!** Use meditation, prayer, or a journal and spending time focused on gratitude, happy memories, goals and dreams, and self-encouragement.
- ✓ **Spruce up your home for safety!** Take some time to clean and organize your space--declutter your rooms, remove tripping hazards like small floor objects and throw rugs, add nightlights in the bedroom and hallways.

- ✓ **Find new ways to connect!** Everyone enjoys a hand-written letter! Find a pen pal, a friend, a family member and write letters back and forth. Add pictures or small tokens to add some fun! If you have access to a smart phone or computer, schedule phone or video calls with those you love, or join a support or interest group. If you have something on the schedule, you will be more likely to stay connected!
- ✓ **Focus on your health!** Make those annual appointments with your doctors, talk about your health, your health goals, and fall prevention strategies. Your doctor is an important partner in your health!



## Not sure how to start the conversation?

Take the Falls Free Checkup and share the results with your doctor, family, or a trusted friend:

<https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-free-checkup/>

# Safely Navigating Winter

It does not matter how old you are, falling outside on the ice can cause devastating injuries. While staying at home might seem like the best answer, we must still leave the house every once in a while. If you do, take these precautions to stay on your feet and have a safe winter.

- ✓ **Be cautious and allow for extra time:** Slowing down is not easy. Leave early, take extra trips so your hands aren't full of items and pay attention.
- ✓ **Clear your walks:** Keep your walkway clear of snow and ice. Toss kitty litter or sand to provide better traction.
- ✓ **Ask for help:** One of the hardest things to do is to ask for help. Although it might hurt our pride, it can save us from a fall that could hurt way more.
- ✓ **Walk like a penguin:** Walking with a wider stance and taking smaller steps helps widen your center of gravity and decreases the amount of time you are on one foot.



- ✓ **Protect Your Bones:** Make sure you are getting enough calcium and Vitamin D. Food is the best way to get both of these in the winter when we cannot get Vitamin D through the sun. If you feel you are deficient in either, talk to your doctor before starting a supplement.
- ✓ **Use assistive devices:** Utilizing a cane or walking stick can help you stay balanced if you were to slip. YakTraks, or ice grippers for your shoes, can help increase traction when you are outdoors (do not wear them inside!). There is also an ice tip you can purchase for your cane.
- ✓ **Bring a cellphone:** Always have a cell phone on you with a charged battery. If you fall, do not wait to call. Laying on the ground for an extended period of time can cause additional damage to the body.