

[IMAGE]

# Too Many Seniors Are Falling (and Dying), But Here's How to Fix It

By Editorial Staff

Seniors have always been at a higher risk of falling than any other age demographic, with the exception of babies first learning how to stand and walk (and falling a lot in the process). With age, our strength, balance, coordination, flexibility, vision and awareness can all suffer to varying degrees, depending on the individual, making a fall more likely. Medication use and chronic health conditions can also play a role.

Unfortunately, with falls come the potential for broken bones and life-threatening injuries, which seniors are generally less-equipped to recover from physically. Even worse: Falls are increasing in the elderly population, and so are deaths attributable to falls. In fact, a recent 15-year analysis published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* underscored those disturbing trends, specifically in seniors ages 75 and older.

It's unclear why more seniors are dying from falls, but we do know ways seniors can help reduce their risk of suffering a fall. Here are some simple suggestions that apply not just to seniors, but the young and old looking to stay healthy and avoid the consequences of an unintentional fall:

*1. Live the Balanced Life:* Posture and balance are absolutely critical to minimizing fall risk. If you're slouched, slumped, unsteady or unbalanced, it doesn't take much for a misstep or miscalculation to turn into a full-fledged fall. Your chiropractor can evaluate your posture and overall balance; perform spinal adjustments to help eliminate any restrictions that may be impacting your posture or otherwise impacting your range of motion; and suggest simple exercises to get you standing tall, well-balanced and stable in no time.

*2. Strength Is Your Ally:* Starting sometime in our mid-30s, we start to lose muscle mass and function – up to 3-5 percent per decade if we're inactive. It's called *sarcopenia*, or age-related muscle loss. Even habitually active people will suffer some degree of sarcopenia, but consistent physical activity that maintains / builds muscle is the key to minimizing its impact.

woman sleeping - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Why does muscle matter when it comes to falls?

Easy. Stronger legs are less likely to betray you. Stronger arms are more likely to support you if you trip over something. More muscle increases the chances you'll survive a fall with minimal damage; after all, muscle can absorb fall impact much better than bone.

*3. Think Natural (Not Medicinal):* Ever heard the term *polypharmacy*? It's a big problem in the elderly population. Polypharmacy means concurrent use of multiple medications, and seniors are at much higher risk for polypharmacy, for several reasons. First, as we age, our risk of suffering chronic conditions goes up (especially if we haven't taken care of ourselves when we were younger). Second, elderly patients (more so even than other age groups) tend to do what their medical doctors tell them to do. And far too often, MDs tell patients to take medicine.

Lifelong wellness chiropractic care can reduce the risk of chronic health issues. And your chiropractor can advise you on natural solutions that not only may replace some of the drugs you're currently taking, but also may eliminate the need to take medication altogether.

*4. You Are What You Eat:* And what we're eating these days is a major problem. The Standard American Diet (SAD), overloaded with empty calories and low on natural nutrition, is a recipe for health disaster. A poor diet makes your body weak, not strong; overweight or obese; less likely to exercise; and more likely to develop one or more chronic conditions that require medication. In other words, what you eat influences every one of the factors discussed above. So eat a balanced, healthy diet to create a balanced, healthy you – and minimize your risk of falling in the process.

You can't beat Father Time, but you can make him take it easy on you. Whether you're 18 or 81 (or anywhere in between), take these tips to heart as part of a healthy living strategy that will reduce fall risk and increase your odds of living a functional, pain-free life well into your golden years. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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