

[IMAGE]

Fall Prevention Can Be Fun

By Editorial Staff

If we asked you to make a list of things you want to avoid as you grow old, cognitive decline, cancer, financial distress, and a few other health and life issues would probably top the list. Avoid falling? If it makes the average person's list at all, it's likely down near the bottom. That's a big mistake, because when you're old, a fall can be debilitating ... or even deadly.

According to the National Council on Aging, "One in four Americans aged 65+ falls each year. Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults."

If you haven't already added "avoid a fall" to your list, perhaps near the top, keep reading, because not only is fall prevention essential, but it can also be fun. Research suggests dance-based mind-motor activities can reduce seniors' fall risk. Among healthy older adults (ages 65 and older), a significant reduction in fall risk and fall rate (37 percent and 31 percent, respectively) was noted in seniors who participated in the activities compared to seniors who didn't. Published in *JAMA Network Open*, researchers reviewed and analyzed 29 previously conducted randomized, clinical trials in arriving at their conclusion.

That's great, you're thinking, but what the heck are dance-based mind-motor activities? The researchers provide a definition: "coordinated upright mind-motor movements that emphasize dynamic balance, structured through music or an inner rhythm (e.g., breathing) and distinctive instructions or choreography, and that involve social interaction."

Sounds like dancing to us! Dance is fun, improves strength and balance, provides for social interaction, and engages the mind and body simultaneously – the perfect activity to maximize our health and wellness as we age.

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