



Have a Nice Trip? See You Next Fall!

Nicole A. Whitehead, D.C., C.A.C.C.P.

It's autumn again, and soon leaves will be falling. Unfortunately, a friend of mine was recently falling, too – right down a flight of stairs. Thankfully she was ok, but I was reminded of how falls seriously injure people everyday. Many older adults are particularly at risk. In fact, according to the Center for Control and Prevention:

- Every 18 seconds in the U.S. an older adult is treated in emergency room for a fall.
- Every 35 seconds in the U.S. someone dies as a result of injuries from a fall.
- More than 90% of hip fractures in older adults are from falls.
- One in five hip fracture patients die within one year of the injury.

We can't *always* prevent falls, but there are certain precautions that we can take from the inside out to make ourselves less prone to falls. Older adults fall more often than the general population because many older adults lose their posture, balance, flexibility, range of motion, reflexes, and strength over time as they become less active.

Very few people lose these skills overnight. We lose them because we stop using them. If we keep challenging our bodies daily in a safe and controlled way, then our muscles and reflexes are more prepared to handle it if we begin to slip. To improve balance, try some of these:

- -Sit on an inflatable gym ball at the desk instead of a chair.
- -Stand on one leg while you brush your teeth or cook.
- -Walk or run on uneven surfaces like grass fields, gravel paths or dirt trails.
- -Practice yoga
- -Use free weights instead of weight machines.
- -Get chiropractic adjustments so your left and right extremities move equally.
- -For cardio: walk, run, dance, do aerobics, play team sports, etc. rather than use recumbent bikes, stair masters, and elliptical machines which give you lots of balance assistance.
- -See your doctor if you have inner ear problems, dizziness, vertigo, etc.

Remember, we lose our strength, balance, and flexibility a little bit at a time. We regain it the same way. If you can only stand on one foot for 2 seconds at a time, do it multiple times, everyday. Eventually you will be able to do it for a minute, or several minutes.

Prevention is always better than cure. If you keep your agility up with every year that goes by, it will minimize your chance of injury from falls. After all, falling is for leaves!

Dr. Whitehead is a family chiropractor in Mooresville. Her office, Advanced Spinal Fitness, provides comprehensive chiropractic wellness care for the whole family. Find out more at www.advancedspinalfitness.net