



Nine Steps To Stay On Your Feet®

Be Active

Manage Your Medicines

Manage Your Health

Improve Your Balance

Walk Tall

Foot Care and Safe
Footwear

Regularly Check Your
Eyesight

Eat Well For Life

Identify, Remove and
Report Hazards



this issue...

- Step 4: Improve Your Balance
- The Falls Linkage Independence Program (FLIP)
- Up Off the Floor Posters
 - Diary Dates

Step 4: Improve Your Balance

Balance, or 'postural stability', is the ability to control and maintain the body's position as it moves. It is the ability to stand, walk, climb stairs, play sport or dance, without falling over.

Balance sensors are found in many places in our bodies – the inner ear, the eyes and in the joints and muscles. Any disruption to these organs and pathways can upset a persons balance.

Poor balance or walking style abnormalities are a common cause of falls in older people.

Factors that may affect balance

- Loss of muscle strength
- Reduced joint movement and stability
- Poor vision
- Side-effects of some medicines
- Ear problems (including wax build up)
- Sudden movements, eg. rising quickly from a sitting or kneeling position
- The effect of a hip or knee replacement in the short term

Suggestions for improving balance

- Physical activity that helps strength, balance and flexibility eg. home or group exercise programs, Living Longer Living Stronger™ and Tai Chi
- Managing medicines – National Prescribing Service has tools available for your clients: <http://www.nps.org.au>
- Walking aids – should be fitted to the correct height and size by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist

Resources are available on improving balance such as the 'Nine Steps To Stay On Your Feet®' Booklet or 'Home Safety Checklist' – these may be useful for you to give to your clients. Please contact us for more information.

ISSUE

04

JULY
2010

The Falls Linkage Independence Program (FLIP)

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The Falls Linkage Independence Program (FLIP) is an Australian Better Health Initiative funded pilot program that has been running since September 2008. The program involves visiting the person who has been referred due to previous falls or is at risk of falling. A comprehensive assessment is completed including a look at the person's home environment, their medications, feet, eyes, balance, strength and other things like memory and issues with fear of falling. The person is then seen again and given a number of recommendations on how they can reduce their risk of falling. The main intervention is a home based balance and strength program which is modelled on the Otago Exercise Program from New Zealand (<http://www.acc.co.nz/otagoexerciseprogramme>). A total of 4-5 home exercise visits are completed.

Below are some case studies based on some of our success stories:

Case Study #1

Mr D is an 81 year old gentleman who lives with his wife in a retirement village. He suffers with Parkinson's disease. He was referred to FLIP through Swan District Hospital due to ongoing falls and poor balance.

On assessment: Mr D required assistance with all bed transfers, showering and dressing. He was falling approximately 4-5 times each week and had been doing so for over 12 months. He had a slow shuffling gait - walking with a 4 wheeled walker. The Timed Up and Go (TUG) test took 31 secs and he could only do the Near tandem stand test for 2 secs. He was unable to perform the Chair stand and Alternate step tests.

Intervention: The Otago strength and balance program with 5 follow-up exercise visits.

At 6 month reassessment: Mr D was still completing his exercise program 3-4 times per week. He had only had 2 falls since the initial assessment and was now able to get himself out of bed independently. TUG test - 41 secs. Near tandem stand had improved to 6 secs. He was now able to perform the Chair stand test - 14 secs, and Alternate step test - 18.74 secs.



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Case Study #2

Mr W is a 78 year old gentleman who lives with his wife in their own home. He was referred to FLIP through Royal Perth Hospital due to falls and poor balance.

On assessment: Mr W had sustained 3 falls in the previous 3 months with some minor bruises. He had recently been in hospital due to pneumonia and had lost a significant amount of weight. He was walking with a walking stick. The TUG test took 30 secs. He was unable to perform any of the other tests.

Intervention: Home hazard reduction education and the Otago strength and balance program with 4 follow-up visits.

At 12 month reassessment: Mr W was walking with no aids. The TUG test took only 11 secs. Near tandem stand test: 4 secs. The Chair stand test took only 10 secs and Alternate step test 8 secs. He had not had any further falls.

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### Case Study #3

Mrs P is an 80 year old lady living with her daughter. Her daughter had heard about the FLIP program and decided to refer her mother as she had had a number of falls.

**On assessment:** Mrs P reported 3 falls in the last 12 months due to slips and trips. She had sustained a pelvic fracture from one of these falls. She was walking with a wheeled Zimmer frame. TUG test took 45 secs. Unable to complete any of the other tests.

**Intervention:** Suggested discussing calcium supplements with her GP. Referral made to Occupational Therapy for a home environment review. The Otago balance and strength program was prescribed with 5 follow-up visits.

**At 12 month reassessment:** Mrs P was walking with a walking stick. Her TUG test had reduced to 25 secs and she was now able to do the Chair stand test in 15 secs. She had sustained only one further fall when trying to mop the bathroom floor. She had taken up recommendation of calcium supplements under the guidance of her GP. The Occupational Therapist had put in place required rails.

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Do you like what you see?

What are your thoughts on this edition of the e-Bulletin?

Please fill out this quick and easy 1-minute [Survey](#)

Check out these websites

Click on the links:

[WA Health Networks](#)

[Stay On Your Feet WA® Website](#)

[ICCWA Website](#)

[Online Publication Order System](#)

[Falls Prevention Model of Care for the Older Person](#)

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Case Study #3

Mr B is a 68 year old gentleman who lives with his wife. He was referred to FLIP through Swan District Hospital due to frequent falls.

On assessment: His wife is his fulltime carer as Mr B suffers with dementia. She reports that he loses his balance frequently and always falls over backwards. He is unable to get up off the ground without her help. He was walking with no walking aids. TUG test took 28 secs. Chair stand test – 60 secs. He was unable to complete any of the balance tests.

Intervention: The Otago balance and strength program with 5 follow-up visits.
Recommended – podiatry, home hazard reduction strategies and an optometry review.

At 12 month reassessment: Mr B had continued to complete his exercise program diligently and followed up on all the recommendations. He had only sustained one further fall when he slipped on a smooth floor. He was able to get himself up off the floor without the assistance of his wife. TUG test reduced to 16 secs. Chair stand test – 34 secs. Near tandem stand – 5 secs and Alternate step test 25 secs.

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Four new Falls Specialist positions will be coming shortly which will cover a much greater area than FLIP currently does. Please continue to send us your referrals in preparation for the new positions. If you are in the Department of Health you can do this via the intranet at <http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/flip> (See Online Referral Form link on the left), or if you are in the community via a referral form - just email [flip@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:flip@health.wa.gov.au) for a copy.

### Have Your Say...

To write a response or comment about this article, please email:

[Stay On Your Feet WA®](mailto:StayOnYourFeetWA@health.wa.gov.au)

## New “Up Off the Floor” Posters

The Stay On Your Feet WA® Falls Prevention Resource Information Centre has been established by the Injury Control Council of WA through funding provided by the Department of Health WA. The Centre provides a single point of access for information and tools on falls prevention for both consumers and health professionals.

The Centre has recently developed a poster detailing what to do should an older person have a fall at home. The double sided poster contains pictures showing how to get up off the floor as well as a simple falls action plan.

Please call The Centre on (08) 9420 7212 or email [soyfw@iccwa.org.au](mailto:soyfw@iccwa.org.au) if you would like more information on the resources available as well as how to obtain copies of the poster.



## Have an Event Coming Up?

To include your event, contact:

[Stay On Your Feet WA<sup>®</sup>](#)

## ICCWA Contact Details

City West Lotteries House  
2 Delhi Street  
West Perth 6005







Telephone: (08) 9420 7212  
Fax: (08) 9486 7955

Email:

[ICCWA](#)

[Stay On Your Feet WA<sup>®</sup>](#)

## Diary Dates

| July      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29        | <b>ICCWA Community Safety Awards</b><br>Injury Control Council of WA<br><b>Time:</b> 3pm-5pm<br><b>Venue:</b> Burswood On Swan<br><a href="http://www.iccwa.org.au">http://www.iccwa.org.au</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
| September |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
| 12-18     | <b>Stay On Your Feet<sup>®</sup> Week</b><br><br><b>Stay On Your Feet<sup>®</sup> Week Launch</b><br><b>Time:</b> 2pm-5pm<br><b>Venue:</b> Brighton Community Centre<br><a href="http://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au">http://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au</a>                                                                                                                                                                                |    |
| 30        | <b>Staying Active, Staying Safe - New Ways Forward for Injury Prevention in the 21st Century:</b><br>A satellite meeting of the PHAA 40th Annual Conference<br><b>Time:</b> 9am - 5pm<br><b>Venue:</b> Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide<br><b>Cost:</b> \$50 for PHAA, AIPN members, \$80 for non-members<br><a href="http://www.phaa.net.au/40thPHAAAnnualConference.php">http://www.phaa.net.au/40thPHAAAnnualConference.php</a> |    |
| October   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
| 1         | <b>Community Safety Month Launch – Breakfast of Champions</b><br>Injury Control Council of WA<br><a href="http://www.iccwa.org.au">http://www.iccwa.org.au</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |
| 25-27     | <b>"Society, Regulators and Health Providers: a clash of expectations?"</b><br>The National Forum on Safety and Quality in Health Care<br>National Convention Centre Canberra, ACT<br><a href="http://sapmea.asn.au/conventions/forumsqhc2010/downloads/Forum_SQHC_2010_Program.pdf">http://sapmea.asn.au/conventions/forumsqhc2010/downloads/Forum_SQHC_2010_Program.pdf</a>                                                          |  |
| November  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
| 3         | <b>Have A Go Day</b><br>Seniors Recreation Council of WA Inc.<br><b>Time:</b> 8.30am – 3pm<br><b>Contact:</b> Dawn Yates on 9492 9773                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| 21-23     | <b>4th Australian &amp; New Zealand Falls Prevention Society Conference</b><br>Submissions close 30 June 2010<br>Notification of acceptance by 31 August 2010<br><a href="http://www.otago.ac.nz/fallsconference/index.html">http://www.otago.ac.nz/fallsconference/index.html</a>                                                                                                                                                     |  |

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