

**CONTACT NUMBERS:**

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our rehab staff for assistance.



# Labrador - Grenfell Health

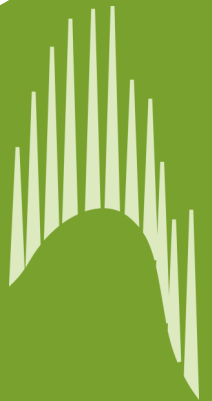
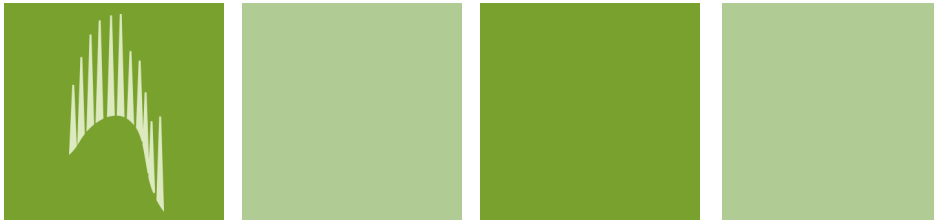
Labrador West 1-709-285-8345  
Goose Bay 1-709-897-2142  
St. Anthony 1-709-454-0137

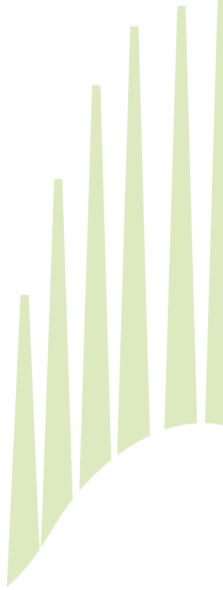
## STAYING SAFE AT HOME: A GUIDE TO INJURY PREVENTION



Labrador - Grenfell  
Health

[www.lghealth.ca](http://www.lghealth.ca)





#### References:

- Exercise images retrieved from [www.physiotec.ca](http://www.physiotec.ca)
- Get Up and Go: A Guide to Staying Steady. Saga, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and Public Health England.
- The Safe Living Guide: A Guide to Home Safety for Seniors. (2015). Public Health Agency of Canada.
- [Findingbalancealberta.ca](http://Findingbalancealberta.ca)
- Eastern Heath—101 Ways to Get Active in Newfoundland and Labrador
- Preventing Falls: A Guide to Implementing Effective Community-Based Fall Prevention Programs. (2015). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

**NOTES:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Injury Prevention .....2

Risk Factors .....2

Checklist.....3

Making Your Home Safe .....4

How to Get Up From Fall .....6

Physical Activity .....8

Exercises .....10

Notes .....12

References .....13

For most people, maintaining their independence and being able to stay in their own home as they age is very important. There are some things you can do to help stay safely in your own home for as long as possible. This includes decreasing your risk for falls and injuries, taking your prescribed medications correctly, maintaining a healthy diet and seeking help when you need it.

## INJURY PREVENTION

Falls are leading cause of injury among Canadians aged 65+. Falls are not an inevitable part of aging– they can be prevented.

Declining vision, hearing, sense of touch or smell and bone density are all normal parts of the aging process. But, these can also increase your risk for injury and falls. Here's how:

- Vision – eyes take longer to adjust between dark and light and vice versa, are more sensitive to glare and there is a decline in depth perception.
- Touch, smell and hearing – sensitivity to heat, pain and pressure decreases. This impacts detecting changes in ground and floor surfaces. Hearing loss can decrease balance.
- Bone density – osteoporosis is worsened by lack of exercise and nutrition. Bone loss can lead to decreased mobility and fractures.
- Balance and gait – balance is complex and involves eyes, inner ear, muscle strength and joint flexibility. Speed of walking, the height your heels are lifted off the floor, and stride length can change with age.

## RISK FACTORS

The best way to stay safe in your own home while maintaining your independence is to prevent injury before it happens. The following checklist contains things that increase your risk for injury. If you are able to check off any of these items, they can help identify areas you need to work on fixing.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/lifestyles/seniors-aging-preventing-falls-around-your-home.html>
- <https://www.fallpreventionmonth.ca/adults>
- <https://www.participation.com/en-ca>
- <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/seniors-aines/publications/public/injury-blessure/safelive-securite/pdfs/safelive-securite-eng.pdf>
- <https://findingbalancealberta.ca/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/publications/publications-general-public/you-prevent-falls.html>
- <https://balanceanddizziness.org/help-yourself/fall-prevention/>

## LIFELINE

<https://www.lifeline.ca/en/>

Different options to meet your needs. Can use with armband or neck pendant.

Automatic fall detection.

Wanderguard options.

Help at the push of a button 24/7.

Different pricing levels.

Call 1-866-605-8009 for more information.



Have you/ do you...

- Had a fall in the past
- Not had a medicine review in past 12 months
- Use the washroom often during the night
- Have limited daily activity (less than 30 minutes of moderate activity per day)
- Sometimes feel weak, dizzy or lightheaded when standing or walking
- Have an alcohol intake more than the recommended limit (2-3 units for women, 3-4 units for men per day)
- Don't get out often because you are worried about tripping or feel unsteady
- Had a fall and felt too embarrassed to tell anyone
- Often get your feet tangled in things that could trip you, including pets and grandchildren
- Struggle to maintain balance
- Wear bi-focals or vari-focals
- Have not had an eye test in the past 12 months
- Have clutter around your house
- Drink enough liquids (1.6 L for women and 2L for men)
- Have slippers that are worn
- Have difficulty taking care of your feet
- Have a long term condition such as Parkinson's, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, COPD, diabetes or dementia
- Try to save electricity by turning off lights
- Have to rush to the washroom regularly

## MAKING YOUR HOME SAFE

In order to ensure your independence and to stay in your home longer, it is necessary to take some steps to safe proofing your home. The following list details areas that you can look at to make your home safer.

### Bathroom

- Ensure you have non-slip surfaces in the tub/shower
- Install grab bars by the toilet and bath to help you sit/stand. Make sure they are well-anchored.
- Use a raised toilet seat, and a bath seat in the shower, if you need them.
- Wipe up moisture or spills immediately.



*Bathrooms and stairs  
are the most common  
areas for falls.*

### Lighting

- 60 year old eyes need 3x more light than 20 year old eyes
- Tuck away lamp cords
- Consider installing two-way switches in hallways and stairs
- Always use a bedside light when getting up during the night
- Never walk around in the dark

### Living area

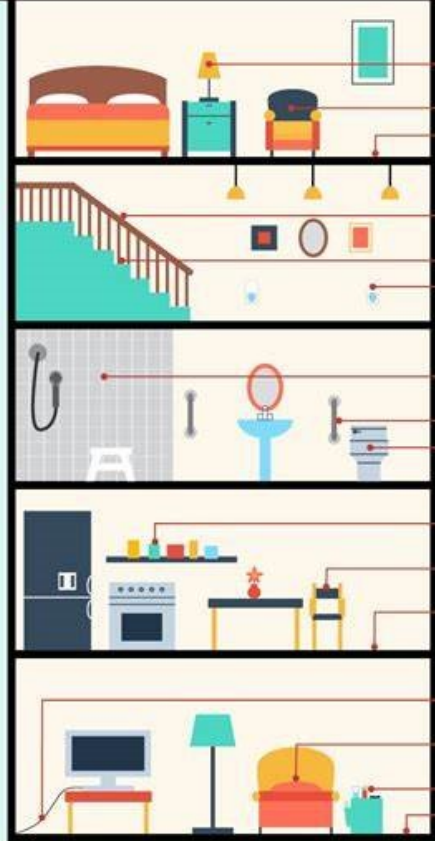
- Use non-slip rugs or remove existing rugs
- Clear away clutter especially on landings and in doorways
- Never store items on the stairs
- Be careful to not trip over pets





# Reduce your risk of falling at home

A fall  
prevention  
checklist,  
room by room



## BEDROOM

- Keep a light—a lamp, light switch or night-light—near your bed.
- Sit down to get dressed.
- Keep loose items off the floor.

## STAIRS AND HALLWAYS

- Add handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Install anti-slip strips on each stair.
- Install night-lights along the route from the bedroom to the bathroom.

## BATHROOM

- Use a shower chair and handheld shower head while bathing.
- Install grab bars near toilet and shower.
- Put a riser seat on the toilet.

## KITCHEN

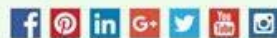
- Move things so they're within easy reach.
- Use dining chairs that have armrests and no wheels.
- Don't clean with a high-gloss wax floor protector.

## LIVING ROOM

- Move cords and other objects out of walkways.
- Use a cushion or a seat riser if your chair is too low to easily stand from.
- Keep frequently used items within reach.
- Remove throw rugs.



To learn more about staying  
healthy in your home, visit  
[good-sam.com](http://good-sam.com)



Sources: <https://nhs.uk/health/guidance/falls/home-safety-01.html>, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-prevention/art-20047308?pg=2>

## Kitchen

- Rearrange cupboards to ensure accessibility to regularly used items
- De-clutter your counter tops
- Clean up spills right away
- Put regularly used items within easy reach
- Store heavier items in lower or counter level cupboards

## General House Ideas

- Reduce Clutter! Get rid of loose wires, cords, mats and other obstacles
- Consider using a cordless phone so you don't have to rush to get to the phone
- Have good lighting throughout the house and install night lights
- Move slowly out of your bed or chair
- Use a stable step stool with a safety rail for reaching higher places
- Ensure stairs are well lit and have sturdy hand rails
- Ask for help if needed!

## Outside the house

- Keep paths free and in good repair
- Ensure entrances are well lit
- Install rails on stairs
- Watch for cracked pavement and sidewalks, holes or rocks that can cause trips and changes in the ground's slope
- Watch for lips on shop entrances, especially when stepping out on a bright day

No matter how cautious you are, sometimes you may still have a fall. If this happens to you, don't panic. You can calmly get yourself up from the floor if there is no one around to help. Just follow these steps:

**1** Turn onto your back



**2** Roll onto your side



**3** Push onto your hands



**4** Prop with both arms behind



**5** Use a cushion (or other low sturdy object) as a low seat



**6** Lift bottom back onto cushion



**Sit to Stand**

Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight. Slowly stand from the chair. Then, slowly sit back down. Repeat 10 times.



**Heel to Toe Walking**

Stand next to your kitchen countertop. Slowly walk the length of the counter, emphasizing your heel hitting the floor first as you step. Turn and repeat in opposite direction. Try to complete 10 steps in each direction.



For more exercises, visit: <https://www.closingthegap.ca/blog/10-fall-prevention-exercises-seniors-can-do-while-sitting-in-a-chair/>



### Heel Raises

Stand next to your kitchen table or countertop. Slowly raise your heels until you are standing on your toes. Maintain this position for 3 seconds. Lower your heels to the floor and repeat 10 times.



### Tandem Stance

Stand with one foot directly in front of the other, with your toes pointing forward. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Repeat but switch foot position.



### One Leg Stand

Stand next to your kitchen table or countertop for support as needed. Slowly lift one foot from the floor. Hold 10 seconds. Return to start and repeat with other leg.



**7** Push as far back as possible



**8** Lift bottom back onto chair



Visit [www.stayonyourfeet.com.au](http://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au)

If no cushion or low chair is available, you can gently use your arms to ease yourself up onto another chair, the toilet, step or other sturdy surface. Otherwise, position yourself comfortably until help arrives. If you have hurt yourself and are unable to move, position yourself as comfortably as possible until help arrives.

If living alone, a falls detection device may be beneficial to ensure safety. If you have any questions about these devices, feel free to reach out to an Occupational Therapist at your closest hospital. If not, ensure you have a charged cordless phone or cell phone that you can keep with you when going about your house in case you need to call someone for help.

## MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE WITH PHYSIOTHERAPY

Although we can't stop the process of getting older, we can counteract some effects with a few gentle tweaks to our lifestyle.

We lose 30% of our muscle mass between the ages of 50 and 70. Our bones can become brittle as well (osteoporosis). Balance, muscle strengthening and joint stabilization are very important. To help with this, add weight bearing exercises to your daily routine and consider taking vitamin D as prescribed by your doctor.

Benefits of physical activity include:

- Weight control
- Combat health conditions (such as diabetes, cholesterol, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, prevent stroke and prevent falls)
- Improve mood
- Increase energy
- Improve sleep
- Fun and social

### **STAYING FIT**

As physical activity is so important, a good way to stay fit is to incorporate general fitness into your day to day life. Walk to a neighbor's house instead of calling them, take the stairs instead of the elevator, stand to fold clothes, or plant a garden or flowers.

Walking is a fun and enjoyable way to stay fit. Go for short walks daily or at least every other day as weather permits. Start as slowly as you need. Begin by only walking a couple houses from your house and add a house each day. Having a walking buddy makes the walk even more enjoyable and relaxing.

It is important to find fun and enjoyable ways to stay active. If you enjoy an activity, you are more likely to continue doing it. Here is a list to get you started but feel free to add your own activities:

- Walk the dog around the block
- Play tag or another game with the grandkids
- Go fishing in season
- Go berry picking
- Park your car as far as possible from where you are going and walk the rest of the way

- Ride a bike
- Do more housework
- Do some gardening
- Take the stairs
- Dance
- Go for a hike
- Stand more and sit less
- Take time to stretch every day
- Use small weights for strength
- Mow the lawn
- Go beachcombing
- Play a game of charades with family and/or friends
- Play lawn darts or horseshoes
- Play darts

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Keeping your lower body strong is key in helping prevent falls. If you have good lower body strength, you will have better balance and endurance to help with your daily activities.

The exercises on the following pages are a good place to start in helping increase your lower body strength and maintain your independence. Your physiotherapist can modify them to meet your needs.

**\*As with all exercise programs, be sure to check with your doctor to ensure it is safe for you to participate in the program.\***