

# 6 Things You Can Do to Reduce Your Fall Risk

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[According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), falls are the leading cause of injury and deaths for older adults in America. This is supported by the sobering statistic that an older adult takes a fall approximately every second of every day. That's why it should come as no surprise that many seniors list a fear of falling as among their key health concerns.

However, while the risk of falling is real and should be taken seriously as you age, there are things you can do to keep living your life without feeling sidelined. In fact, Kendal at Lexington Director of Rehab, Dr. Savleen Juneja encourages every senior to embrace exercise as a means to improving balance and making your legs stronger. "Exercise makes you feel better and gives you more confidence," she says. Taking proactive steps to reduce your fall risk can help keep you on your feet — both literally and figuratively!

Here are **six things you can start doing today to reduce your fall risk:**

## **De-clutter**

Often, we don't notice the tripping hazards in our own home until it's too late. Take inventory of your space and remove any clutter that could pose a danger. For instance, rather than keeping loose shoes by the door, invest in a shoe rack to safely contain your footwear.

## **Dress for success**

Clothing that fits too loose or drags the ground can quickly become dangerous if you aren't paying attention. Avoid this risk entirely by dressing in well-fitted clothing that doesn't impair your ability to move freely.

## **Survey your living space for safety tweaks**

Do you have a hallway that could use more lighting? Would your shower be easier to get in and out of with a grab bar installed? Often, small and simple upgrades can dramatically increase the safety of your space and provide some much-needed security. The occupational therapy department at Kendal at Lexington can even help you identify problem areas through a home safety evaluation. "We fill out a home safety evaluation where we look at everything," Dr. Juneja says. "Your kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms, laundry room and the entry and exit of the house."

### **Work on your balance**

Believe it or not, your balance is something that can actually be improved with practice. Certain exercises, like tai chi and yoga, both offered at Kendal at Lexington, are good for both developing muscle memory and increasing stability. In fact, [a recent study](#) tied regular tai chi practice to a 20 percent lower risk of falling once and a 31 percent drop in the overall number of falls. Dr. Juneja cautions that by the time older adults begin feeling unsteady on their feet, they've already started to lose strength. "That means you need a balance retraining program. You can go to the doctor to get a referral for our physical therapy program," she says.

### **Wear shoes or firm slippers**

As comfortable as it might be to hang around your living space in your socks, keeping shoes on your feet — or rubber-soled slippers, at the very least — will provide a firmer walking surface and reduce your chances of slipping on hardwood or tile floors.

### **Talk to your doctor about your medication**

Some medications can affect your balance and equilibrium. "Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medications you take, even over the counter medications," Dr. Juneja says. "There are some medications that can make you sleepy or drowsy." Talk to your doctor about this potential side effect and how you can better manage it. It might be as simple as taking the time to stand up a little slower, or there might be an alternative medication you could take if your risk of falling is already high.

Dr. Juneja asserts that even older adults struggling with arthritis shouldn't need to stop moving. "Just because you have arthritis doesn't mean you can't age actively," she says. "Don't miss out on your chance to live life to the fullest." With these few precautions and practices, you can reduce your risk of falling and stay healthier on your feet — without having to sacrifice your independence.

Have you recently suffered a fall and are trying to recover? [Get in touch](#) to learn more about therapy for falls at Kendal at Lexington.

