

Better Balance Through Ballroom: Using Exercise, Yoga and Dance to Reduce Your Risk of a Fall

Lori A Newell

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Each year one out of every three individuals over age 65 will fall. Falls can lead to broken bones, head injuries and a loss of independence. In some cases a fall may lead to losing one's home and having to move to a nursing home. However, falls are not a normal part of aging and most are not accidents. Falls are not random, uncontrollable acts of fate, but rather occur in predictable patterns, with recognizable risk factors and among identifiable populations. A fall is not only a predictable event but a preventable one. To fully reduce the risk of a fall it is important to develop a comprehensive program that addresses all risk factors. This includes education in how changes in vision, changes to the home environment, the use of assistive devises, clothing choices, medication usage and a fear of falling can all increase a person's risk. Learning about solutions to address the above risk factors can provide a sense of control over one's situation and help lessen the risk of a fall and serious injury. Education on reducing risk factors must be combined with a comprehensive exercise program that addresses balance, strength, flexibility and overall endurance. This requires a program that includes a variety of exercises and movements. Ballroom dancing combined with gentle yoga poses and strengthening exercises for the core and legs can provide such a workout. Dancing is more fun and uplifting than traditional exercise and it can address balance issues in a very unique way. Dancing helps to improve body awareness and provides techniques that can help students learn to both recognize when they are at risk for a fall and how to stop themselves from falling. The Better Balance Through Ballroom Program provides a place to start. Basic ballroom steps are illustrated along with strengthening exercises and yoga stretches. This book also includes several chapters that outline the most common fall risk factors and what steps can be taken to lower the risk. This book is perfect for those who have fallen or have a fear of falling and can complement any existing fall prevention program currently being followed.



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