Fall Prevention and Exercise Program

Including easy exercises for maintaining strength, balance and mobility
Table of Contents

Part 1  Introduction .................................................. 1
  Acknowledgements .............................................. 1
  Falls are a serious problem ................................... 2
  How to use the video and handbook ....................... 2
  Using the handbook ............................................. 2
  Using the video .................................................. 3

Part 2  Preventing Falls .............................................. 4
  Personal Risks ..................................................... 4
  Situational Risks (Indoor) .................................... 6
  Situational Risks (Outdoor) ................................... 7
  Behaviours which Increase Risk ............................. 8
  Attitudes and Beliefs .......................................... 9
  Three Steps to Prevent Falls ................................ 11

Part 3  The Exercise Program ....................................... 12
  Before You Begin ................................................ 12
  Disclaimer ......................................................... 12
  Why Exercise ...................................................... 12
  Exercise Safety .................................................... 12
  A Balanced Exercise Program ............................... 14
  A Word About Good Posture .................................. 15
  Warm-up Exercises (all levels) ............................. 17
  Beginner Level Exercises (stretches) ..................... 18
  Beginner Level Exercises (strength) ...................... 20
  Intermediate Level Exercises (stretches) ............... 24
  Intermediate Level Exercises (strength) ................. 26
  Advanced Level Exercises (stretches) .................... 34
  Advanced Level Exercises (strength) ..................... 37

Appendices ............................................................. 46
  1. Using Weights in your Exercises ..................... 46
     Safety Considerations When Using Weights .......... 46
     Purchasing Weights and Bands ......................... 47
     Home-made Weights ......................................... 47
  2. Using Towels in your Exercises ..................... 48
  3. Safety Checklist “Fall-Proofing” Your Home .... 49
  4. To order more copies of Positive Steps .......... 52
Acknowledgements

Positive Steps was developed through a partnership between the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region and the Dr. Paul Schwann Applied Health and Research Centre, University of Regina.

Generous support was provided by the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, the Dr Paul Schwann Applied Health and Research Centre, and Farm Credit Corporation.

Thanks also to the following people who helped to make this project possible:

- Don Heenan and Scott Wilson of Medical Media Services, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region for production of the video and for their infinite patience

- the exercise leaders, C.M., Sandy, Jean, Yvette and Dorothy for the donation of their time and exercise talents. Also thanks to Yvonne for her assistance with the segment on posture, and to Shirley for posing for the photos used in this handbook.

- Peggy Bacon, physiotherapist, Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, for reviewing the exercises

- Jacquie Stewart of REMAX for securing the filming locations

- the home owners who generously allowed us into their homes for filming

- Ken Jefferson and the Red Cross Link to Health Program for use of the music heard throughout the video
Falls are a serious problem

Between 1992 and 1997 there were 17,801 fall-related hospitalizations among Saskatchewan seniors. Almost half of these falls occurred in the home. The injuries resulting from falls can be serious and may lead to loss of confidence, disability, loss of independence or even death. Falls accounted for 56% of accidental deaths in Canada in 1989, and falls are a contributing factor in 40% of nursing home admissions. (Source: Saskatchewan Health, 1999)

It has been estimated that up to 80% of falls can be prevented. Simple changes in and around the home, as well as changes to the way we do our day to day activities can greatly reduce our risk of falling. In addition, regular exercise will keep muscles strong, improving balance, co-ordination and mobility, while reducing the risk of serious injury if a fall does occur.

How to use the video and handbook

The Positive Steps program consists of a handbook and an accompanying video. The Positive Steps program allows you to look at your fall risk and gives you the tools you need to lower that risk. The handbook can be used without the video if you do not have a television or a VCR. You will, however, find it easier to do the exercises if you are able to follow along with the video. The exercises found in this handbook, and on the video can be done alone, in your own home. The video can also be used for small groups who wish to exercise together, whether it is in a home, a seniors’ centre or a community hall.

Using the Handbook

The first part of the handbook looks at some common causes of falls and gives you ideas on how to eliminate or minimize your risks. The second part of the handbook deals with the exercise program. It guides you through a series of warm-up exercises, reviews the flexibility and strength exercises shown on the video and reviews fitness and safety information.

Using the Video
Before using the video we recommend that you review all the information in the handbook. To use the video, begin at the first or beginner level. If you are already active you may find these exercises quite easy but it is suggested that you begin here anyway. Once you can do the suggested number of each exercise (usually 15 repetitions) without becoming overly tired, it is time to move on to the next level. There are three levels in all, each marked by a different colored band at the bottom of the television screen. The beginner level is marked with a green bar, the intermediate level is marked with an orange bar and the advanced level is marked with a blue bar. Once you find the appropriate section on your video, you will be asked to stop the tape and to do the warm-up exercises found in this handbook. Once you have completed the warm-up exercises, press the play button on your VCR and continue along with the exercises on the video.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of exercise difficulty</th>
<th>Corresponding coloured band on video (seen at bottom of screen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this section we will learn to recognize the risk for falls and injuries, to identify ways to reduce the risk of falling and to explore attitudes and beliefs about falls.

**Inactivity** – Inactivity affects our balance, muscle strength and bone strength, but it also has a more subtle affect on the body. Inactivity affects our sense of body awareness or our knowledge of where our body is in space. Poor body awareness increases the likelihood of a misplaced step, or a foot not being lifted quite high enough on the stairs.

**Changes in bone strength** – As we age there is a tendency for bones to become more brittle and fragile. If this bone loss progresses to the point where fractures occur with small amounts of force, it is known as osteoporosis. Fractures can occur as a result of a fall but they may also cause the fall. We can slow, and sometimes reverse, the loss of bone by eating a diet which is rich in calcium, getting regular exercise, avoiding excess caffeine, not smoking and considering hormone replacement and/or medications where appropriate.

**Changes in muscle strength** – Muscles tend to become smaller and weaker with age. Part of this muscle loss is a natural effect of aging, but part of it is also the result of inactivity. Regular exercise, especially resistance-type exercises like the ones in this handbook and on the video, will help keep muscles strong. In turn, strong muscles will allow us to complete our day to day activities with less fatigue, and keep us steadier on our feet.

**Changes in balance** – Poor balance is a combination of many factors including muscle weakness, poor body awareness, changes in body posture and shape, and changes to the nervous system.

**Changes in reaction time** – As we age, our ability to respond quickly to a situation may decline. For example, if we stumble we may not be able to respond quickly enough to get our feet back under us. The stumble then becomes a fall.
Changes to hearing – Hearing may become less acute with age which may mean that we miss cues in our environment. For example, we may not hear the dog come into the room and lie down behind us, but when we step backwards that furry friend becomes an unexpected fall hazard.

Changes to vision – As we age we may find that it is more difficult to see in dim lighting or to adjust to very bright lights or glare. It may also become more difficult to see objects lying on the floor which may cause us to trip and fall.

Chronic conditions – Certain diseases and conditions can increase our risk of falling. Heart disease, stroke, arthritis and other joint diseases, Parkinsons and problems with our feet are some examples. Ensure that you see your doctor regularly and take all medications as prescribed to lower your risk of falling.

Overweight or weight gain – Being overweight increases the risk of falling and makes moving around more difficult. Manage weight by eating a balanced diet and by having an active lifestyle.

Sleep disturbances – Not getting a good nights sleep leaves us feeling tired and out of sorts. Such fatigue increases our risk of falling by making us less aware of our environment and slowing our reaction time. Practice good sleep habits, get plenty of exercise and rest when necessary.

Dizziness – Dizziness may result from changes in blood pressure, as a reaction to medications or as the result of illness or disease. If you have spells of dizziness be sure to discuss them with your doctor so that the cause can be determined.

Assisting Others

If you are with someone who falls, call for help. Don’t try to assist them by yourself. You may further injure them while trying to help them up, or you may injure yourself. Make them comfortable until help arrives.
Slippery floors – newly waxed floors and certain types of flooring surfaces tend to be very slippery. In your own home, use non-slip wax and be aware of the type of surface if purchasing new flooring. If you have flooring which tends to be slippery, consider applying non-skid strips in traffic areas.

Spills – Any surface can become slippery if it is wet. Mop up spills immediately in your home. Keep a mop handy for this purpose. When you are away from home, be cautious in areas where snow and water has been tracked in, and watch for “Wet Floor” signs in commercial buildings.

Scatter rugs – Loose rugs which can slip, curl or bunch are a fall hazard. Replace them with non-slip floor mats or ensure loose edges are securely tacked down.

Bathtubs – The combination of water, slippery surfaces and awkward body positions makes the bathroom, and in particular, the bathtub, a place where a fall can occur. To lower your fall risk in the bathroom, use a rubber bathmat inside the tub and a non-slip mat outside the tub. Install grab bars in the tub and consider installing them beside the toilet as well.

Stairs – Lower the risk of falling on stairs by installing a handrail and covering the steps with a non-slip covering. Ensure the stairwell is brightly lit. If stair edges are difficult to see, mark them with tape or paint. Keep stairs free of clutter – don’t use them for storage.

Dim lighting – Ensure burned bulbs are replaced promptly. Keep traffic areas well lit. If you get up at night, turn on a light or use a nightlight.

Footwear – Wear shoes with low heels and non-slip soles. Avoid shoes with slippery or worn soles. Wear shoes rather than socks or slippers.

Clutter, toys, papers – Objects lying on the floor are a fall hazard. Keep all walkways and traffic areas clear of such obstructions. Be careful when out visiting.
**Extension cords** – Electrical cords which cross walkways increase the chance of tripping. Plug appliances into the nearest outlet. If extension cords are used, run them close to walls.

**Situational Risks (Outdoor)**

**Icy Sidewalks** – Ice and hard packed snow present special challenges in our climate. Protect yourself by purchasing boots with non-skid soles, good treads and wide flat heels. Consider purchasing special slip-on rubber treads, or metal “spikes” which give additional traction but should be removed once indoors. These can be purchased at many shoe repair stores. Special soles can be put on boots at shoe repair stores. You can also purchase special cane tips for icy conditions.

**Uneven surfaces** – Be aware when walking over uneven surfaces like potholes, broken cement etc.

**Bad weather** – If possible, avoid going out in bad weather where wind, poor visibility and slippery conditions may increase your risk of falling.

**Rush hour traffic** – Avoid heavy traffic hours whenever possible.

**Darkness** – Avoid walking at night unnecessarily. If you are out at night, wear light coloured clothing so that you are easily visible. Stay in well-lit areas.
Behaviours Which Increase Risk

Certain activities and behaviours tend to be associated with an increased risk of falling.

*Reaching over your head* – Store articles within easy reach and keep heavier articles on lower shelves.

*Climbing on chairs* – Instead of using a kitchen chair when you need to change a light bulb or reach a top shelf, keep a sturdy step stool handy for those times when you really need to reach a high place. Better yet, get help with such tasks.

*Answering phones* – When the phone rings we often rush to answer it. We don’t want to miss a call, nor do we want someone to worry if we don’t answer the phone. At the same time, though, rushing to answer the phone is a behaviour that often results in a fall. Consider keeping a portable phone near you, or use a message manager so that you can return calls if you are not able to make it to the phone in time.

*Crossing the street* – Jay walking is a dangerous practice for everyone. One driver may stop for us, giving the illusion of safety, but drivers in other lanes may not see us and may not be able to stop in time. Always cross at an intersection. Ensure that you have caught the eye of the driver before crossing. Be aware of traffic coming in other lanes and do not step into that lane until you know the vehicles have seen you and are stopping.

*Using Alcohol* – Alcohol greatly increases our risk of falling. It distorts our judgement and slows our reaction time.

*Misusing drugs and medications* – Intentional or unintentional misuse of drugs and medications can increase our risk of falling. Take all medications as prescribed. If you are taking several medications, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about potential interactions. Ensure you read and follow dosage instructions carefully. Consider using a “dosette” to ensure you are taking the proper dosage each time. Do not take medications prescribed for someone else.
Our attitudes and beliefs can affect our risk of falling. Take a moment to answer the questions below. Check whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If I ask for help, people will think I can’t live on my own.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If I use aids like a cane or a walker, it means I am losing my independence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If I am very careful, stay indoors and walk less, I won’t fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Accidents can’t be helped. You get old, you fall. That’s life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I’ve always done it this way. I’ve not had problems before so why change now?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you agreed with one or more of these statements you may be increasing your chances of falling because of the beliefs you hold. Let’s look at some of these beliefs and how they can affect our chances of falling.

1. If I ask for help, people will think I can’t look after myself. They will think that I
If you are afraid to ask for help, you may find yourself doing things which put you at risk. There are many places to get help including family, friends, neighbours, and volunteer organizations. Most of these people want to help you preserve your independence, not take it from you. Never be afraid to ask for help if you need it. A fall, especially one which causes serious injury, is much more likely to take away your independence than is a request for help.

2. *If I use aids like a cane or a walker, it means I am losing my independence.*

Many people are reluctant to use walkers or canes because they believe that it makes them look old and that it limits their independence. On the contrary, assistive devices like canes and walkers can give you added confidence and keep you mobile and independent for many years.

3. *If I am very careful, stay indoors and walk less, I won’t fall.*

Staying active and mobile is one of the best ways to prevent falls. If you allow yourself to become inactive because you are afraid of falling, you will begin to lose muscle and bone strength. Your balance will deteriorate and your confidence will decline. All of this increases, rather than decreases, your chance of falling. In addition, your quality of life will suffer.

4. *Accidents can’t be helped. You get old, you fall. That’s life.*

Most accidents are preventable. We have many tools at our disposal to help us lessen the risk of falling. Be aware, use caution and stay active.

5. *I’ve always done it this way. I’ve not had problems before so why change now?*

As our life situation and physical abilities change we must sometimes make adjustments to the way we do things. It does not mean that we are any less capable, only that we have adapted to our circumstances.
Three Steps to Preventing Falls

1. Be aware – Look around you. Learn to recognize risks. Anticipate where problems might occur.

2. Be safe – Take steps to lower your risk. Remove hazards in your home. Ask for help when necessary. Use canes and walkers if you need them. Compensate for some of the physical changes which occur in the body with aging by moving more carefully. Use the pull–out chart at the back of this handbook to remind you about simple things you can do in and around your home to make it safer.

3. Be active – Maintain a healthy lifestyle which includes regular physical activity to keep muscles, bones and joints in good health.
Why Exercise?

Disclaimer
The exercises in this handbook and on the accompanying video are designed to assist the older person in safely becoming more active. Not all of the exercises may be appropriate for you. Consult your doctor before beginning this exercise program for guidance on which exercises are right for you.

Regular exercise is critical to maintaining strength, balance and co-ordination as we age. It has also been proven to be effective in the prevention and treatment of many diseases including heart disease, diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis. Adapt the exercises to suit your abilities and only do as many repetitions of each exercise as you can. Stop all exercise immediately if you experience breathlessness, chest pain or any other unusual symptoms. We recommend that all exercisers begin at the first level and progress only when they feel comfortable doing so.

Regular exercise helps to prevent falls by improving muscle strength, co-ordination, and balance. It will also help to keep joints mobile. All of this allows you to do day-to-day activities with less fatigue, discomfort and strain. In addition, regular exercise can help to prevent diseases like osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. This may mean fewer medications, a contributing factor in many falls. But there is more to exercise than the physical changes. Exercise makes you feel better, gives you a sense of control and the confidence to maintain an active lifestyle.

Exercise Safety

While exercise is essential to good health, it is sometimes necessary to avoid or modify certain activities, particularly if you have specific health problems. Your doctor is the best person to help you with this, or to guide you to the appropriate health professional.
Once you begin an exercise program it is important to proceed slowly – don’t try to “get fit fast”. Injuries often occur, not because the exercises are dangerous, but because we try to do too much before the muscles have had a chance to strengthen and adjust to the new activity. Remember to always to listen your body. It is your best gauge of what amount of exercise is right for you. It is also important to remember that sometimes, if you have done too much, your body will only tell you the following day! Always err on the side of doing too little rather than too much. You can always try to do a bit more next time.

If you are exercising with a group, remember that each body is unique. Work at your own pace and don’t allow yourself to be pressured into doing more than you feel is right for you.

Always begin each exercise session with a warm-up. There is a suggested warm up routine in this handbook (pages 16 and 17). The warm-up exercises increase the temperature of your muscles, minimizing the risk of injury. They also gradually bring up your heart rate and blood pressure in preparation for more vigorous exercises. These same gentle exercises can be used as a cool-down as well. The cool-down phase serves to bring blood pressure and heart rate back to normal. Finishing off with some additional stretches will help to prevent muscle stiffness and will increase your flexibility. While cool-down stretches are not included on the video, use the same stretches found at the beginning of the appropriate segment of the video.

Choose an exercise area that is a comfortable temperature and is free of clutter and obstructions. Wear supportive footwear with good traction. Never wear high-heeled shoes, sandals or slippers to exercise. Wear loose comfortable clothing but avoid very loose flowing garments that may become tangled as you exercise.
A balanced exercise program is much like a balanced diet. In the same way that you need foods from various food groups to stay healthy, you also need exercises from several categories to meet all of your exercise needs. Here are the three different types of exercise and why they are important to your good health.

**Stretching exercise** – These exercises help to keep joints and muscles mobile and flexible. The big stretch we take when we get up in the morning is one example. There are stretches for almost every muscle and body part. Stretches are most effective if they are taken to a point of gentle tension and held for a few seconds (try for a minimum of 10 seconds or longer if possible). Stretching can be done as frequently as you wish, but should be included before and after each exercise session as part of the warm-up and cool-down activities. You will find some stretching exercises at the beginning of each segment of the exercise program included in this handbook and on the accompanying video.

**Strengthening exercise** – Strengthening exercises make the muscles stronger. This allows us to walk more easily, climb stairs, get up from a chair or toilet with less effort, carry groceries or lift a grandchild. Having an appropriate level of strength is often what determines whether we can live independently, or whether we will require assistance with daily activities. Strengthening activities use resistance to make the muscles work a little harder, encouraging them to become stronger. The resistance might be a light weight, a stretchy band, or just the weight of the body. There are different strengthening exercises for nearly every muscle in the body but there are certain key muscles that we must keep strong to stay mobile and independent. These are the muscles that we focus on in this exercise program. Strengthening exercises should be done slowly, with emphasis on maintaining good body posture and correct technique. They are done as a series of “repetitions”. For example, you might begin by doing 5 repetitions of an exercise and progress to doing 15 repetitions. When that is comfortable for you, you might consider using a small hand-held or velcro-style weight while you do the exercise. Strengthening exercises are most effective if done 3 times per week with a day’s rest in between.

**Cardiovascular or aerobic exercises** – These include walking, swimming, bicycling, aquacise classes, aerobics classes and
dancing. Because these activities use the big muscles of the body and raise the heart rate, they help to keep the heart healthy. They are also the activities that help us to maintain a healthy body weight. As an added bonus, certain activities in which you support the weight of your body (e.g. walking) help to maintain the strength of your bones. While we have not included specific cardiovascular exercises as a part of the Positive Steps program, we do recommend that you participate in such activities as often as possible – every day is great! If getting out for a walk is difficult for you, try to develop a walking course through your home (free of obstacles and clutter) or in the corridors of your building. If that is not possible, try walking on the spot for a few minutes each day. You may find that as you do the strengthening and stretching exercises in the Positive Steps program, activities like walking will become easier for you.

A Word About Good Posture

A normal spine is not straight. It has four curves. Correct posture is achieved when, looking from the side, your ear, shoulder and hip are stacked one on top of the other. A line drawn through these three points would be straight. The four curves in the spine are what allow us to stand upright. If these curves become excessive, however, the spine may be put under too much stress, causing pain or injury.

Another way to assess your posture is to examine the position of your pelvis while standing. If you think of your pelvis as a bucket of water, a neutral position would be one in which the water is held completely in the bucket. The pelvis can tip forward, which would allow water to pour out the front, or backward, with water pouring out the back. Try to maintain the neutral pelvic position, or keep the water in the bucket, throughout the exercises, whether standing or sitting.
Part 3

The Exercise Program

These warm-up exercises are the same whether you are doing the beginner, intermediate or advanced exercise level. All of them can be completed either sitting in a chair, or standing, with a chair nearby for support.

Walking in Place

Continue this exercise for up to 10 minutes. If you are able, and would rather go for a walk outside or through your building instead of walking on the spot, please do so. When you return from your walk, do the other warm up exercises that follow, then move into the stretching and strengthening exercises.

Seated – alternately lift your feet off the floor as if you are walking on the spot. As you begin to feel warm, or as you begin to get more fit, try lifting your feet and knees a little higher as if you are marching on the spot.

Standing – walk on the spot. As you began to feel warm, or as you begin to get more fit, try lifting your feet and knees slightly higher and move your feet a little faster – more like a march. Remember, though, this is a warm-up exercise and should be gentle and not too vigorous.

Arm Swings

Let your arms hang at your sides. Gently swing them forward and back. If you are able, and it is not too tiring for you, you may wish to combine this with the walking on the spot, so that you are walking and swinging your arms. Complete several repetitions.
Part 3

The Exercise Program

Warm-Up Exercises

Shoulder Rolls

Roll your shoulders up towards your ears, press them back, then press them downwards. Repeat 10 times in a smooth rolling movement.

Arm Cross-overs

Scissor your arms in front of your chest alternating right over left and left over right. Make your movements large, smooth and controlled, not short and choppy. Complete 10 repetitions.

Ankle Circles/

Toe points

Again, this exercise can be completed while sitting down, or while standing and using a sturdy chair for support. Circle your ankle clockwise 10 times, then counterclockwise 10 times. Repeat on the other side. Go back to the first foot and point your toes then pull your toes back toward your leg. Repeat this forward and back motion 10 times. Repeat on the other foot.
Materials required:

- Television and VCR (if using exercise video)
- 2 sturdy chairs or a chair and a counter top
- a clear space on a wall

**STRETCHING EXERCISES**

These exercises improve your flexibility and will increase the mobility of your joints.

**Hamstring Stretch**

This exercise stretches the hamstring muscle at the back of your thigh. Sit forward on your chair with one leg extended in front of you, heel on the floor and knee straight. Keep your back straight and lean forward from the hip. Think about pressing your chest forward. You should feel a gentle stretch at the back of the thigh of the outstretched leg. Hold for 15 seconds, or as long as is comfortable. Try to work your way up to holding for 15 seconds if you can. Repeat on the other leg. Remember to breathe as you hold the stretch – do not hold your breath.

**Calf Stretch**

Sit forward on your chair with one leg extended in front of you, heel on the floor and knee straight. Pull your toes back towards your body. You should feel a gentle stretch in your calf muscles. Hold this stretch for 15 seconds if you can. Repeat on the other leg.
Chest Stretch

Sit tall in your chair. Reach your hands behind your back. Pull your shoulder blades together and your elbows back. If you can clasp your hands, do so, but you do not need to clasp your hands to feel a stretch. Hold this stretch for 15 seconds. Remember, you only need to stretch to the point of tension. You should feel no pain.

Overhead Reach

Sit tall in your chair and reach both arms up over your head. Reach up as high as you can. Bring your arms down and rest for a few seconds. Now take your right arm up above your head. If this is comfortable for you, try leaning slightly to the left as you reach your right arm up. Hold for 15 seconds. Bring your right arm down. Now reach up with your left arm and lean slightly to the right. Remember to breathe.
These exercises strengthen and tone the muscles. Stronger muscles will help you to have better balance and co-ordination and make everyday activities, like walking and doing housework, easier.

**Chair Squats**

This exercise will strengthen the muscles of your upper legs. Stand 6 inches in front of your chair. Have another chair or countertop in front of you. Place your feet shoulder width apart – your toes may be pointing forward or slightly turned out. Hold on to the chair in front of you for support and balance. Check your posture. Tuck chin; shoulders back and down; stomach tight. Slowly lower yourself, hinging at your hips – keep your back straight. Bend at the knees as you stick your seat out behind you. Maintain your posture as you lower yourself slightly, as if you are going to sit down, only going as far as you feel comfortable. Breath out, slowly straighten your legs and extend your hips as you come up to a standing position. Remember – do not hold your breath. Repeat 15 times or until your legs feel a bit tired.

**Wall Push-Ups**
Move to a space on the wall that is clear of obstructions and pictures. Stand facing the wall with your feet approximately 6-12 inches from the wall. Lift your arms and place your hands against the wall at shoulder-height as far apart as feels comfortable. Check your posture. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the wall. Keep your body straight, hinging at your ankles as you lean forward. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Lower yourself toward the wall to a point where you feel your arms can still hold you but the muscles in your arms are working. Breathe out as you slowly push back, straightening your arms. Repeat this exercise 15 times. Remember to stop when you are tired. You can slowly build up the number of repetitions that you are able to do.

Calf Raises

Sit forward on your chair with both feet on the floor. Lift your heels up off the floor as if you were standing up on your tip toes. Breathe out as you do this. Lower your feet so that they are flat on the floor. Repeat this exercise 15 times, but stop sooner if you feel tired.
Part 3  The Exercise Program

Beginner

**Shoulder Squeeze**

Lift your elbows up and out to the side. Breathe out as you draw your elbows back and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold for a few seconds then relax. Repeat this exercise 15 more times, but remember to stop if you feel tired. Try not to shrug your shoulders up as you pull back. Keep your shoulders relaxed throughout the movement.

**Toe Taps**

Sit on your chair with both feet flat on the floor. Lift the toes of both feet as high off the floor as you feel comfortable doing. Keep your heels in contact with the floor as you do this. Repeat this exercise 15 times, or stop when you are tired. Do not feel you have to complete all fifteen times. You can slowly build up to 15 repetitions.
Trunk Stabilizer

Sit erect and slightly forward in your chair. Breathe out as you lean back slightly, without letting your back touch the back of the chair. Only lean back as far as you feel comfortable. You still want to be able to bring yourself back to an upright position. Hold for a few seconds then return to upright. Now lean slightly to the left and hold a few seconds while breathing out. This movement should come from your hips. You should feel your right hip coming off the chair slightly and your weight shifting more to your left hip. The movement should not occur by bending sideways in your lower back and waist. Support yourself with your arm if necessary but try to let the muscles in the trunk do the work. Return to upright and repeat to the other side. Leaning once backward and once to each side counts as one repetition of this exercise.
Materials required:

- Television and VCR (if using exercise video)
- 2 sturdy chairs or a chair and a counter top
- a clear space on a wall
- a carpeted floor, a mat, or a folded blanket

**STRETCHING EXERCISES**

These exercises improve your flexibility and will increase the mobility of your joints.

**Hamstring Stretch**

Have your chair beside you. Rest a hand lightly on the chair for balance. Begin by stepping forward with one foot. Lift the toe of the front foot and straighten your knee (don’t lock it). Shift your weight onto your back leg. Remember to keep your back knee slightly bent and your leg relaxed. Keeping your upper body in good posture, lean forward from your hips until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh on the front leg. Hold this stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.

**Calf Stretch**

Keep one hand on your chair for balance. Stand upright and step backward with one foot, distributing your weight evenly on your front and back foot. Look down to ensure that the toes of both feet are pointing forward. Shift your weight onto your front foot. Move your upper body forward as you bend your front knee. Make sure you can always see the toe of your front foot over your knee. As you move forward, keep the heel of your back foot in contact with the floor and keep your back leg straight. Hold for about 15 seconds. You should feel this stretch in the back of your lower leg. Repeat on the other side.
Part 3  

The Exercise Program

Intermediate

Chest Stretch

Clasp your hands behind your back if you are able. If you are not able to do this, simply reach behind you with your arms extended. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and stretch. Hold for about 15 seconds.

Whole Body Stretch

Stand with good posture, feet shoulder-width apart, and knees slightly bent. Bring your arms up in front of your body, crossing them in front and reach up as high as is comfortable for you while breathing in. Hold this position for a few seconds, then slowly lower your arms down to your sides while exhaling. Repeat.

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES
Chair Squats

This exercise will strengthen the muscles of your upper legs. Use two chairs for this exercise. Stand with one chair 6 inches behind you and the second chair in front of you. Rest your hands on the back of the chair in front of you for support. Place your feet shoulder width apart. Your toes may be pointing forward or slightly turned out. Check your posture. Slowly lower yourself, hinging at your hips. Keep your back straight. Bend at the knees as you stick your seat out behind you as if your were trying to sit down on the chair. Lower yourself as far as you feel comfortable, then slowly straighten your legs and extend your hips as you return to an upright position. Breathe out as you do this – do not hold your breath! Repeat 15 times or until your legs feel tired. When you get to the point where you can do 15 of these exercises easily, try lowering yourself down further until your seat almost touches the chair. This will make the exercise more challenging.
Wall Push-Ups

This is an exercise for the chest and arms. Move to a space on the wall which is clear of obstructions and pictures. Stand facing the wall with your feet approximately one foot from the wall. Lift your arms and place your hands against the wall at shoulder-height and shoulder-width apart. Check your posture – chin tucked, shoulders back and down, and stomach tight.

Slowly bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the wall. Keep your body straight, hinging at your ankles as you move forward. Keep your feet fully on the floor. Lower yourself toward the wall to a point where you feel your arms can still hold you. Slowly push back by straightening your arms. Breathe out as you do this. Repeat this exercise 15 times, or stop when you are tired and work toward 15 repetitions as you grow stronger. If you find it easy to do this exercise 15 times, try lowering yourself and touching your forehead to the wall, or move your hands closer together as you do the exercise. Both of these things will make the exercise more challenging.
Lunge

This exercise is for the legs. Stand near a sturdy chair or counter top. Check your posture. Hold lightly onto the chair for support and step backward with one leg, about the distance of a normal walking step. Keep your upper body straight as you bend your front knee and lower yourself down, bending your back knee towards the floor. Go down to a point that feels comfortable, and where you know you can push yourself back up. Raise yourself by straightening the front leg slowly as you breathe out. We will repeat this exercise 10 times on each leg. Remember to stop when you feel tired. You can slowly build up to repeating this exercise 10 times.

Shoulder Squeeze
This exercise strengthens the muscles in the upper back, especially those between the shoulder blades. Stand with good posture. Raise your arms in front of you to mid-ribcage height. Looking at the back of your hand, visualize pulling against the resistance of a rubber band while slowly pulling your hands back toward your mid-trunk. Bend your elbows while keeping them out to the side as you pull back. Breathe out as you pull back. Be sure that your shoulders do not shrug up as you squeeze your shoulder blades together. Slowly straighten your arms. Repeat this exercise 15 times, or stop when you are tired and gradually work towards 15 repetitions as you become stronger.

Toe Taps

This exercise strengthens the muscles at the front of your lower leg. Stand with good posture behind your chair, using the back of the chair for support. Lift the toes of your left foot as high off the floor as you feel comfortable doing, then relax them back to the floor. Repeat this with the right foot. Do 15 of these on each foot, or do as many as you can and work towards 15 as you become stronger.
Trunk Stabilizer

This exercise will strengthen the muscles in your stomach and trunk area. Sit erect in your chair near the edge of the seat. Cross your arms over your chest. Lean back as far as you feel comfortable doing, keeping your back straight as you move from your hips. You will feel the muscles in your stomach tighten. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to upright. Now lean slightly to the right and hold for 5 seconds. You should feel that your hip is lifting slightly off the chair. Lean to the left and hold for 5 seconds. Leaning backward, to the left and to the right makes 1 repetition of this exercise. Aim for a total of 10 repetitions but remember to stop when you are tired and gradually try to increase the number of repetitions as you become stronger. As you become stronger, you may also find that you are able to lean further and hold the end position a little longer.
Calf Raises

This exercise will strengthen the muscles in your calf. Stand behind your chair using the back of the chair for support. Lift up onto your toes. Slowly lower yourself back down. Repeat the exercise 15 times, or do as many as you can and work towards 15 as you become stronger.

Balance

Stand, with good posture, behind your chair. Use the back of the chair for support. Shift your weight onto one foot and slowly lift the other foot off the floor. Release the back of the chair, holding that position as long as you can. If you are able to hold this position for a long time, try moving one arm up over your head, out to the side and then down in front of you as you hold the position. Always keep one hand near the chair so that if you can quickly grab it if you start to lose your balance. Repeat this exercise standing on the other foot.
Lying on the floor

Many people do not like to do exercises on the floor because they have difficulty getting up and down. However, being able to get up and down from the floor is a useful skill, particularly if you fall. This exercise will teach you a method that you can use to get safely down to the floor, and back up again. The activity will also strengthen the muscles used in getting up and down, so that the activity will gradually become easier for you to do. The third (advanced) part of the exercise program includes exercises done on the floor so this activity will also prepare you for those exercises. The first time you do this exercise, have someone with you to assist in case you have difficulty getting up.

Place your chair beside an open area. If you are on a non-carpeted surface you may wish to lay a blanket or quilt beside your chair to provide some cushioning for your knees and hands. Bend forward from your hips and place the hand closest on the seat of the chair. Step slightly forward with the foot farthest from the chair, slowly bend your knees and lower yourself onto the knee of the back leg. Stop for a moment and relax. Now, keeping your hand on the chair and the other hand on your thigh, slowly bring the other knee to the floor. Put one hand on the floor in front of you and lower yourself onto your hip. From this position, straighten your legs and lower yourself onto your side using your arm for support. Relax and take a few deep breaths while you prepare to get back up.
Part 3

The Exercise Program

Intermediate

Getting up from the floor

The next movement should be towards the chair that you used to get down onto the floor. Still lying on your side, push your shoulders up off the floor so that your weight is once again on your hip. Bend your knees in close to your body. Using your arms for support, roll forward onto your knees. Place one hand on the seat of the chair. Shift your weight onto the knee closest to the chair. Bring the other leg up and put your foot on the floor. Lean on the chair and your thigh for support and, while breathing out, use your legs and arms to push yourself up from this position. Make sure you stay close to the chair in case you need to grab it for balance when you stand up.
Materials required:

- television and VCR (if using exercise video)
- 1 or 2 sturdy chairs or a chair and a counter top
- a clear space on a wall
- a carpeted floor, a mat, or a folded blanket
- light hand weights (purchased or made at home – see information on home-made weights on page 48)
- a small hand towel and two larger towels rolled or folded for the floor exercises (see page 49)
- stretchy band for Standing Row (optional)

STRETCHING EXERCISES

These exercises improve your flexibility and will increase the mobility of your joints.

Hamstring Stretch

Begin by stepping forward with one foot. Lift the toe of the front foot and straighten your knee (don’t lock it). Shift your weight onto your back leg. Remember to keep your back knee slightly bent and your leg relaxed. Keep your upper body in good posture, lean forward from your hips until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh on the front leg. Hold this stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.
Calf Stretch

This exercise stretches the back of the calf. Have a chair handy for balance. Rest your hand on it if you need to. Step backward with one foot while standing upright. Distribute your weight evenly on your front and back foot and ensure that the toes of both feet are pointing forward. Shift your weight onto your front foot. Move your upper body forward as you bend your front knee. As you move forward, keep the heel of your back foot in contact with the floor and keep your back leg straight. If you are not feeling a stretch, you may need to slide your back leg further back. Remember as you stretch, that you should feel no pain, only tension in the muscle. Hold the stretch for at least 15 seconds and repeat on the other leg.

Chest Stretch

This exercise will stretch the muscles in your chest and shoulders. Lift your arms up and place your hands behind your head or at your ears. Pull your elbows back as you squeeze your shoulder blades together and down. Hold this stretch for 15 seconds and relax.

Quad Stretch
This stretch will focus on the muscles at the front of the thigh. It also requires balance so use your chair or countertop for support. Stand on your right foot and bring your left foot toward your bum, bending at the knee. If possible, reach back with your arm and grasp your ankle or your pant leg. Pull your lower leg gently toward your seat until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. If you cannot reach your pant leg, place your leg on a chair behind you. Throughout this stretch, keep your thighs in line with each other. Do not extend at your hip or arch your lower back. Repeat on the other leg. Remember to use good posture and to breathe!

**Whole Body Stretch**

To finish off we will do a whole body stretch. Stand with good posture, feet Shoulder-width apart and knees relaxed. Bring your arms up in front of your body, crossing them in front and reach up as high as is comfortable for you while breathing in. Hold this position for a few seconds then slowly lower your arms down to your sides while exhaling.
STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

Chair Squats

This exercise will strengthen the muscles of your upper legs. Stand with a chair 6 inches behind you. Place your feet shoulder-width apart. Your toes may be pointing forward or slightly turned out. Check your posture. Slowly lower yourself, hinging at your hips. Keep your back straight. Bend at the knees as you stick your seat out behind. Lower yourself until your seat touches the chair. Slowly straighten your legs and extend your hips as you return to an upright position. Breathe out as you do this – do not hold your breath! Repeat 15 times or until your legs feel tired. When you get to the point where you can do 15 of these exercises easily, try variation 1 below.

Variation 1: Light hand weights (beginning with 1-2 pounds) can be held while doing this exercise.

Variation 2: This exercise can also be done standing behind a chair and doing a deeper squat. For safety reasons, be sure to hold onto the chair when you begin doing this more advanced version of the exercise.

Wall Push-ups
This exercise is for chest and arms. Move to a space on the wall which is clear of obstructions and pictures. Stand facing the wall with your feet approximately 1 1/2 feet from the wall (one arm’s length). Lift your arms and place your hands against the wall at shoulder-height and shoulder-width apart. Check your posture. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the wall. Keep your body straight, hinging at your ankles as you move forward. Keep your feet fully on the floor. Lower yourself to the wall to a point where you feel your arms can still hold you but the muscles in your chest and arms are still working. Slowly push back by straightening your arms – breath out as you do this. Repeat this exercise 15 times remembering to stop earlier if you are tired. You can slowly build up the number of times you repeat this exercise.

Variation: If you find it easy to repeat this exercise 15 times, try moving your hands closer together on the wall. You can also progress to a push-off where you apply a bit more force on your push away from the wall, varying your hand position between each push.
Lunge

This exercise is another leg strengthener. You will need your chair beside you for support. Rest one hand on the chair at your side. Check your posture – tuck your chin, squeeze and depress your shoulders and tighten your stomach muscles. Begin by stepping backward with one leg, keeping your weight on your front foot. Try to make your backward step slightly larger than a normal walking step. Keep your upper body straight as you bend your front knee and lower yourself down, lowering your back knee toward the floor. Go down to a point where you feel comfortable and know you can push yourself back up. Raise yourself by straightening the front leg slowly as you breathe out. We will repeat this exercise 10 times on each leg. Remember to stop when you feel tired. Use the chair for support, but try not to lean on it. To make this exercise more challenging, try stepping further backward.

Variation: When you have mastered this exercise, and can do it with good balance and body position, try holding some light hand weights as you do the exercise.

Stand with good posture. Raise your arms to mid-ribcage height and hold onto a
Part 3  The Exercise Program

**Standing Row**

If you have a band, use it. The band should be fairly tight and your arms out straight. Looking at the back of your hand, slowly pull your hands back toward your mid trunk. Bend your elbows while keeping them tucked in close to your sides as you pull back. Watch that your shoulders do not shrug up as you squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull toward your trunk. Slowly relax your arms, letting the tension out of the band in a controlled manner. You should feel this exercise working the muscles between your shoulder blades and in the front of your arms. Repeat 15 times, but remember to stop sooner if you feel tired. If you find 15 repetitions easy, try adding a band if you are not using one, or move further away from the point where your band is secured. Remember to breathe out as you pull back. Do not hold your breath.

**Calf Raises**

Stand next to a solid object such as a counter top or a chair. To start, you will probably need to hold on for balance. However, you may be able to progress to doing this exercise with little or no support. Remember, always have something close by in case you lose your balance. Stand with one hand resting on your support. Shift all your weight onto one leg and lift up onto the toe of that foot. Lift the other leg up by bending at the knee. Slowly lift up and down onto your toes of your foot. Repeat 15 times on each foot or quit sooner if the muscles in the back of your leg become tired. You can make this exercise more challenging by increasing the number of repetitions as your muscle gets stronger.

*Variation:* Wear light velcro weights around your ankles while doing the exercise.
Trunk Stabilizer

For this exercise you will need a sturdy chair. Sit erect with good posture near the edge of the chair seat. Cross your arms over your chest. Keeping your chin tucked, your shoulders back and your stomach muscles tight, slowly lean back, moving from your hips. Keep your back straight. As you lean back, you should feel your stomach muscles begin to work – they must keep your upper body from falling backwards. Lean back to a point where you feel your stomach muscles working and then hold that position. Repeat this exercise 10 times but remember to stop if you feel tired.

*Variation:* To make the exercise more challenging, slowly raise one thigh off the chair while leaning backward. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Relax your leg down and slowly return to an upright position. Alternate the leg you lift between repetitions. Remember to breathe as you do this exercise. Do not hold your breath.
The next three exercises are done on the floor. If you do not have a carpeted area on which to do these exercises, lay a mat or folded blanket on the floor. Use the technique which you learned in the Intermediate Section (page 31) to get down to the floor. Use the same technique to get back up. If necessary, go back and review these procedures before you continue with these three exercises. If you are unable, or do not wish to get onto the floor to do these exercises, they may be done on a bed with a firm mattress.

Alternate Arm and Leg Lift

This exercise strengthens the muscles of the back. Do this exercise either from your hands and knees, or lying on your stomach, whichever is more comfortable for you.

*If doing this exercise on your hands and knees,* remember to keep your trunk in a neutral position throughout. Slowly raise your left arm as far as is comfortable but not above shoulder height. Hold for a few seconds and return your hand to the floor. Now lift your right leg and extend it behind you. Keep the knee straight but not locked and lift your leg as high as is comfortable but no higher than hip height. Repeat with the right arm then the left leg. Once you have lifted each arm and each leg you have completed 1 repetition of this exercise. Complete 5 repetitions in total, but stop sooner if you feel the muscles in your shoulders or back are tired.
If doing this exercise on your stomach, place one of your large towels under your hips and one at shoulder level. Extend your arms over your head as far as comfortable. If you have shoulder problems, keep your elbows bent and your arms out to your sides and lift your arm off the floor in this position. Your forehead should be comfortably supported on a hand towel. From this position slowly raise your left arm about two inches off the floor and hold briefly. Keep your arm straight but do not lock the elbow. Now lower your arm and lift your right leg about two inches off the floor. Keep your leg straight but do not lock the knee. Repeat with the right arm, then the left leg. Once you have lifted each arm and each leg you have completed one repetition of this exercise. Complete a total of 5 repetitions in total but stop sooner if you feel the muscles in your shoulders or back are tired.

Abdominal Squeeze

This exercise strengthens the abdominal or stomach muscles. Position yourself on your back with your knees bent up and feet on the floor.
Support the head with a rolled towel. Focus on moving your pelvis to the neutral position as discussed in the section on posture. With your pelvis in this position you should have a space between your lower back and the floor – your back should not be flat on the floor and you should not have a feeling of pressing your back into the floor. In this neutral position, place your hands on your stomach – contract your stomach muscles but do not move your pelvis as you do this. Imagine that you are attempting to pull your bellybutton toward the floor without moving from your neutral position. Hold this contraction for a count of 5. Breathe out as you hold this position, then relax. Repeat 10 times, stopping sooner if you feel tired. This exercise will take some practice. Keep trying until you feel your stomach muscles working as you hold. If you are unsure about what the neutral position of the pelvis is review the information on posture on page 15.

*Variations:* To make this exercise more challenging, try straightening one leg along the floor or lift one leg off the floor with the knee bent. Alternate legs between squeezes. Never let your pelvis leave the neutral position. If you try one of the more advanced positions and you feel your pelvis shift, return to the easier version.

**Bridge**

Lay on your back with your arms at your side. Place a rolled or folded towel un-
Part 3        The Exercise Program

Advanced

Move behind your chair or close to a countertop. Make sure your blanket or mat is not in your way and that you have solid footing. Stand on one foot, holding onto the chair or counter top. Slowly release the chair or counter top, keeping your hands close to the support. When you feel yourself losing your balance, put your foot down and take hold of the chair or counter top to regain your balance. Repeat on the other leg.

Variation: To make this exercise more challenging, try it with your eyes closed, or move the leg which is not supporting you forward, to the side and to the back, while maintaining balance on the other foot.
While all of the exercises in the *Positive Steps* handbook and video can be done without weights, you may wish to use light weights for some of the exercises in the advanced section (e.g. the chair squats, lunges and calf raises). A different type of weight or resistance is used in the Standing Row (page 40) which uses a stretchy band. Adding weights or stretchy bands increases the demand on the muscle. This makes the exercise more challenging and encourages the muscle to become stronger.

**Safety considerations when using weights**

- Do not attempt to add weights to your workout until you feel completely comfortable that you are doing the exercise correctly.
- Use weights only in the advanced section of this program.
- Start with a small weight of perhaps 1-2 pounds, and continue using that weight until you can comfortably complete 12-15 repetitions of the exercise. At that point you might consider adding a small amount of additional weight.
- Each time you add or increase weight, cut back on the number of repetitions you do. For example, if you are doing 15 repetitions of your exercise with no weight, you might add a 1 pound weight and reduce the number of repetitions to 8. You would then gradually continue to increase the number of repetitions until you again reach 15.
- Do all repetitions slowly and concentrate on using perfect technique and posture each time.
- When you are done with your weights, put them in a container or tuck them under a chair or in some other out of the way spot. Don’t leave them lying where you may trip over them.
- As with any type of exercise begin slowly and progress in small steps or increments.
- **Always stop exercising immediately if you experience breathlessness, chest pain or any other unusual symptoms.**
**Purchasing Weights and Bands**

Simple hand-held weights can be purchased at most department stores in the sporting goods section. They are relatively inexpensive and come in a variety of weights, colours and styles. Start with lighter weights of 1-2 pounds.

You can also purchase weights which have a velcro strap, allowing you to fasten them securely around your wrist or your ankle. Wrist weights are particularly helpful if holding a hand weight is difficult for you. Velcro ankle weights allow you to add weight while doing certain leg exercises (they would be appropriate for the calf raises seen on page 40 of the handbook). Velcro wrist and ankle weights are commonly available at most department and sporting good stores but will cost a bit more than hand-held weights.

Exercise bands are available from sporting goods stores. They are often sold from a roll in 1 yard lengths. Depending on the brand, bands may be colour coded, with different colours representing different amounts of resistance. Make sure that you ask about the various colours when you are purchasing exercise bands. Variations of these bands come with handles. These are easier to hang on to, but will cost more.
Home-made Weights

Items you find in your own home can be used as inexpensive weights to help you get started. Try these:

- soup cans

- containers with a tapered shape which allows you to hang on to them (dish detergent bottles often have a good shape). To make them heavier, try putting some water in the container. You can also use sand, beans, or rice.

- containers with a handle molded into the container which allow you to get a good grip (e.g. certain vinegar containers, bleach containers etc.) Again, add water, beans or rice to increase the weight as you get stronger. Make sure the containers are thoroughly cleaned of their original contents!

- to sew a home-made weight, sew a bag, leaving one side open. Fill the bag with beans then sew up the fourth side securely. Make bags of various sizes and weights. Experiment by filling them with different materials (sand, beans etc) to vary the weight.

- make a bag as described above, and sew a strip of velcro around it, large enough to fasten around your wrist or ankle.

- inexpensive stretchy exercise bands can be made by braiding lengths of panty hose together

When you are doing exercises on the floor or mat, towels can be used to make you
more comfortable and to support key parts of your body. Rolled towels are most commonly used under the hips, shoulders and head to keep the body in good alignment.

For convenience, you can keep some towels rolled and ready to use in your exercise sessions. Simply roll a bath towel down its length, then fasten the roll at each end with elastic bands. Store the pre-rolled towels with your video, weights and other exercise gear.

When doing exercises on your stomach, try placing a smaller folded towel under your forehead. Experiment to see what works best for you.
# Safety Checklist – “Fall-Proofing” Your Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bathroom</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a non-slip mat in the tub?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a grab bar installed in the tub area?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a non-slip mat beside the tub?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are floors kept dry?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use non-slip wax (or no wax) on floors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are floors kept clean and dry?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If rugs or mats are used, do they have a non-slip backing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have and use a sturdy step stool to reach upper shelves?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedroom</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are floors kept free of clothing and shoes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use a night light or other source of light if you get up at night?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halls and Stairs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are stair or hall rugs tacked down?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do scatter rugs have a non-slip backing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are halls and stairways well lighted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are steps, stair coverings and railings kept in good repair?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do all stairways have a sturdy handrail?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are stairs kept clear of loose objects?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cut or tear this page out and hang it in a convenient location for future reference*
## Safety Checklist – “Fall-Proofing” Your Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the basement area well lit (including stairs)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a sturdy handrail on the basement stairs?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the basement floor kept free of laundry, tools etc.?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrances</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are sidewalks, steps, porches and entries kept free of clutter?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are sidewalks, steps, porches and entries kept free of ice and standing water?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are sidewalks, steps, porches and entries kept in good repair?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the entry well lit (including steps)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are garden tools stored away after use?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are broken sidewalks and driveways repaired promptly?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are ladders kept in good repair?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use a four to one ladder ratio (base of ladder one foot out for every four feet up)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you do? If you answered “no” to any of the questions above, take some time to review what you can do to make that part of your home safer. Also re-read Preventing Falls (pages 4-10) in the *Positive Steps* handbook for more ideas on avoiding falls both in and out of your home.
Appendices

To order more copies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Steps Video and Handbook (a two item set)</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Steps Audio Cassettes and Handbook (handbook and three audio cassettes)</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Steps Handbook only (for those who <em>do not</em> want video or audio cassettes, <em>or</em> who would like to order additional handbooks)</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* does not apply to those living within the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name ______________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

City/Town _________________ Province _______ Postal Code _________

Telephone ________________ Fax (if applicable) _________________

Method of Payment ☐ cheque ☐ money order ☐ cash (in-person orders only)

All prices include shipping and handling. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Do not send cash through the mail. Make cheques payable to Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region

Mail Order to:
Active Living Coordinator
Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region
2110 Hamilton St.
Regina, Sask. S4P 2E3