

# Keys to Better Balance: Community Resource

## How Do You Know if an Exercise Class is Good for Preventing Falls?

\* To be used in conjunction with "Keys to Better Balance: Instructor Resource and Keys to Better Balance: Community and Instructor Resource" documents.

### Research shows to look for these

**Activity variety:** The best classes include both strength exercises and balance challenges. Class should include a warm-up and activities that become more challenging over time.

**Balance** should be the most important kind of activity. Balance activities should challenge you when you are moving, when multi-tasking and when standing still. Examples include balancing with feet together, heel to toe, one legged standing, reaching, turning and shifting weight.



**Everyday strength-** such as carrying groceries or getting up from a chair or toilet -is important for safe movement. BUT improving strength alone is not enough to prevent a fall!

Photo credit: Thomas 8047  
"grocery shopping" Flickr  
Creative Commons, Dec 4 2014

**What are activities I could do that have both strength and balance?** Activities that have balance and strength include Tai Chi, dance, ping pong, tennis, pickle ball and some fitness classes. Science shows that Tai Chi has been proven to decrease your fall risk! Some places to find classes like these: Senior centers, community centers, YMCA's, places of worship, and recreation departments such as Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR).



Photo credit: Susan Frikken



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Created by the Falls Prevention Task Force of  
Safe Communities of Madison-Dane County

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## How Do You Know if an Exercise Class is Good for Preventing Falls?

Are there types of activities and exercises that do NOT make a difference in preventing falls?

- Walking and pool exercises are good for you, but they have **NOT** been shown to decrease falls risk. So, walking and pool exercise should **NOT** be the biggest part of fall prevention class.

## How much activity do I need to decrease my risk of falling?

- Studies show that you must exercise about 2 hours each week for at least 6 months to decrease your risk of falling. It is OK to mix it up and break it up! For example, you could do 1 hour 2 times each week, or 30 minutes 4 times each week. You could go to a class, exercise at home, or do a little of each to add up to 2 hours. **Safe Communities of Madison-Dane County's List of Current**

### Falls Prevention Classes

[http://www.safercommunity.net/falls\\_prevention\\_classes.php](http://www.safercommunity.net/falls_prevention_classes.php)

## Word Search Game! Find these words above. Circle all that you see!

activity

*Tai Chi*

*multi-tasking*

everyday

risk

challenging

senior centers

decrease

pickle ball

strength

difficult

falls

carrying

toilet

walking

chair

