



Get the Facts on Falls Prevention

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Key Takeaways

With over one in four Americans age 65+ falling each year, NCOA provides facts, tools, and fall prevention strategies to help keep you

safe.

The financial toll for older adult falls is expected to increase as the population ages and may reach over \$101 billion by 2030.

Learn more about the Falls Free® Initiative and how this national effort has promoted effective falls prevention strategies for older adults.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for older Americans. Falls threaten seniors' safety and independence, and generate enormous economic and personal costs. However, falling is not an inevitable result of aging. Through practical lifestyle adjustments, evidence-based falls prevention programs, and clinical-community partnerships, the number of falls among seniors can be substantially reduced.

The challenges of falls for older adults

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other falls research:

- More than one out of four Americans age 65+ falls each year.¹
- Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults.²
- The cost of treating injuries caused by falls is projected to increase to over \$101 billion by 2030.³
- Falls result in more than 3 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 800,000 hospitalizations.⁴
- In 2015, the total cost of non-fatal fall injuries was \$50 billion.⁵
- Each year about \$754 million is spent on medical costs related to fatal

falls.⁵

- For older adults in the U.S., fall death rates went up by 30% from 2007-2016, and researchers predict there will be 7 deadly falls every hour by 2030.⁴
- People with mild hearing loss are nearly three times as likely to fall, with each 10 decibels of hearing loss increasing falls risk.⁶
- The majority (60%) of falls happen in the home, 30% in a public setting, and 10% in a health care center.⁷

Falls, with or without injury, also carry a heavy quality of life impact. A growing number of older adults fear falling and, as a result, limit their activities and social engagements. This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness.

NCOA's Role

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) leads the **National Falls Prevention Resource Center** <<https://ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center>> , which supports awareness and educational efforts about falls and promotes evidence-based falls prevention programs and strategies across the nation. The purpose of the center is to:

- Increase public awareness and educate consumers and professionals about the risks of falls and how to prevent falls.
- Support and stimulate the implementation, dissemination, and sustainability of evidence-based falls prevention programs and strategies to reduce the incidence of falls among older adults and adults with disabilities.
- Serve as the national clearinghouse of tools, best practices, and other information on falls and falls prevention.

The National Falls Prevention Resource Center leads the **Falls Free® Initiative** <<https://ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-free-initiative>> , a national effort to address the growing public health issue of falls, fall-related injuries, and deaths. The initiative includes a coalition of over 70 national organizations charged with working toward the progress of one or more of the strategies in the National Action Plan. Members disseminate proven falls prevention programs, advocate for funding and regulatory changes, and educate professionals, older adults, and caregivers about how they can reduce their risk of falling. The initiative also includes a 47-member State Coalition on Falls Prevention Workgroup charged with collaboratively promoting effective federal, state, and local strategies to address falls.

The Falls Free® Initiative's work includes:

- **Falls Free® National Action Plan** <<https://ncoa.org/article/2015-falls-free-national-falls-prevention-action-plan>> : In March 2005, NCOA released the landmark evidence-based Falls Free® National Action Plan to prevent falls and fall-related injuries in older adults. The plan was updated in 2015 and continues to serve as a roadmap and catalyst for action. The plan includes goals, strategies, and action steps to increase physical mobility, reduce the impact of medications as a falls risk factor, and improve home and environmental safety. The plan also promotes the expansion and funding of falls risk screening, assessment, clinical interventions, and evidence-based programs.
- **National Falls Prevention Awareness Week** <<https://ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-prevention-awareness-week>> : Every September, the Falls Free® Initiative promotes National Falls Prevention Awareness Week. States are encouraged to host and promote falls prevention awareness and screening activities to draw attention to the problem and offer older adults practical solutions.

For more information:

- **NCOA Center for Healthy Aging**
<<https://ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging>>

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