



News Release

Sunrise Fire-Rescue Department
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For Release: IMMEDIATE

Take a Stand Against Falls this Month!

(SUNRISE, FL)- September is Fall Prevention Awareness Month, and the National Council on Aging has revealed this year's theme: "Take a Stand Against Falls."

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), one-in-three adults age 65 and older fall each year. These falls can result in severe injuries, such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries. At worst, they may even be fatal.

However, most falls are actually preventable. One of the first steps in preventing falls is to recognize that falling is not an inevitable part of aging, and to then adopt strategies that will make falls less likely:

- **Stay Active.** Lack of exercise results in diminished muscle tone and bone density, whereas physical activity can maintain and even *increase* strength and balance.
- **Review your medications** with your doctor, as they may have side effects and interactions that could make you dizzy and more susceptible to a fall.
- **Do a home safety check** to identify and correct common hazards like loose rugs, cluttered walkways, and insufficient lighting.

Certain activities and programs have been proven to reduce the incidence of falling in older adults. The ancient Chinese practice of **Tai Chi** uses slow gentle movements to strengthen the body while focusing the mind. According to Dr. Peter Wayne (research director of the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School), Tai Chi has been shown to reduce falls in seniors by up to 45%. It can also improve balance in those with a neurological condition such as Parkinson's disease, as reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Tai Chi classes are offered regularly at the City of Sunrise Senior Center. Call (954) 572-3670 for details.

Various fall-prevention classes have emerged that use an integrated approach to fortify older adults both physically and mentally against falls. One such program - **A Matter of Balance (MOB)** - is offered free of charge through the Sunrise Fire-Rescue Department and the Senior Center, in partnership with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Broward. Adapted for lay-leader instructors from the original model used at Boston University, this eight-week program not only teaches participants moderate exercises to enhance strength and balance, it also trains them to restructure negative, fearful thoughts about falling into positive and empowering beliefs. Upon completion of the MOB course, participants report a higher level of confidence in their ability to determine much of their own future health and activity level, as well as a stronger commitment to continued exercise.

"Fall injuries are a main concern for us as emergency responders," said Fire Chief Thomas DiBernardo. "We want to keep our young-at-heart residents safe by helping them become knowledgeable on the best ways to prevent falls."

To sign up for upcoming MOB classes, please call Sunrise Fire-Rescue at (954)746-3465. For on-going safety information, 'Like' us on Facebook at Sunrise Fire-Rescue and follow us on Twitter@SunriseFRD.

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