

Older Adult Falls Prevention Program

The Department of Health Older Adult Falls Prevention Program works to prevent older adult falls by partnering with local fall prevention advocates & coalitions, emergency medical services and fire departments, and health care organizations to coordinate evidence-based exercise and balance classes and promote multi-disciplinary programs that reduce falls.

**Washington's
population is aging**

Washington's 65+ population totaled 1,280,555 in 2020. That number is projected to reach 1,756,582 by 2030.



Falls are not a normal part of aging – most falls can be prevented.

Fall prevention is key to remaining active and independent as we age, and can help older adults remain in their homes longer.



Falls are the leading cause of injuries and deaths in older adults

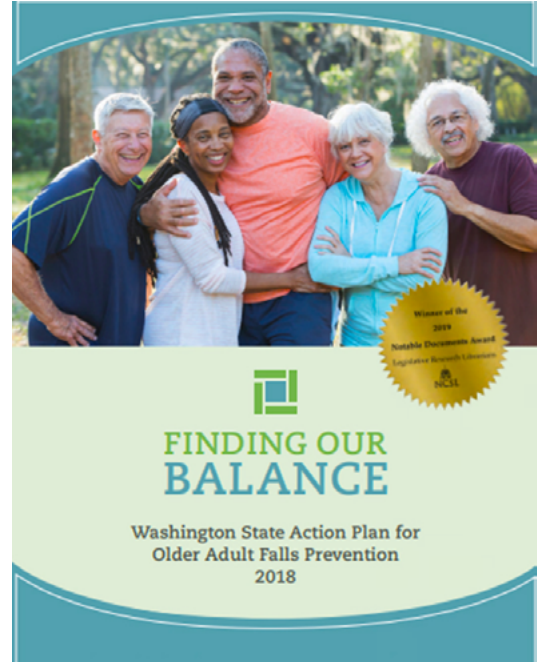
- One in three Washington residents over the age of 65 fall each year.
- On average, 6,000-8,000 Washington residents over 65 call 9-1-1 each month because of a fall.
- In 2019, there were 14,275 non-fatal fall-related hospitalizations among Washington residents over age 65.
- 997 Washington residents over the age of 65 died as a result of a fall in 2019.

Strategies to Reduce Falls

Five Year Action Plan

The Finding Our Balance: 2018 Washington State Action Plan for Older Adult Falls Prevention is a five year plan with six strategy areas of focus:

- Strong and effective community partnerships
- Public awareness and education
- Prevention across the continuum of care
- Expanded reach and access to evidence-based programs and community screenings
- Effective interventions for high-risk and underserved older adults
- Improved safety in homes and communities



Education

Provide education and resources to older adults on risk factors and fall prevention strategies.



Fitness

Increase availability and accessibility of low cost, evidence-based exercise programs that target strength and balance.

Medication Management & Healthcare

- Educate and encourage healthcare providers to review medications on a regular basis.
- Encourage practitioners to use a multi-factorial risk assessment and management programs including tailored follow-up interventions for older adults at risk for falls.

Home Safety

- Expand and enhance the delivery system for home modifications and home safety related services.
- Partner with organizations who provide no-cost home safety assessments.
- Educate family members and caregivers on how home safety modifications can increase the safety and independence of older adults, and where to find services.

For fall prevention resources and ideas, visit doh.wa.gov/findingourbalance or email findingourbalance@doh.wa.gov.