

Updated Directives for Fall Prevention

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As many of our readers know, in our work we meet with aging organizations on new health initiatives, facts on new medicines approved by the FDA; and, modernized practices for fall prevention. New in the published media is a report from the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* with straightforward guidelines on fall assessment since the last version in 2001. Not only will clinicians, physical therapists, and, certified nurse assistants, be able to use the guidelines, but older adults themselves can benefit from the newer standards for fall prevention.

The updated directives include some exercise element for resident programs in the cooperative or other living communities. Now with adequate research data, Tai chi is an addition since the 2001 recommendations. The report still emphasizes that training or guidance in balance, gait, and strength instruction still take an important role. Along with these programs, flexibility and endurance training should be offered, as well as an assessment of activities of their daily living (ADL) skills. These living skills can be assessed as a whole of their functionally including the use of adaptive equipment or other mobility aids they use.

Along with efforts to keep physically fit, medication reduction is stressed, as side effects are a strong risk probability for dizziness and dis-orientation. In a continuing effort to keep the resident safe and engaged, an updated history of any chronic illnesses or conditions such as, osteoporosis, lack of visual acuity, cardiovascular disease, or peripheral nerve damage should be included in their strategies to reduce fall risk. And, all of these can be documented by at-home caregivers or adult family.

To read the complete report visit the [American Geriatrics Society's Website](http://www.americangeriatrics.org/health_care_professionals/clinical_practice/clinical_guidelines_recommendations/prevention_of_falls_summary_of_recommendations), http://www.americangeriatrics.org/health_care_professionals/clinical_practice/clinical_guidelines_recommendations/prevention_of_falls_summary_of_recommendations.