



# The Otago Exercise Program

The Otago Exercise Program is a series of 17 strength and balance exercises delivered by a Physical Therapist in the home or clinic that reduces falls between 35 and 40% for sedentary older adults. This evidence-based program, developed in New Zealand, calls for PTs to assess, coach and progress patients over the course of six months to one year. Recent research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention shows statistically significant improvement in clinical scores after as little as 8 weeks.

In the United States, the Otago Exercise Program is being promoted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and the Administration for Community Living in 16 states to help reduce the burden of falls through prevention and exercise education. The CDC has identified four key factors you can modify to reduce the risk of falls, and top on that list is to begin an exercise program that includes both strength and balance training.

## **Four things you can do to reduce the risk of falls:**

- 1 - Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength & balance**
- 2 - Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines**
- 3 - Get annual eye check-ups & update your eyeglasses**
- 4 - Make your home safer by:**
  - Removing clutter & tripping hazards
  - Putting railings on all stairs & adding bathroom grab bars
  - Having good lighting, especially on stairs

We offer this program as a free self guided resource online for our community to improve fall prevention awareness and education as well as a paid option to work with a physical therapist in our wellness center, by telePT coaching and/or home visits. If you would like to preview the course free please read the site disclaimer and terms of use before you begin.

We suggest this course be presented and completed under the guidance of a licensed physical therapist that has been trained to offer the Otago Program. Note: The clinical trials completed and cited in the literature demonstrated the best outcomes when the program had been delivered with the oversight of physical therapists and trained health professionals.

Please choose the best option for your needs. If you choose the paid option on our website you will be prompted to schedule your first visit with a physical therapist once your payment has been processed at checkout. The physical therapist fee covers initial time to meet with you in our wellness center to provide an overview of the program and conduct the baseline functional assessments used in the Otago program. You can reserve and pay for follow-up PT appointments as needed during the course of the program. Ask your physical therapist for details and about fees if you would prefer to have a home visit scheduled for your appointment. This program is currently not covered by insurance.