

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2023

As the summer months fade away and we prepare for the changing season, it's a perfect time to reflect on how important our own health and wellness are! You might ask, *what is Wellness?* The Global Wellness Institute defines it as the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health.

Wellness is multidimensional!

- **Physical:** Nourishing a healthy body through exercise, nutrition, sleep, etc.
- **Mental:** Engaging the world through learning, problem-solving, creativity, etc.
- **Emotional:** Being aware of, accepting and expressing our feelings, and understanding the feelings of others.
- **Spiritual:** Searching for meaning and higher purpose in human existence.
- **Social:** Connecting and engaging with others and our communities in meaningful ways.
- **Environmental:** Fostering positive interrelationships between planetary health and human actions, choices and wellbeing.

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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World Senior Citizen Day – August 21st, 2023

LET'S CELEBRATE!

6 things that you can do to honor the older adults around you on this day!

1. Volunteer at your local Retirement home.
2. Visit a loved one or give them a call.
3. Visit the local farmers market and prepare a home cooked meal for an older adult.
4. Ask an older adult about their bucket list, see if there is something you can help them accomplish.
5. Sign up for a workshop together (wood working, art, cooking).
6. Play games or join a local club (exercise group, coffee club, book club).



Our Participants Feature: Meet Dave & Debbie



When my husband was diagnosed at age 64 with Frontal Lobe Dementia, the first thing the doctor recommended was exercise. As an employee with VON, I thought of our SMART® Exercise and Fall Prevention Program with Khrista Boon right away!

As we shared our experience we received nothing but positive feedback from the doctors and neurologist. Improving balance and mood through a wide variety of music and movements improves overall health of brain function.



We enjoy the opportunity to challenge ourselves; a goal Khrista encourages all of us to do. Most of all she encourages us to breathe! Breathe through the movements, like in the cool down, the simple exercise of breathing through each stretch can be the most relaxing experience.

We especially enjoyed the introduction to cardio drumming. It's a fun and simple exercise with high intensity drumming movements!



Did You Know?

([Finding Balance Alberta](#))

Did you know that most falls are preventable!

How can you prevent a fall?

Challenge Your Balance

Balance is controlling your movements. Practice movements like reaching while standing, toe and heel raises, stepping in different directions, step-ups or half-squats. Try tai-chi, yoga or sports that challenge your balance.

Build Your Strength

Do exercises for your leg muscles. Use bands, weights or your own body weight. Try squats, hamstring curls, and side leg lifts.

Be Active

Do activities you enjoy! Try to do 30 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity or exercise at least 5 times per week. Walk, dance, garden, bicycle, or swim.

What you can do!

- Be Active. Challenge Your Balance. Build Strength.
- Medications, vitamins, and supplements.
- Vision and eye health.
- Getting a good night's sleep.
- Eating healthy.
- Staying hydrated.
- Shoes and footcare.
- Getting around in your home.
- Getting around in your community.



VON SMART Instructor Feature!



AMANDA DAY

Amanda has recently joined the VON SMART Team in Sarnia-Lambton as our part-time Registered Kinesiologist.

Amanda graduated from Western University, London with a BSc Kinesiology degree with a minor in Psychology. She became interested in health and movement from years in sports and activities in her hometown of Strathroy.

Amanda has volunteered in several physiotherapy and chiropractic clinics, as well as coached a few hockey teams in her community.

She stays active by playing/coaching hockey, going to the gym and walking her dog. Amanda loves the summer, the beach and being outside.

WELCOME AMANDA!

Resources McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Steady on your feet: New ways to improve balance and avoid falls. (mcmasteroptimalaging.org)



When it comes to keeping your feet safely on the ground – metaphorically and literally – it’s all about balance. But like many other things we take for granted when we’re young (strength, endurance, bone density, a full head of hair...) our sense of balance declines as we age. That’s one reason why older adults are at greater risk of falling and potentially becoming seriously hurt or even dying as a result.

Past research has shown that regular physical activity can help prevent falls, particularly when it includes exercises and movements designed to improve balance. Tai Chi for example, is recommended for its various benefits, including improving strength and balance through slow, controlled movements.

But if Tai Chi isn’t for you, there are other options you many want to consider. One systematic review of 15 randomized controlled trials measured the benefits of Pilates, a mind-body exercise that has been popular since the early 20th century. Like Tai Chi, it involves controlled movements and concentrates on flexibility, strength, posture and breathing. Each study included in the review revolved around older adult participants who took part in group Pilates sessions. The exercises varied (mat exercises as well as exercises using elastic bands, foam rollers, balls, or other equipment), and generally involved 60-minute Pilates sessions done 2-3 times a week. The study participants were either compared to folks who kept up with their usual daily activities but did not take Pilates, or folks doing task-oriented trainings such as yoga, stretching, aerobic exercises, and more.

Another emerging form of balance training that is gaining attention for its novel approach is “perturbation-based balance training” or balance recovery training. It focuses on improving people’s reaction time and helping them better recover from a loss of balance. Training can include equipment (such as moving platforms), or manual interference (such as nudges by a therapist) to enhance your ability to react and stop yourself from falling.

A systematic review of eight randomized controlled trials examined whether perturbation-based balance training lowers the risk for falls in older adults as well as people with neurological disorders such as Parkinson’s disease. More than 400 people between the ages of 50 and 98 took part in perturbation-based balance training and were compared with those in control groups who participated in other types of balance enhancing exercises.

What the research tells us

Pilates may help older adults improve their dynamic balance (staying balanced while moving around or changing positions), as well as their static balance and stability (staying balanced when in an upright position or when doing things without moving your feet). The findings also support the idea that Pilates training may be better than other task-oriented trainings at improving overall balance, however more research is needed before we can say whether Pilates may help to reduce one’s chance of falling.

So far the evidence on perturbation-based balance training is also encouraging: participants completing the training reported fewer falls and were less likely to fall, compared with those in the control groups. Further research is needed but there is cautious optimism that this approach may help people react and recover their balance more quickly so that a slip or trip doesn’t necessarily have to end in a fall. This type of training uses specialized equipment and help from a trained physical therapist, so it may be worth keeping in mind for when you are able to access services in-person.

VON Updates

There will be no classes AUGUST 7th, 2023



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

Windsor-Essex | Chatham-Kent | Sarnia-Lambton

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