

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2021

Season's Greetings!

With the Holiday season upon us and a New Year around the corner we wanted to thank everyone for all of their hard work, dedication and patience over the last year. Our SMART classes continue to be well received and attended all while keeping the safety of participants, staff and volunteers in mind. We have enjoyed reconnecting with our Fitness Friends and look forward to 2022!



Featured in the image above is our VON SMART Chair Exercise Class at Amherstburg Community Services

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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-or-

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Fall Prevention Month Fun! Urban Poling



In the image to the left we have our Fitness Friends at Hudson Manor in Tilbury and SMART Instructor Susan Bowes facilitating an Urban Poling class. In the image to the right is the winner of our Fall Prevention Month Contest Joy with Susan Bowes and Program Coordinator Meghan Simon. Joy will be **100 years young** this month and has been a devoted VON SMART class participant for years! She is an excellent example that you can continue to *Move To Be Strong* at any age.

Fall Prevention Workshop



Featured in this image is SMART Program Supervisor Khrista Boon and Fitness Friends at Amherstburg Community Services. The SMART Program was invited to do a Fall Prevention Workshop and luncheon for the group. They also had the chance to participate in a chair Tai Chi session. This marks our first in person Fall Prevention Workshop with precautions in place since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

Did you know?

Being on 4 or more medications can increase your risk of having a fall. Some side-effects of medications can include dizziness, balance problems, concentration problems or a drop-in blood pressure-all of which can increase your risk of a fall!

What you can do to decrease your risk?

- Make sure you are taking medications as prescribed:
 - Do you need to take your medications at a certain time of day?
 - Do you take your medication with food or on an empty stomach?
 - What to do if you miss a dose?
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medications

Reflection

1. When was the last time you reviewed your medications with your doctor or pharmacist?
2. If you have just recently started a new medication, make notes on how it makes you feel. Have you noticed any different side effects?



Top 5 Tip to Prevent Falls from an OT & Gerontologist!

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults and the number of individuals who fall increases exponentially with each decade after the age of 65. Fortunately, there are many steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of falls.

Here are the top 5 tips to help prevent falls from Mandy Shintani, Occupational Therapist & Gerontologist and Founder of Urban Poling:

1. Ensure you use supportive shoes for outdoor and indoor use instead of slippers. Instead of using slippers, buy a supportive slip-on shoe meant for outdoor use but keep it only for indoor use. *As a fellow gerontologist said they are called slippers for a reason!*
2. One of the most common reasons, people slip is that they shuffle, ensure to bend your knees, and lift your feet off the ground when walking.
3. People tend to be more careful when they are outside of their homes but really most falls occur in your home or near your home. So, plant your feet carefully when you are getting your mail or walking to your car.
4. Keep a clear pathway for you to get to the bathroom. Slow and steady wins the race on the way to the bathroom at night.
5. Use ACTIVATOR® Poles! Research supports factors related to fall prevention such as improved balance, core strength, and posture

The 4 points of contact provided when walking with ACTIVATOR® Poles promotes balance and confidence with every step. The added stability of poles while you do exercise allows you to feel confident in your movements and motivates you to be persistent in your regimen. Pushing down into the ledge of the CoreGrip handles fosters an upright posture while engaging the upper body.



Resources

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

[Healthy Aging Research | McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#)

When it might be wise to stop taking certain medications

[When it might be wise to stop taking certain medications \(mcmasteroptimalaging.org\)](#)

The Bottom Line

- Certain drugs (e.g. for sleeping problems, depression and anxiety) increase the risk for falls and confusion, particularly in older adults who are already prone to falls and cognitive issues.
- Stopping these medications can result in reduced risks and improved cognition.
- Adults are advised to regularly review their medications with their family doctor.

Isn't it often the way – you fix one problem, only to create another. It can be said about all kinds of repairs: to our homes, our cars and sometimes, more seriously, to our own health and well-being. We start taking medication for a certain problem or condition, but later discover it's causing another health issue. Perhaps the drugs are triggering unpleasant side effects or maybe they're reacting poorly with something else we're taking but either way, it's frustrating and we wonder if we're worse off than we were before.

A good example is "psychotropic" medications which affect mood, thinking and behavior and include sleeping pills, anxiety-reducing drugs, antidepressants and antipsychotics. While they may help improve specific symptoms, they are known to increase the risk of disorientation and falls, particularly in seniors. Since many older adults are already prone to falls and confusion, taking these drugs further increases the chance of falling and getting hurt. A potential preventative measure may be to simply stop.

Always consult with your doctor or pharmacist about your medication changes.



VON Updates and Support

With the holidays approaching and we look to close out the year, the SMART team wanted to communicate to everyone the following cancelations of VON SMART classes for the Holiday Season:

- Friday December 24th, 2021
- Monday December 27th, 2021
- Friday December 31st, 2021
- Monday January 3rd, 2022



Reflecting Back and Looking Forward to 2022...

At the 2017 Research to Action Conference, Dr. Aric Sudicky in his talk on *Applying the Science: Creating a personalized recipe for healthy aging*, highlighted an important question: **How do you want to live the next years of your life?**

To answer this question, Dr. Sudicky went on to mention 3 important ingredients for living and aging well:

- **Find your sense of purpose**
 - Stay connected and engaged with people that enrich your life and add value to it
- **Preserve your muscles**
 - Consult with a dietician to ensure you are eating a well-balanced diet
- **Apply the tension**
 - Exercise and stay active! Incorporate weight bearing activity into your daily routine to keep your bones and muscles strong

VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

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