

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



JULY 2023

What better time than the present to start a routine of incorporating daily activity into our lives. Now that warm summer days are finally here, enjoy being outside with friends, family or in solitude. Step out for a walk or tend to your garden. These are just some examples of how we can stay active during the warmer months.

Creating moving moments throughout your day can be just as effective as a structured exercise program. Moving moments and exercise can keep you strong and may also:

Prevent disease: regular physical activity can help prevent many common diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. Exercise also improves your overall immune function.

Improve mental health: these benefits are nearly endless. Exercise produces endorphins (this is your "feel good" hormone), which acts as a stress reliever and leaves you feeling happy. It is also linked to improved *sleep quality*.

Decreased risks of falls: exercise improves overall strength, confidence and recovery in the event of a fall. It also improves balance and coordination key to preventing falls.

Social engagement: whether via traditional exercise classes or a walking group, exercise can be made into a fun social event. Exercising in a group can help to provide a sense of purpose and reduce loneliness and depression.

All this to say: *Our bodies are meant to move!*

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:

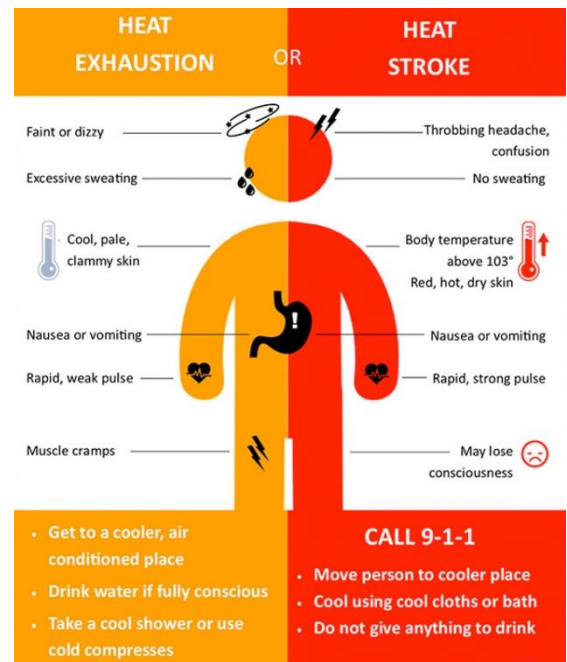
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Exercising Safely in The Heat!

As the first day of summer has passed, the summer heat has begun. If you choose to exercise outdoors, this can be something as simple as a walk, here are some tips to avoid heat related illness such as cramping, dehydration, and heat exhaustion and signs and symptoms to look out for!

1. Drink plenty of fluid, such as water, fruit or vegetable juices or drinks that contain electrolytes
2. If you live in a home without air conditioning or fans, try to keep your space as cool as possible such as limit the use of the oven or keep shades closed.
3. If your living space is hot, try spending the hottest part of the day in a place with air conditioning.
4. Dress for the weather. Wearing lightweight clothing, light colors, natural fabrics such as cotton. Wear protective clothing such as hats and sunglasses.
5. Avoid exercising outdoors during peak sun times – late morning/early afternoon.
6. Make sure you use a broad-spectrum sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher, reapply throughout the day.
7. Ask your doctor if any of your medications make you more likely to become overheated or sunburned.



Stay Safe! Respect your limits!

Meet Donna Our Participant Feature



Donna is a VON SMART exercise participant. She truly believes in exercise and the benefits it offers. Donna loves VON exercise classes and attends on a regular basis. **She will be celebrating her 101st birthday on July 25th, 2023!** Until Donna was 80 she continued to drive to and from the family trailer in Florida every winter by herself. Donna's favorite exercise is the seated leg scissor and seated jumping jacks.

Donna believes that one of the benefits of exercise is a sharp mind. She and three other residents play advanced duplicate bridge every week. She is a regular attendant at the puzzle table, is very friendly and always wears a smile.

She tries to add moving moments into her day by doing front, side and rear leg lifts while waiting for the building elevator. Donna is truly an inspiration to us all and she 100% recommends the VON SMART program to everyone. HAPPY BIRTHDAY MONTH DONNA!

Did You Know?

[\(Fall Prevention in Seniors\)](#)

Falls are the No. 1 reason for injury-related death, hospitalization and emergency department visits for older adults in Canada. Falls among older adults cost \$5.6 billion in 2018 – nearly 20 per cent of the total cost of injury in Canada.

Our bodies naturally change with age and these changes affect the way we feel, move, and behave. A fall can have a devastating and lasting impact on a person, resulting in injury, chronic pain and a reduced quality of life. Even without an injury, a fall can cause an older adult to lose confidence and reduce their activities. The good news is that there are actions you can take to prevent falls.

Check out our resources section below to find information on how to assess risk, how to prevent a fall, how to get up safely after a fall, falls and their connection to various issues such as vision, medication, chronic diseases, cognitive impairment and more.

Key strategies to prevent falls

These are the most effective steps you can take to prevent a fall, as assessed by the Public Health Agency of Canada and Finding Balance, a program for older adults and caregivers created by the Injury Prevention Centre at the University of Alberta

- Exercise: challenge your balance and build strength.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take your time: don't rush when walking or getting up.
- Balance your body through good nutrition and hydration.
- Get your sight and hearing checked regularly.
- Manage your medications and review them regularly with your pharmacist or doctor as some may make you prone to dizziness and falling.
- Wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes.
- Consider using a cane or other mobility device if needed.
- Maintain proper use of eyeglasses and hearing aids.

In your home

Make sure you have proper lighting in hallways, stairs and walkways, as well as in the bedroom and bathroom.

Keep stairs free of clutter and exterior stairs and walkways free of clutter, ice or snow.

Install hand rails along stairs and safety grab bars in the bathroom.

Check your home for slipping and tripping hazards, and use non-slip mats or rugs.

Ensure regularly used items are within reach.



VON SMART Instructor Feature!



CAREY BRUYERE

My passion for older adults can be traced back to my pre-registered nursing years. Whether as a palliative care volunteer or as a personal support worker, I've been on an educational path to care for older adults from the start. The reason? It is incredible to spend time with older adults, listening to their life experiences and gaining insight on life. My nursing specialty lies in the psycho-geriatric field of health, caring/advocating for those with dementia.

I feel fortunate to have been offered a Group Fitness Instructor position with VON SMART in Chatham-Kent. I am excited to join an organization that emphasizes holistic care to the aging population, encompassing physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological needs.

Outside of my position with VON, I am committed to providing 1:1 support for my canine clients, embracing their unique personalities and cultivating home-away stays that are individualized to their needs. I also live the "sweaty" life, enjoying my time in the gym, powerlifting and boxing!"

Resources
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Getting your 'feet' in the game! Can exercising your feet help you stay on them?
(mcmasteroptimalaging.org)



Many of us have heard the expression 'stand on your own two feet'. It's generally used to communicate that a person needs to become more independent and self-reliant. But in a very literal sense, being able to move safely on our own when up on our feet is important for preventing falls.

Globally, falls are the second leading cause of death from unintentional injury. Older adults experience the greatest number of falls that result in death. What's more, falls that aren't fatal can lead to injury and disability, increasing the likelihood of long-term care and institutionalization. However, we can actively take 'steps' to reduce our risk of a potentially dangerous tumble. Exercise is one strategy that can help prevent falls, and especially those that lead to injury. Resistance training, activities that improve flexibility, and tai chi are a few beneficial exercise types. Maintaining the health of our feet through visits to a podiatrist is another method we can lean on for falls prevention. So, if exercise and foot care are beneficial strategies, should we add exercises that target our feet to our fall's prevention toolbox?

Well, research has identified intrinsic foot muscle strength as a predictor of falls. Intrinsic foot muscles are small muscles found in the foot. We can thank these muscles for helping us with small movements like extending or flexing our toes. They also provide stability and information that other foot muscles use to produce large movements, such as running or walking. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it appears that intrinsic foot muscles are smaller and weaker in older adults compared to their younger counterparts. Changes to muscle strength can impact one's balance and ability to carry out essential daily activities. With this in mind, it doesn't seem far-fetched to assume that exercises that strengthen our intrinsic foot muscles can hold benefits.

But before we commit to practicing these exercises, let's get our feet wet by checking out the evidence!

What the research tells us

A recent systematic review looked at the effects that intrinsic foot muscle strengthening exercises (aka foot and ankle strengthening exercises) had on functional mobility in adults 65 years of age and older who were independent, generally healthy, and living in the community.

Intrinsic foot muscle strengthening programs included exercises such as gripping small objects with the toes, wearing cushioned footwear, heel lifts, calf raises, and ankle exercises. Some studies also included other simultaneous strategies like shoe inserts and education. The review found that intrinsic foot muscle strengthening programs may improve toe strength, balance, and certain aspects of functional mobility. The good news continues on with the finding that these programs may even reduce the risk of falls. Unfortunately, fear of falling was not improved.

Intrinsic foot muscle strengthening can often be done from the comfort of your own home with minimal assistance. Speak with your health care team about whether these types of targeted foot exercises are right for you and how to execute them safely on your own or with supervision from a caregiver or professional.

VON Updates

There will be no classes JULY 3rd, 2023



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

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