

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



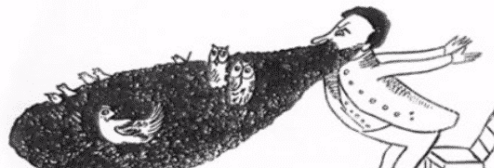
VON SMART NEWSLETTER



MAY 2023

*There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared! -
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard.'*

by Edward Lear



Sometimes a little laughter is all we need. May 12th is national limerick day. A Limerick is a poem intended to be funny with a rhyming pattern of aabba.

As they say, laughter is the best medicine. Laughter can improve our relationships with one another, supports physical and emotional health, promotes a positive attitude, strengthens our immune system, reduces pain, and protects us from the harmful effects of chronic stress and tension. Best of all it is free, fun and easy to utilize by anyone.

Spread the laughter this month by composing a funny song, by creating a limerick, writing a joke or two. Spread that joy with those around you!

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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May is mental health awareness month. This is the time that you can take to learn and talk with others about mental health issues. It provides us an opportunity to reflect on the effects that mental health can have on our loved ones.

Sign to look for, isolation, extreme mood changes, confused thinking, reduced ability to concentrate, excessive fears or worries, significant tiredness/fatigue, inability to cope with daily problem, major changes in eating habits and more. Check in with your loved ones. It is important to have an open and trusting relationship with your support system.

Did you know that exercise can help with your mental health too?



Today we are featuring one of our volunteers, Sharon. Sharon is a volunteer for our Windsor Essex region.



“As a life long learner, being an educator for 30 years was a natural fit for me. Now retired, I appreciate the things that make me smile each day: time spent outdoors, a welcome home tail wag from my dog, long walks with my husband, chats with friends, a cup of tea with fresh baked cookies shared with my mom, and working in my studio (an ambitious word for our spare room) where I can play and create.

Valuing an active lifestyle, connecting and learning with the VON SMART program team has made my volunteer opportunity rewarding from the start. I feel so lucky to be able to facilitate fitness classes with such a great group of people at Harrowood who inspire me daily and make me smile well beyond the time we spend together.”

Did You Know?

Did you know that May is a month to bring awareness to better hearing and speech!

Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM) is all about raising awareness of how hearing loss or speech problems can impact communication.

There are many reasons for loss of hearing and speech. We often forget the important of each of these in our daily lives.

Think. If I cannot hear what is around me this can increase your risk of falling. If you do fall the lack or impaired ability to communicate can lead to a fall as you are unable to communicate the unsafe environment with those around you.

Hearing is one sense that provides us feedback as to where we are in space. An impaired sense of hearing can increase your risk of falling due to loss of balance.

Better speech speaks to our ability to communicate between each other. Barriers related to speech can be something as simple as a language barrier to the inability to speak.

If you, or a loved one is at risk for falling it is important to have safe guards in place in case a fall were to happen in the privacy of your home or out in public.

How to prevent falls in the first place, or lower your risk of falls when you have impaired hearing or communication.

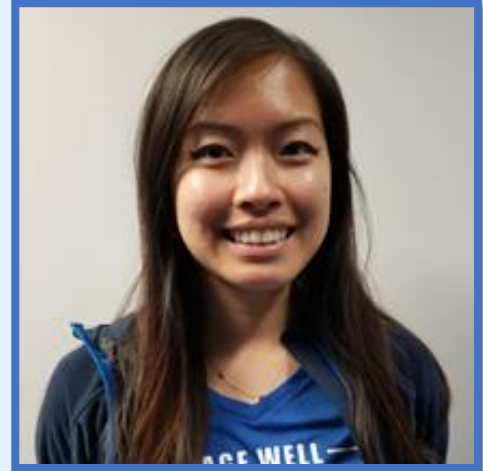
- Practice key words in a language familiar to those around (help, hurt, fell)
- Wearing a medic alert alarm
- Turn on Apple watch fall detection
- Use the buddy system when going to unfamiliar places
- Get your ears checked regularly by a health care professional
- Consider a speech pathologist
- Keep your hearing aids charged at all times
- Have an emergency contact number in your wallet with key information (your name, language, emergency contact, list of medication and relevant information)



COMMUNICATION
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Better Hearing & Speech Month

VON SMART Instructor Feature!



Nina Ngo

Nina is a new hire for the VON SMART Exercise and Fall Prevention Program. She is excited to be a part of a team that share similar values. Nina has had the opportunity to attend 3 different schools in 3 different locations. With her extensive knowledge in sedentary behavior, physical inactivity and nutrition; this showcases her passion for health, fitness, and improving the quality of lives of those around her. As Ms. World Traveler who loves to try new foods and go on lots of adventures, Windsor-Essex County has always been her home. She has previous experience in working at a gym, hospital setting, and private physical therapy clinics.

Here are some of Nina's favorite motivational quotes:

"Movement IS MEDICINE!"

"Exercise not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude, and your mood."

"Nothing is impossible, the word itself says I'm possible!"

Resources
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

3 evidence-based strategies for foot health

[\(\[mcmasteroptimalaging.org\]\(http://mcmasteroptimalaging.org\)\)](http://mcmasteroptimalaging.org)



Our feet help move us forward in life, literally. But to put our 'best foot forward,' we need to make the health of our feet a priority. Ask yourself these two critical questions: 1) how often do I check the health of my feet, and 2) do I address the concerns I identify? In a perfect world, our answers would be frequently and yes. However, the reality is likely different. From wounds to infections to deformities and more, the list of problems our feet can 'run' into stretches far beyond that pesky coffee table that our toes always seem to find. Here are a few research-based strategies that can improve the health of our feet and reduce complications related to poor foot care practices and certain diseases.

1. Routine at home checks

Diabetes increases the risk of developing open wounds or sores on the feet, also known as foot ulcers. These ulcers can be caused by nerve damage that prevents people with diabetes from realizing they have injured their feet, poor circulation, dry skin that leads to cracked heels, and muscle deformities that further impact damaged skin and tissue. When not appropriately treated, these ulcers can become infected, potentially resulting in amputation or death. Luckily, most amputations can be avoided by implementing some simple practices into one's daily routine. First, knowing the signs and symptoms that indicate something may be wrong is essential; these include loss of sensation in the feet, numbness, and tingling. Special attention needs to be paid to cuts and open wounds, discoloration, thick toenails, blisters, dryness, and cracks. People with diabetes should also avoid walking barefoot and instead opt for properly fitting shoes. Lastly, even those without diabetes should look out for the issues mentioned and promptly address them.

2. Intrinsic foot muscle strengthening

The state of our feet is not always top of mind when we think about falls. The strength of our intrinsic foot muscles or, more plainly put, the small muscles in our feet that help with small movements and stability and provide information used to drive large movements.

Given what they do, it is safe to say that these muscles are important. Unfortunately, intrinsic foot muscles tend to be smaller and weaker in older adults, which can impact balance and tackling day-to-day activities. Research shows that foot and ankle strengthening programs may improve toe strength, balance, and specific aspects of functional mobility in adults 65 years of age and older who are independent, generally healthy, and living in the community.

3. Visits with a doctor or foot specialist

While investing personal time and effort to improve and maintain the health of our feet is a vital part of the equation, seeking professional care is the other part. For example, podiatrists work to diagnose and treat issues related to our lower limbs. Research shows that multicomponent care—which involves podiatrist care including advice, information, exercises, footwear, and orthotics—and multifaceted care—which involves risk assessments done by a team of professionals from different specialties and referral to a podiatrist—may decrease falls in older adults.

If we turn back to the topic of diabetes, we see that experts recommend that folks get their feet regularly screened by a doctor or foot specialist.

VON Updates

There will be no classes Monday May 22nd, 2023.



VON SMART Exercise & Fall Prevention

Windsor-Essex | Chatham-Kent | Sarnia-Lambton

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