

GET FIT AVOID FALLS PROTOCOL

A Community based inter-agency approach to falls prevention

INTRODUCTION

The Get Fit Avoid Falls project is an interagency programme including Wycombe District Council, Wycombe Leisure Limited, Wycombe Primary Care Trust and Bucks Social Services.

BACKGROUND

*Around a quarter of a million people over the age of 75 seek medical treatment in Accident and Emergency Departments every year as a result of a fall at home.
1 in 5 results in a fracture requiring hospital treatment.*

The risk of falling increases as we get older and some medical conditions lead to an increased risk of falls. We can reduce or even prevent falls by getting fit and taking precautions e.g. fitting grab rails, improving balance and muscular strength etc.

The Get Fit Avoid Falls programme has been successfully run in Amersham, Chesham and Chalfont St Peter area the programme has been adapted for this project.

TARGET GROUP

The programmes caters for people over the age of 65 years who have fallen or at risk of falling, because of poor mobility and or strength, lack of confidence and have balance problems.

They have been identified through the Accident and Emergency Falls Service at Wycombe Hospital or through Day Care Service Managers and Wardens in Sheltered Housing Schemes within the local area.

The group setting caters for a maximum of 20 participants attending each programme. Groups larger than 20 would not be safe or effective

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Fear of Falling
- Feeling Unstable
- History of Falls (injurious and non-injurious)
- Low bone density and / or family history of osteoporotic fracture

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Uncontrolled

- Angina
- Resting SBP.180mmHg or resting DBP.100mmHg
- Tachycardia .100bpm
- Acute systemic illness (cancer, pneumonia)
- Visual or vestibular disturbances
- Significant drop in BP during exercise
- Unstable or acute heart failure
- Unable to maintain seated upright posture due to neurological deficits
- Recent injurious fall with out a medical examination
- Impaired cognition (to the extent of being unable to follow simple movement instructions.) (An individually tailored mobility and gentle walking and / or seated exercise programme with carer assistance may well be a possible alternative for these individuals.)

Also

People who place themselves and others at risk. Participants who are unable to monitor or modify there exercise level or technique or follow advice. Also, participants who endanger others in a way that contravenes safety standards.

PROGRAMME AIMS

The aim of the project is to bring a falls prevention programme to the local community and help those people at risk of falling, by improving quality of life by reducing the fear of falling, increasing activity levels and reducing isolation.

We have developed a 12-week programme with exercises to improve balance, strength and mobility, followed by educational workshops aiming to increase knowledge of falls prevention including how to recover from a fall, home safety and community services.

There are also free refreshments and if help is required attending the venue, free return transport can be organised with Dial a Ride.

LOCATIONS/LENGTH OF PROGRAMMES

Wycombe District Council and Bucks Social Services have offered several day care centres some within warden controlled housing schemes for the programmes to run:

The programmes will run for 12-weeks, with one 2-hour session a week.

WHAT WILL THE TEAM/SERVICE PROVIDE

There will be no charge to participants attending the programme and they will receive free benefits such as hip protectors, grab rails and home security devices.

- Pre-programme invitation to participant
- Pre-programme letter to participants GP
- Explain the programme to each participant e.g. what to expect from the programme, what to wear to each class
- Pre-programme health screen and functional assessment for each participant
- Blood pressure readings are taken in the sitting and standing position to check for a postural drop.
- A Programme booklet will be provided to each participant
- A home based exercise programme will be provided to each participant
- Provision of hip protectors to those who meet the criteria and instructions for patients
- Over a period of 10 weeks, exercise sessions will be carried out to improve static and dynamic balance, strength, mobility and confidence within a group setting.
- Tai chi at the end of each exercise session
- Falls prevention educational sessions over the period of ten weeks, including group activities, demonstrations, quizzes and handout
- Backward chaining (getting up from the floor, useful techniques are demonstrated)
- Training in how to cope with "a long lie" (frequent consequence of a fall)
- Environmental assessment if required
- Provision of appropriate equipment and environmental adaptation e.g. walking aids, grab rails, chair/bed raises. Equipment will be provided if appropriate to ensure safety. It will be assessed for and provided by a member of the falls team.
- Post-programme functional assessment
- Discharge letter to patients GP, referrer and other appropriate services
- 3mth telephone follow up check (first programme only as pilot programme for the area)

PRE-PROGRAMME

On the first session we will complete a health questionnaire and participants will be issued with free hip protectors. The exercise programme will start the following week. Participants will be requested to wear appropriate footwear, clothing and their hip protectors if accepted.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment and recording tools used are:

- Register
- Patient evaluation form (recording patient's name, personal details, medical history, and medication, blood pressure (postural drop), predisposing factors and history of falls and out come measures.
- Out-come measures include: CONF/BAL Questionnaire, Mini-Cog, Timed Up and Go, 180° Turn and feed back questionnaire

EXERCISE SESSIONS

Each session caters for a diverse range and abilities, by ensuring an appropriate level of exercise for the individual. There are seated and standing options for all exercises. Each session also provides gentle graded progressions of each exercise for different functional levels. The sessions aim to improve balance and co-ordination, increase functional capacity, increase bone and muscle mass and to increase confidence.

All sessions begin with a warm up to loosen joints, warm and stretch muscles, rehearse skills and gradually increase the demand on the heart and lungs.

Starting with chair based exercises using therabands, beanbags, balls etc, progressing to standing static and dynamic balance routines as well as balance and strengthening circuits

The cool down consists of slow rhythmic exercise, reducing joint stiffness, ending with 5 minutes of Tai Chi.

The group is seated on straight-backed sturdy chairs (preferably without armrests) in a circle. The instructor demonstrates and explains each exercise, observes and gives feed back to the patients.

Warm Up – seated → supported → free standing	12 – 15
Dynamic endurance work	10 – 15
Active post-aerobic cool-down	
Dynamic standing balance	5
Resistance	15
Flexibility/ Cool Down	5
Relaxation	2-3
Tai Chi	5-7
Coping Skills feedback	5
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1 hour 10 minutes	

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

After each exercise session the team and other health professionals will present an educational workshop for all participants.

Educational Topics include:

- Benefits of Exercise
- Home Hazards
- Healthy Eating
- Falls Prevention/How to Recover From a Fall
- Foot Care
- Community Services
- Backward Chaining
- Outdoor Mobility
- Goal Setting/Confidence Building

Handouts and quizzes offered to participants produced by the falls team include:

- The Benefits of Exercise - Handout
- A checklist for a safer home - Handout
- How to cope with a fall - Handout
- Falls quiz

Community services: Information leaflets offered to patients include:

- Safe hip “The Hip Protector” – Robinson Care
- Feel Good Keep Moving – Buckinghamshire NHS
- Avoiding Slips, trips and broken hips. How to avoid falls in the home – information for older people – DTI
- FALLS How to avoid them and how to cope – Age Concern
- Safety In Your Home – Help the Aged
- So you think you’re safe at home? - DTI
- Step up to safety – DTI
- Handy Van Scheme High Wycombe – Help the Aged
- Key safe
- Calcium Rich Foods and Bone Health – National Osteoporosis Society
- Eat Well Keep Well ‘5’ a day – Better Homes – Better Health
- Wiltshire Farm Foods the home meals service
- Dial-a-Shopper Home Delivered Meals with Shopping Service
- Cosy feet
- Wycombe Dial-A-Ride
- Community Careline services
- Independent Living

TRIGGERS FOR REFERRAL FROM EXERCISE TO MEDICAL SETTINGS

Triggers to Refer back to the GP or Physiotherapist before continued participation in the Get Fit Avoid Falls exercises programme is permitted

- Sudden onset of symptoms of illness (e.g. dizziness, inner ear infections, exercise tiredness, weight loss, loss of appetite or shortness of breath, anxiety, unidentified or uncontrolled pain)
- Worsening of existing medical condition (e.g. frequency of transient ischaemic attacks increases, swelling of an OA knee following the session etc)
- Onset of dizziness with current or new medications or concerns about whether correct pills are being taken at the correct time or dose
- Sudden onset of pain in joints (e.g. osteoarthritis of the knee, swollen joints, limping)
- Deterioration of functional capacity or balance (e.g. now needs walking aid, progressive difficulty with walking on the flat, fatigues more quickly, transfers becoming difficult)
- Increase in falls or increase in injury due to falls (e.g. starts to fall at home in repeat areas of the house or doing certain tasks, can no longer rise from the floor, injuries not healing properly, arrives with a black eye and has not been to see the GP after the last fall yet)
- Distinct changes in vision (e.g. depth perception, missing steps, light-headedness on walking downstairs with bifocals)
- Distinct changes in hearing (e.g. wax removal)

FOLLOW ON/DISCHARGE

- Outcome summary of intervention will be sent to the GP
- If patient does not complete the full twelve week programme a summary letter will be sent to GP
- 3mth telephone follow up

EVALUTION

- On completion of each programme intervention and post discharge assessment, an evaluation form will be completed for data input, and a report presented
- Feed back from patients using satisfaction questionnaire
- Meetings will be held by the Get Fit Avoid Falls team to discuss the current service and development needs

PROGRAMME PLAN

<p>Week 1</p> <p>Introduction Health Questionnaire & Blood Pressure Fitting of Hip Protectors and talk Pre programme assessments</p>	<p>Week 7</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Falls Prevention</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening Exercises (Theraband) Tai chi Educational Talk – Benefits of Exercise</p>	<p>Week 8</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Backward Chaining or Outdoor Mobility</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Home Safety Advice</p>	<p>Week 9</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Backward Chaining or Outdoor Mobility</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Handy Van Scheme</p>	<p>Week 10</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Talk – Goal Setting and Confidence Building</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercise Tai Chi Educational Talk – Healthy Feet</p>	<p>Week 11</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk –</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Educational Talk – Healthy Eating</p>	<p>Week 12</p> <p>Post Programme assessments Completion of Questionnaire</p>

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARENESS

- Clean, clear well lit area
- Location of first aid equipment
- First aider or medical personnel
- Location of nearest phones
- Location of nearest toilets
- Location of Emergency call buttons
- Location of fire exits and meeting points
- Availability of fresh drinking water

STAFF

- Two-three, staff members are required per session to carry out/supervise the programme.
- The postural stability instructors are to conduct the exercise session, and to either present or supervise the educational sessions
- Health professionals present a number of the educational sessions from Amersham and Wycombe General Hospital, these include staff from the Dietetics department and Podiatry department.

GET FIT AVOID FALLS TEAM

Staff:

Shelia Davies	- Project Lead –Health Promotion Officer Wycombe District Council
Kate Cox	- Chair NSF County sub Group For Falls and Fracture Prevention District Physiotherapist
Lucie Posnett	- Project Co-ordinator (Postural Stability Instructor Wycombe PCT)
Alison Aylen	- Physiotherapy Head of Falls Prevention and Management Programme for the community. Clinical lead for Older People Wycombe PCT
Ann Thompson	- Postural Stability Instructor (Wycombe Leisure Limited)
Steve GoldenSmith	- Day Care Project Manager for Older People Bucks Social Services
Deborah Taylor	- Health Improvement Manager Wycombe PCT

Also to include:

Day Care Centre staff, Wardens in Sheltered Housing Schemes, local Community Therapy services that present at educational workshops