

## Falls

Falls can diminish your ability to lead an active and independent life. There usually are several reasons for a fall, and the more risk factors you have, the greater your risk.

The reasons for falls are complex and include:

- Being 80 years old or older
- Leg muscle weakness
- Difficulty with balance or walking
- Vision problems (cataracts, macular degeneration, wearing bifocals)
- Medical conditions that limit your ability to get around, such as Parkinson's disease, stroke, or diabetes
- Conditions that cause confusion, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease
- Depression
- Taking more than 4 medications at the same time or psychoactive medications (such as sedatives or antidepressants)
- Using a cane or other walking device
- Home hazards (throw rugs, pets underfoot)
- Low blood pressure
- A history of previous falls



About **one third** of people over the age of 65 and almost half of people over the age of 80 will fall at least once this year.

## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

If you are worried about falling or if you recently had a fall, your physical therapist can conduct a screening of your fall risk. If the screening shows that you are at risk, the therapist will perform a thorough evaluation, and design an exercise and training program to improve your balance and strength, and may include:

- Balance Training
- Walking and Moving Improvement
- Learning to Multitask Safely
- Strength Training
- Aerobic Training
- Education
- Fear Management
- Use of community programs