

**Title of Intervention:** A Specific Balance-Strategy Training Program

**Intervention Strategies:** Individual Education, Group Education

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To reduce falls among older adults

**Population:** Individuals over 60 years of age

**Setting:** Neurological Disorders, Ageing and Balance Clinic, Department of Physiotherapy, The University of Queensland; health care facility-based

**Partners:** None mentioned

**Intervention Description:**

- Individual Education: All participants received an education booklet that provided information on reducing the risk of a fall in the home or community. Each participant also received a calendar to record slips, trips and falls and postage paid envelopes to return monthly sheets. The definition of what constituted a "slip," "trip" or "fall" was included on the front of the calendar.
- Group Education: Participants were randomly assigned to either the balance strategy or control group. The balance strategy was carried out using workout stations in a clinical setting while the control group attended community exercise sessions. Participants attended 10 weekly one-hour sessions in small groups of up to six participants.

**Theory:** Not mentioned

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Physiotherapist, physiotherapy students
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Computer for analysis and randomization
- Space: Clinical setting for balance strategy
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Fall reduction education booklet, calendar, postage paid envelopes, exercise equipment
- Evaluation: Calendar records of falls, questionnaire, balance measure equipment

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Randomized controlled trial
- Methods and Measures: Participants were assessed before and after the intervention and at 3 month follow-up. Number of falls, co-morbidities, medications, community services and activity level, functional motor ability, clinical and laboratory balance measures and fear of falling were assessed.

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: Individual group analyses indicated that those participants receiving the specific balance strategy training did better than the control exercise intervention group. The balance strategy intervention group showed significantly more improvement in functional measures than the control group. Separate group analyses indicated significantly improved performance in functional motor ability and most clinical balance measures for the balance group.
- Long Term Impact: Both the balance and the control exercise group benefited from the interventions with a significant reduction in falls.

**Maintenance:** Not mentioned

**Lessons Learned:** Specific balance strategy training using workstations is superior to traditional exercise classes for improving function and balance.

**Citation(s):**

Nitz JC, Choy NL. The efficacy of a specific balance-strategy training programme for preventing falls among older people: a pilot randomised controlled trial. *Age Ageing*. Jan 2004;33(1):52-58.