**Snacks and Science (March 19th 2025) - Frequently Asked Questions on Falls**

What should I do about balance on transit, especially on TTC streetcars and buses, when the vehicle is moving?

* To maintain balance on moving vehicles, always look for handrails and use them whenever available. It's important to find stable support when getting on transit, and if a seat is available, make sure to sit down for added stability. Do not hesitate to ask for a seat if it is occupied or request help when getting in and out of the car. People are usually willing to help. Always prioritize your safety and comfort.

What does "frailty" mean?

* Frailty can have different meanings in research, but practically, it refers to signs such as slow movement, reliance on assistive devices for mobility, fatigue, low energy levels, and malnutrition. These factors are often assessed by healthcare professionals who then make a clinical judgment of a person's level of frailty.

Is peripheral neuropathy the same as diabetic neuropathy?

* If peripheral neuropathy is caused by diabetes, then yes, they are the same. However, neuropathy can also occur due to other causes unrelated to diabetes.

What does “perturbation” mean?

* Perturbation refers to reacting to a force in order to retain your balance. For example, if someone pushes you forward, your body will automatically try to adjust to recover your balance, much like a reflex. Practicing perturbation exercises with a healthcare professional or therapist can help you learn how to recover your balance during a fall. **You should not try this at home without professional guidance.**

If you know you're going to fall, would you recommend falling forward?

* Yes and no. There are a few strategies to consider. If you know you’re going down, first assess your surroundings and try to choose a softer surface. For example, if you’re on a sidewalk, look for a patch of grass and aim to fall sideways onto it. If you’re falling backward, try to break the backward momentum and fall to the side to avoid hitting your head. Always prioritize safety and try to minimize injury.
* That said, many people describe falling as happening so quickly that there’s no time to think or make decisions in the moment. If that’s the case for you, don’t blame yourself. The most important thing is to focus on recovery and, if possible, explore ways to reduce the risk of future falls.

What about falling out of bed? Does that still count as a fall?

* Yes, falling out of bed is still considered a fall. A “fall” is anytime you come to rest at a lower level. To help prevent falls from the bed, you can use bed rails, which are available to purchase on [www.Amazon.ca.](https://www.Amazon.ca) Opting for beds with a lower height can help reduce the risk of injury.

What should I do if I fall and don't know if I’ve broken any bones? Should I try to get up?

* The first step after a fall is to assess how you're feeling. Take a moment to determine if anything hurts or if you're feeling dizzy. If you feel okay, and you can move your arms and legs without pain, you can consider a strategy for getting up.
* It’s always a good idea to call for help. However, if no one is around and you don't feel a lot of pain, try getting on all fours in a crawling position and look for something stable, such as a chair. Crawl over to the chair and use it to help you slowly get up. Always take care depending on where you’ve fallen and how you feel. If you're unsure about injuries or feel severe pain, stay put and call for assistance.

How much exercise is too much exercise?

* There is no drawback to a moderate amount of exercise; it really depends on how you’re feeling and how tired you are. Through the MacM3 study, we aim to provide personalized recommendations for how much exercise individuals need. For older adults in the community, about 7,000 steps a day may be sufficient for good health and reducing the risk of certain outcomes. However, it’s important to note that walking or powerwalking alone won’t reduce the risk of falling. To reduce fall risk, it's important to include balancing exercises that challenge your stability.

Do you fall and break your hip, or do you break your hip and then fall?

* Usually, you fall and then break your hip. In fact, according to data collected from hospitals, about 95% of all hip fractures are caused by a fall.