



Falls and Eyesight

Currently, one in seven New Zealanders are 65 and over. Around 30% to 60% of people in this age group have a fall each year. And 10% to 20% will end up in hospital with a fracture.

Those over the age of 85 are 15 times more likely to fracture their hip in a fall than a 65-year-old. Hip fractures can have a huge impact, with 30% of those over 85 who suffer one requiring placement in aged residential care.

Research shows there is a link between poor eyesight and falls in older people.

As we age most of us will become longsighted (presbyopia), making it hard to focus on things close up and we're slower to adjust to light. This is because the muscles of the eye lens harden. Eventually we will all need glasses.

Other age related eye conditions that contribute to falls are cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.



Some tips to prevent falls associated with eyesight issues:

- Get your eyes and glasses checked regularly
- As you're statistically more likely to fall in the first few days after getting new classes, be careful and don't rush!
- With bifocals, the change in focus is not instant, which is important when walking – looking from your feet to the footpath, then to the view, so be careful and slow down
- When moving from a well lit to a darker area – turn on a light or slow down so your eyes can adjust.
- On rough ground 'stop' before you look at the view.
- Clean your glasses regularly (at least daily)



Follow this advice and you will help to reduce the chances of falling. For other tips on falls prevention check out these links:

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/be_aware_of_your_feet.pdf

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/getting_yourself_up_from_the_floor_.pdf

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/footwear_matters_.pdf

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/to_exercise_or_not_to_exercise_.pdf

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/home_gym.pdf

For more information and advice on preventing falls our friendly Physiotherapists can help just contact Therapy Professionals :

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Fax: 03 377 5281

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