**SESSION FIVE HANDOUT**

**STEPPING ON**
Building confidence and reducing falls

**Session Five**

1. Today’s session introduction.
2. Review homework and exercise review.
3. Guest speaker: vision and falls.

**Break**

4. Reflections of a former participant.
5. Vitamin D and calcium — bone and muscle health.
7. Train and bus safety.
8. Homework.

Don’t give up, maintain your gains — an insurance policy for independence.
Vision and Falling
Have your eyes checked at least every two years

VISION

We all get used to living with ‘not quite’ perfect eyesight — we learn to live with it. So:

1. Have your eyes checked at least every two years with an eye specialist or optometrist. Many of us would see much better with new glasses.

2. Clean your glasses regularly. They get very dirty just by being used. This can be done with soap or detergent in the kitchen, sink, or even in the shower. You’ll be amazed at the difference.

MOVING AROUND AND ABOUT

1. When walking look about six steps ahead to give you time to adjust your steps to potential hazards.

2. When coming from outside to inside — wait till your eyes adjust before coming in. Take sunglasses off when coming inside.

LIGHTING

Buy 75 or 100 watt bulbs. Using lower watt light bulbs won’t save on power bills.

AT HOME

1. Clutter can make seeing hazards more difficult. Make sure your hallways, porches, and verandahs are free from unnecessary items. Don’t use thoroughfares as storage areas.

2. Get rid of furniture with casters like mobile TV stands or wide legs like table legs that can stick out and intrude into the traffic ways where you walk. Get rid of those sausage-shaped draft excluders used to put under doors.

3. Check that there is enough colour contrast between furniture and walls/curtains. For example, a white coffee table on a white carpet is easy to trip over.
CATARACTS

If you have cataracts and have had a fall see your doctor and talk about an early referral for cataract treatment. Cataracts can make it difficult to see when moving about and research shows a link between cataracts and falls. Some lighting conditions, such as glare, can also make it more difficult to see with cataracts.

BIFOCALS & MULTIFOCALS

Bifocals are good for seeing long and short distances at the same time. However, they make step edges, paving edges, gutters and stairs inside and outside difficult to see. Be wary and learn to adjust your head to see. Indoors, it may be satisfactory to take bifocals off when going up steps or stairs.

NIGHT VISION

At night if your vision is worse, (because for example, you don’t have glasses on) then your balance can be worse. You may also become disoriented in the dark. It is important to use some kind of lighting at night. Photosensitive lights that plug into the power point can help light up a walkway. These can be bought at supermarkets. Touch lamps, bedside lights and torches are a good idea. Install light switches at the top and bottom of stairways.

IF GLARE IS A PROBLEM

1. Buy cheap netting or lace curtains to cover windows to shield from the sun in summer.
2. Reduce glare by checking for reflective surfaces and unshielded light bulbs.
3. Halogen lighting gives a bright but diffuse lighting and can reduce glare.
4. Wear a hat outside and wear sunglasses suitable for your eye condition.

An eye specialist can give you eye exercises and low vision aids to make best use of your vision.

Wear your glasses and have regular check ups.
Vitamin D, Calcium and Hip Fracture

Sunlight is best source of vitamin D

- Helps prevent hip fracture.
- Increases bone mass.
- Increases muscle strength.

How much sunlight?

- ______ minutes in summer and ______ minutes in winter.
- Five to six times during each week.
Vitamin D, Calcium and Hip Fracture

- Helps absorb calcium.
- Makes bones and muscle stronger.
Bus Travel Safety

Planning
1. Have your money ready.
2. Be early so that you are first in the line.
3. Travel in non-peak times (10am–2pm) when there are fewer crowds.
4. There may be bus routes with accessible buses. Find out the bus timetables so you can plan ahead. These allow easy access on and off the bus if you need it and are not just for wheelchair access.
5. Take a backpack in case you see little things to buy.
6. Go to the bigger stores with a friend.

On the bus
1. Ask the driver not to take off until you’re seated.
2. Take the first seat — up front if possible.
3. Keep a hand free to hold on.
4. Don’t get out of your seat or change seats when the bus is moving.

Getting off the bus
1. Always ask the bus driver to pull up as close to the sidewalk as possible. Tell him you have a problem getting out even if you don’t.
2. When you get off the bus, pause, and go in the direction the bus is travelling.
3. If you have trouble with your knees — go down the bus steps sideways, or even backwards. It might help.
4. There is often a sign nearby the bus stop. Use it to help you up the gutter.
5. Thank the driver when he is helpful.
Train Travel Safety

Planning
1. Be early so you don’t have to rush.
2. Ask the ticket seller which platform to go to.
3. Call ahead to find out about the station you are leaving from or travelling to. You can find out if it has a lift, if the platform is curved or not (it might have a gap if it is curved), if steps have a handrail, etc.
4. If you use a cane be sure and take it when traveling by train.
5. Travel in non-peak times (10am–2pm) when there are less crowds.

Getting on and off
1. Ask the guard (or someone at the station) to help you.
2. Take your time getting on.
3. Get on and off in the middle of the train near the blue signal carriage.
4. If you can, sit in the first seating area to avoid the stairs.
5. If you have trouble with your knees, try getting off sideways, holding the rail.

Local knowledge
__________________________ station has

✓ Check if yes:
☐ Stairs with a handrail
☐ Hearing help
☐ Taxi and buses nearby
☐ Elevator
☐ Escalator
Sun Time Check List

I have had 20 minutes in the sun on:

(✓ tick which days)

☐ Monday
☐ Tuesday
☐ Wednesday
☐ Thursday
☐ Friday
☐ Saturday
☐ Sunday

Target: 3 – 4 days per week