As your strength and balance improve, walks will be easier.

Ask questions about side effects of medications. It’s your body.

Session Six
1. Today’s session introduction.
2. Review homework.
3. Guest speaker: medication and falls.
4. Strength and balance exercise led by the physiotherapist.

Break
5. Mobility mastery experiences.
6. Sleeping better.
7. Homework.
Falls Prevention & Managing Your Medicines

Medicines and falls
You may be at greater risk of falling because you:
• Take a medicine known to increase the risk of falling.
• Simply take four or more different types of regular medications.

What are medicines?
Medicines come in many forms, including tablets and capsules, skin patches, liquids, eye drops, sprays, inhalers, creams, suppositories and injections and are those:
• Prescribed by doctors, naturopaths, herbalists or homeopaths.
• Purchased by yourself from chemists, supermarkets or health food shops.

What types of medicines can increase the risk of falling?
• Sleeping tablets.
• Medications taken for anxiety and depression.
• Sometimes there can be an added risk when different medicines are combined.

What do I need to look out for?
• Drowsiness
• Unsteadiness
• Dizziness
• Blurred or double vision
• Light headedness
• Difficulty thinking clearly

Remember that:
• All medicines have unwanted effects and that some unwanted effects can increase the risk of falling.
• Medicines affect different people in different ways — never take someone else’s medications.
• Medicine effects can change when different medicines (including what you purchase yourself or obtain from a naturopath) are combined.
• It is not always easy to notice if you have been affected by a new medicine or a change in dose of a medicine you already take — you may feel better than before and may not notice that you are a little less steady on your feet or that your vision is slightly blurred.
• Alcohol can react with medicines — always check the medicine labels and follow the instructions or ask your doctor and pharmacist.
• As you get older you may not need as high a dose as when you are younger, and you may be more prone to have side effects; you may need less of a dose.
What should I do?

- Have your medicines and dosages reviewed on a regular basis — ask your doctor which of your medications could increase your risk of falling. If you are on medications that could increase your risk of falling, ask if the dose can be reduced.

- Ask your doctor about organising a pharmacist to visit you at home under the Home Medicines Review free service.

- Tell your doctor if you have felt any of the unwanted effects, particularly those listed above and especially if you have started a new medicine or a dose of your medicine has been changed.

- Ask your doctor and pharmacist about ways to deal with sleep problems without using sleeping tablets. Talk to them about reviewing and reducing the dosage.

- Talk to your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking or thinking of taking any vitamin or herbal products, painkillers or any products that you purchase yourself.

- Ask your pharmacist and doctor about using an aid to help organise your medicines, for example a ‘box’ type that you or your carer can fill each week or a ‘blister’ pack where all your medicines are sealed into a ‘bubble’ for dose times (i.e., morning, dinner, night-time) and that is prepared by your pharmacist each week.

Talk to your doctor and pharmacist

- Know what each medicine is for, how and when to take it. Know the benefits and risk of all the medicines you take and learn the names.

- *Consumer Medicine Information* leaflets are available in large print from your pharmacy for every prescription medicine and for some medicines that you buy without prescription.

- Ask the doctor or pharmacist to explain the information in the leaflet.

Use a medicine review card and keep an up-to-date list of all the medicines you take.

Show the list to health professionals when you have appointments, including your dentist.
Sleeping Better

Sleeping pills
It is best to avoid taking sleeping pills if you can. The side effects of taking sleeping pills for a long time can be:

- Daytime hangover effects.
- Daytime sleepiness.
- Falls and confusion.
- More sleep problems.

How to sleep better
1. Go to bed when you are ready to sleep. Current research has shown that just going to bed half an hour later can work.
2. Have a bedtime ritual — do the same thing each night.
3. Avoid coffee and other drinks and foods with stimulants.
4. Regular exercise is very important.
5. If you cannot sleep at night then read or do some quiet activity. This works best if you don’t stay in bed. Get up if you can — if it’s not too cold.
6. Avoid daytime naps.
7. Keep the bedroom just for sleeping — and sexual activity.
8. Keep clock faces turned away and try not to check the time when you awaken during the night.
9. Have a special ‘worry time’ before you go to sleep.
10. Have enough daylight during the day — natural light helps with sleep/night cycles.
11. Try relaxation or other special ways of helping you sleep. Your library may loan relaxation tapes.
12. Try not to worry about not sleeping.
**My Medications**

- List all medicines.
- Keep this form up-to-date.
- Keep it with you at all times.
- Share it with your doctors, hospital, nurses and pharmacist.
- If you have questions, ask your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

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<thead>
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<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>Doctor’s phone no.</td>
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<td>Pharmacy name and address</td>
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<td>List any allergies you may have</td>
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<td>Notes and comments</td>
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## Personal Medication Record Card

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<th>Name of Medicine</th>
<th>Dose (mg, ml, units, drops)</th>
<th>When do you take this medicine? (check time)</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>Bedtime</th>
<th>Why do you take it?</th>
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