Helpful Tips:

Check with your healthcare provider about the right walking aid to use. Ask about a walker with a seat attached if you fatigue easily and need frequent rest breaks.

Check the tips of your cane or walker to make sure they have nonskid covers.

Sit down to get dressed.

Use a fanny pack or backpack to keep your hands free.

Move slowly from room to room. Don't rush.

Do not try going up or down stairs using a walker.



Done in collaboration with



HOW CAN <u>YOU</u> PREVENT FALLS?

Your Trusted Partner In Health

SLVH.ORG

719-589-8100

Prevention is Key

The leading cause of injury in older adults is caused by falls. While most can be minor, others can be a life changing event. Our goal at San Luis Valley Health is to

keep our patients, family and friends safe and free from harm. Here are a few quick pointers we wanted to share.



Keep in mind, prevention is the best medicine!

Exercise in any form is good to maintain strength and balance, no matter what age. Exercises such as walking, swimming, yoga or resistance training are all excellent exercises that can help improve strength and balance. Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.



If you live alone, consider an Emergency Alert System or EMS activation device!

Consider having a consult with your local physical or occupational therapist to identify problems and suggest solutions.



REMEMBER:

Your SLV Health Physical or Occupational therapist can assist you in providing tips and educating you, and/or family members on how to safely transfer in/out of vehicles.

Physical Therapy and Occupational services are offered at:

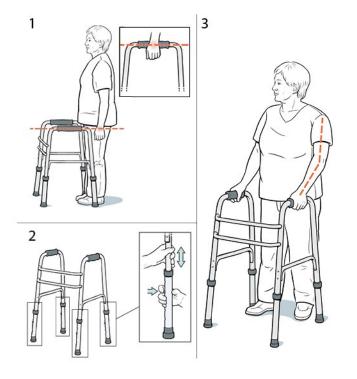
Stuart Avenue Clinic (719) 589-8100 to make an appointment. Fax number is (719) 589-8101.

Monte Vista PRO Therapy (719) 852-5144 to make an appointment. Fax number is (719) 852-5145.

Conejos County Hospital (719) 274-6025 to make an appointment. Fax number is (719) 274-6017.

Get to know your walker

- 1. Roll the walker, or lift it, forward about 12 inches.
- 2. Step forward with your weaker leg first.
- 3. Use the walker to help keep your balance.
- 4. Bring your other foot forward to the center of the walker.
- 5. Then start over again from Step 1.



IMPORTANT TIPS:

You should have slight bend at your elbow joint.

Other Important Tips

Have your vision checked regularly or as recommended by your provider. Problems with vision can affect depth perception, and glaring or blind spots can affect your balance. Keep your glasses or contact lenses clean.

Keep a current list of medication and allergies with you. Review your medication with your doctor or pharmacist to determine which ones can affect balance and mental awareness. Be aware of side effects of all medications you take. Also be aware of medications that can cause complications such as bleeding which can also affect you if you fall.

It's also important to check your hearing regularly as well. Poor hearing and inner ear conditions such as vertigo, dizziness, can cause problems with balance.



Visit Audiologist Dr. Linda Vaughan, SLV Health 719-589-8087

Stay safe inside/outside your home

- Work on strength, balance and resistance training.
- Keep pathways clear of cords, oxygen tubing, or other tripping hazards.
- Remove clutter.
- Keep floors clean and dry.
- Replace or repair damaged flooring and/or sidewalks.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Use nightlights.
- Apply non-skid decals or glow-in-the-dark tape to stairs or floor level changes.
- Apply non-skid tape in the tub or shower. Consider a tub chair.
- Get an elevated toilet seat.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom around the toilet and shower.
- Avoid wearing long robes, nightgowns or clothing.
- Wear shoes or slippers that fit well and stay securely on your feet.
- Use a step stool. Avoid climbing on furniture to reach things.
- Be careful with pets. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Take your time. SLOW DOWN!!



Are you NEW to an assistive device (walker, cane, etc.)?

- Be sure your assistive device fits to <u>your</u> specific height.
- Handles of walkers and canes should be at wrist height when standing upright.
- Cane should be used in hand <u>opposite</u> of injured or weaker leg.

weaker leg



TIP: Keep your walking aid within easy reach when you are in a chair or in bed.

Follow these steps when using a cane:

- 1. Get your balance.
- 2. Move the cane and your weaker leg forward.
- 3. Support your weight on both the cane and the weaker side.
- 4. Step with your stronger leg.