

# American Academy of Pediatrics

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## **“DON’T LET GRAVITY BE YOUR DOWNFALL”: NEW GUIDELINES HELP SENIORS STAY SOLIDLY ON THEIR FEET AND FREE OF INJURY**

National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) Team Up on New Falls Prevention PSA Campaign for Seniors

**ROSEMONT, Ill. and DALLAS, March 5, 2007** – To help America’s seniors stay on their feet and free of injury, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) have developed a set of simple guidelines designed to help older Americans avoid falls and lower the incidence of serious injury when falls occur. The two organizations will launch a public service announcement (PSA) campaign in March 2007 to spread the word to active seniors. “More and more American seniors are remaining active as they age, which is a very positive and healthy trend; however, as we age our bones become more brittle and the risk of serious injury from falling down also increases,” said James H. Beaty, MD, president of AAOS. “Seniors can help protect themselves against injuries by making some very simple changes around the house and by adopting an ongoing exercise regime.

“One in three adults over age 65 falls each year in the United States, adds Chuck Kimmel, ATC, president of NATA. “Falling injuries for senior citizens can be not only traumatic, but also life threatening and the healing process is slower. Incorporating balance, strength and flexibility routines into daily activities is essential to stave off the risk of falling.” NATA and AAOS offer active seniors the following guidelines to guard against injuries caused by falling:

### **Keep your muscles and bones strong, by following an exercise regimen:**

- Strength training with weight bearing and resistive exercise works for all age groups.
- Practice exercises designed to help improve balance.
- Exercise at least three days a week to improve strength, flexibility and balance.
- Choose low-impact exercises to avoid stress on your joints.
- Stretch daily to improve flexibility and mobility.
- Be creative! Try Tai Chi, pilates and yoga for variety.

### **Make your home safer by making some simple improvements:**

- Good lighting, without extension cords, to eliminate dark areas.
- Slip-resistant walking surfaces.
- Grab-bars and a night light in the bathroom.
- Handrails on both sides of stairs extending one foot beyond last step.

- Remove throw rugs from doorways and hallways.

**If you have fallen before, follow these recommendations:**

- Consider a full physical evaluation and balance screen, including vision and hearing tests.
- Wear shoes with good support, such as lace-up oxford shoes with leather soles and rubber heels.