PREVENTING FALLS: PATIENT HANDOUT
Finding & Fixing Fall-Risk Factors

Among Adults with Lower-Limb Loss, Falls Occur…¹
- **When?** – Most frequently when transferring (e.g., going from sitting to standing).
- **Where?** – Nearly 2/3 of falls occur in the home.

What Factors Affect Fall Risk?²⁻⁹

- **General Factors**
  - **Non-modifiable:** Female sex, increased age, non-white race, vascular disease, & cognitive (e.g., memory) problems
  - **Modifiable:** Back or joint pain, leg muscle weakness, & fatigue

- **Amputation-Related Factors**
  - **Non-modifiable:** <4 years since amputation, higher level of amputation

- **Prosthesis-Specific Factors**
  - **Modifiable:** lack of routine maintenance, poor socket fit, poor prosthesis alignment, limited motion of prosthetic foot

- **Environmental Factors**
  - **Modifiable:** slippery surfaces, poor lighting, low furniture, high shelves, lack of handrails, tripping hazards (e.g., wires, pets), poorly maintained streets/sidewalks

Why Do So Many Adults with Lower-Limb Loss Fall?¹⁰

Balance Consists of….

1. **Vestibular System** – located in the inner ear, this tells you how your head is moving and what position it’s in. 1 in 5 adults with lower-limb loss have an issue with their vestibular system.

2. **Somatosensory System** – Receptors in your muscles tell you where your body is in space. The prosthesis doesn’t have these, so your somatosensory system is impaired.

3. **Vision** – people with lower-limb loss rely heavily on their vision, which requires constant attention to surroundings to prevent a fall.

How Do I Fall Safely?

Do…
- Protect your head.
- Aim to land on meaty body parts.
- Roll into the fall.

Do NOT…
- Lock up your arms or legs.
- Fall on an outstretched hand.
How Do I Get Up If I Fall?

Getting Up from the Floor

1. Get on your hands and knees
2. Place your sound foot forward under your torso with your foot flat on the floor, balancing on your hands and prosthetic-side knee
3. Extend your sound knee while keeping your weight on your sound side
4. Push with your arms & sound leg
5. Bring your prosthesis forward when you are almost upright

Getting Up with a Chair

1. Move into a kneeling position facing a chair
2. Move your prosthetic out to the side with the knee straight
3. Push through the chair and bring your sound limb under your body, straightening your leg
4. Bring your prosthetic side under your body

This document was created based on the below references that are available online through PubMed at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ (note: some references require a fee to access):