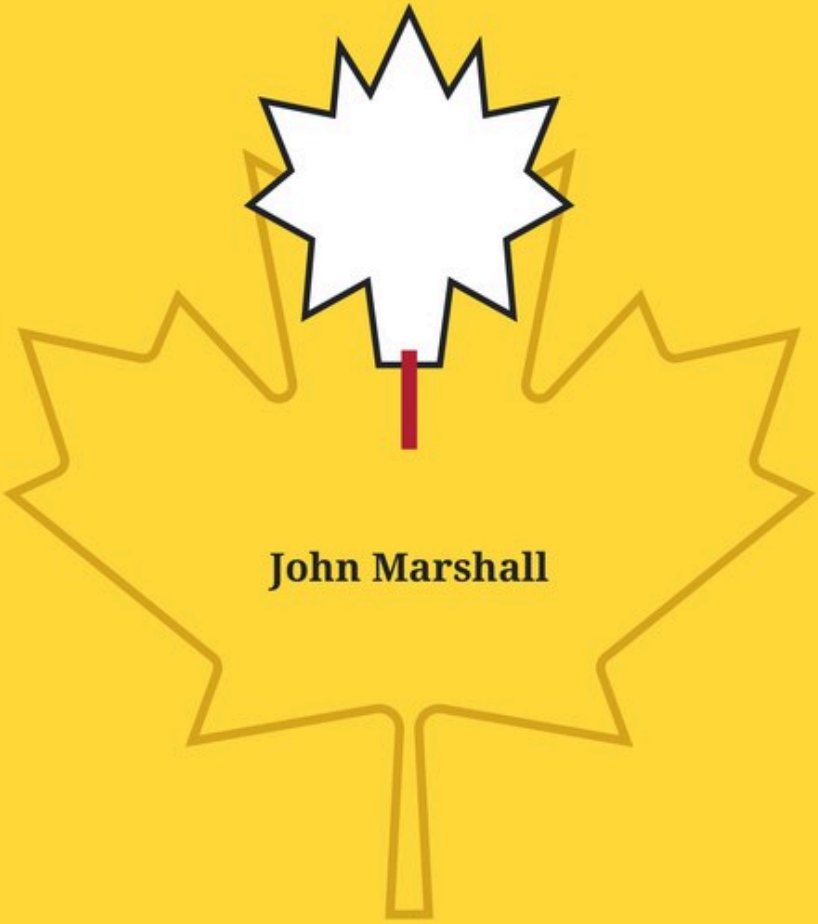
THE PROOF SERIES

A PLAYFUL GUIDE TO STAYING STEADY AT HOME

Fall Proof

Why falls happen and how to prevent them — room by room, step by step — in plain language, with big type and a few laughs.



John Marshall

PROUDLY CANADIAN



PROUDLY CANADIAN

Fall Proof: Staying Steady, Strong & Safe at Home

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

By John Marshall

www.buyproof.ca

KNOW YOUR BODY

Why Falls Happen More After 65

One in three Canadians over 65 falls at least once a year. It is not clumsiness and it is not bad luck — it is biology, and biology can be outsmarted.

Learn the causes › Fix the home › Train the body › Stay steady

1. Blame the wiring, not yourself — Balance depends on your eyes, inner ears, and the sensors in your feet and joints. All three get a little quieter with age, like a radio losing its signal.

2. Muscles shrink quietly — After 60, adults can lose 3 to 8 percent of muscle each decade. Weaker legs mean a small trip becomes a big fall instead of a funny story.

3. Reaction time stretches — Catching yourself mid-stumble takes fast feet and quick decisions. Both slow down with age — which is why prevention beats recovery.

4. Good news first — Falls are not inevitable. Studies show balance training and home fixes cut fall risk dramatically. This book is your toolkit for both.

TALE

E STORY

Margaret, 78, blamed her tumble on the cat.
Her doctor blamed weaker ankle muscles and a dim hallway. The cat was innocent; the hallway got a nightlight.

!

Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalizations for Canadian seniors — and most happen at home, not on icy sidewalks.

Take care: A fall that causes a head strike, loss of consciousness, or a suspected fracture needs medical attention the same day. Do not tough it out.

YOUR BALANCE TEAM

Three Systems Keep You Upright

Staying upright is a team sport. Your eyes, your inner ears, and your body's position sensors all vote on where you are — and your brain tallies the votes.

Eyes watch › Ears level › Feet report › Brain balances

1. Eyes: the lookouts — Vision tells your brain where the floor is and what is coming. Poor lighting or outdated glasses make the lookouts report fuzzy news.

2. Inner ears: the level — Tiny structures in your inner ear sense head motion and tilt, like a carpenter's level. Ear infections or crystals out of place can tilt the reading.

3. Feet and joints: the scouts — Nerves in your feet and ankles report every wobble instantly. Numbness from diabetes or poor circulation mutes these scouts.

4. When one teammate naps — If one system weakens, the others cover for it — until a dark room plus a slippery floor overwhelms the backup crew. Keep all three in shape.

TALE

E STORY

Gordon, 81, discovered his dizziness only struck in the dark.

His eyes had been doing all the balancing work for years; his inner ears had quietly retired.

!

Standing on one foot while brushing your teeth is a free daily balance test. If 10 seconds feels hard, your team needs practice.

Take care: Sudden dizziness, spinning, or fainting is not normal aging. See your doctor promptly — it can signal blood pressure or heart issues.

STRONG LEGS, STEADY YOU

Muscles: Use Them or Lose Them

Your legs are your shock absorbers. Strong thighs and calves catch you when you trip; weak ones file the paperwork for a fall.

Notice weakness › Start small › Repeat daily › Stay strong

1. The quiet shrinkage — Muscle loss speeds up after 60, especially in the legs. You will not notice it until a curb feels taller than it used to.

2. Strength is recoverable — Even in your 80s and 90s, muscles respond to exercise. Chair stands and short walks rebuild the catching power surprisingly fast.

3. Bones need the memo too — Weight-bearing movement tells bones to stay dense. A stronger skeleton turns a would-be fracture into a bruise.

4. Start embarrassingly small — Five chair stands a day beats zero heroic gym sessions. Consistency builds the muscle; ambition builds excuses.

TALE

E STORY

Ruth, 84, started doing chair stands during TV commercials.
Three months later she caught herself on a loose rug — and laughed instead of falling.

!

Protein matters as much as exercise: most older adults need a palm-sized portion of protein at each meal to rebuild muscle.

Take care: Sharp joint pain during exercise is a stop sign, not a challenge. Muscle effort is fine; joint pain means check with your doctor or physiotherapist.

MIND OVER WOBBLE

The Fear-of-Falling Trap

Here is the cruel joke: being afraid of falling makes you more likely to fall. Fear stiffens your walk, shrinks your world, and weakens your legs.

Notice the fear › Learn the skill › Fix the hazard › Live large

1. Spot the spiral — Fear leads to less movement, less movement leads to weaker muscles, weaker muscles lead to real unsteadiness — which justifies the fear. Round and round.

2. Name it to tame it — Admitting you are nervous on stairs or ice is not weakness; it is data. Data can be acted on. Denial just keeps you home.

3. Replace fear with skill — Each chapter of this book replaces one vague worry with one concrete skill: a grab bar here, a balance drill there, better shoes everywhere.

4. Keep your world big — Skipping the stairs, the walk, the outing shrinks life. Fix the hazard instead of avoiding the room — your world stays wide.

TALE

E STORY

After one fall, Helen, 79, stopped visiting her garden.
A handrail on the back steps and two weeks of balance drills later, the tomatoes missed her no more.

!

Community balance classes — often free at Canadian community centres and seniors' centres — cut fall risk and the fear itself.

Take care: If fear keeps you from leaving home or doing daily tasks, tell your doctor. Anxiety about falling is treatable, not a life sentence.

TRUTH SERUM

Five Myths About Falling

Falls come wrapped in folklore. Let us unwrap five stubborn myths so they stop steering your decisions.

Hear the myth › Check the facts › Act on truth › Skip the fall

1. Myth: falls are just part of aging — False. Falling is common but not normal or inevitable. Most risk factors — weak legs, poor lighting, slippery tubs — are fixable.

2. Myth: staying still keeps you safe — The opposite. Inactivity weakens the very muscles that catch you. Safe movement beats fearful stillness every time.

3. Myth: it only happens to frail people — Active, healthy seniors fall too — on stairs, in bathrooms, on clutter. Vigilance is for everyone, not just the visibly frail.

4. Myth: one fall means it is all downhill — One fall is a warning light, not a verdict. People who act on it — exercise, home fixes, medication review — often never fall again.

TALE

STORY

Frank, 76, insisted falls were for old people — until he slipped getting out of the tub.
He now tells everyone at coffee row that grab bars are for smart people.

!

Myth five: strong people do not need grab bars. Grab bars are like seatbelts — for everyone, used before you need them.

Take care: Do not let myth-busting make you reckless. Confidence should come from preparation, not from pretending hazards do not exist.

TEAM HUDDLE

When to Talk to Your Doctor

Some fall risks live inside your body, not your hallway. Your doctor and pharmacist are fall-prevention teammates — recruit them.

Book the visit › Bring the list › Report falls › Follow referrals

1. Book a fall-risk review — Ask for a yearly check focused on falls: blood pressure sitting and standing, medications, vision, feet, and a quick balance test.

2. Bring your medication list — Dizziness, drowsiness, and low blood pressure are common drug side effects. A review often finds one culprit to adjust.

3. Report every fall — Even a no-injury tumble is valuable data. Patterns — always in the morning, always on stairs — point straight at the cause.

4. Ask about referrals — Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and optometrists all play a part. In Canada, a doctor's referral often unlocks covered visits.

TALE

TALE STORY

Eleanor's doctor spotted her blood pressure medication as the morning-dizziness culprit.
One timing change later, the hallway stopped spinning.

!

Many provinces cover one comprehensive eye exam per year for seniors — an easy, free fall-prevention win.

Take care: Never stop or change a prescription on your own because it might cause dizziness. Adjustments are a team decision with your prescriber.



BATHROOM BASICS

Grab Bars: Your Bathroom's Best Friend

The bathroom is fall headquarters: hard surfaces, water, and slippery footing. A grab bar turns a gamble into a grip.

Buy real bars › **Find the studs** › **Mount firmly** › **Grip daily**

1. Bar, not towel rack — Towel bars pull out of drywall under body weight. Real grab bars are stainless steel, rated for 250+ pounds, and anchored into studs.

2. Place the trio — The classic setup: one horizontal bar by the toilet, one horizontal plus one vertical (or L-shaped) in the shower or tub. Cover every transition.

3. Hire the install — A handyperson charges roughly $100–$200 CAD per bar installed. It is the highest-value fall-prevention purchase in this entire book.

4. Test before you trust — Pull hard on every new bar. It should feel like part of the wall — because it is. Wobbly bars get re-anchored, not tolerated.

TALE

E STORY

After his bar went in, Doug, 82, demonstrated it to every visitor like a new grandchild.

His daughter finally admitted the bathroom felt safer for her too.

!

Suction-cup grab bars are for balance assistance only — they can pop off without warning. For catching a fall, only screwed-in bars count.

Take care: Never grab a shower curtain rod, glass door, or towel ring to steady yourself. They are decoration with delusions of strength.

GRIP THE FLOOR

Non-Slip Mats and Strips

Wet porcelain has the friction of a skating rink. Mats and strips add the grip your feet are begging for.

Cover the tub › Cover the floor › Check the grip › Replace yearly

1. Mat inside the tub — Choose a mat with strong suction cups that covers the whole standing area, not a decorative postage stamp. Replace it when cups stop gripping.

2. Mat outside the tub — A washable, rubber-backed bath mat catches drips and wet feet. Skid-proof backing matters more than pretty patterns.

3. Adhesive strips as backup — Textured stick-on strips on the tub floor work where mats slide. Clean and dry the surface first, and replace strips yearly.

4. Mind the mat edges — Curling mat corners are trip hazards wearing a disguise. Flat, heavy mats or taped edges keep the solution from becoming the problem.

TALE

STORY

Irene's new bath mat curled at the corner and nearly sent her flying.
She taped the edges down and now inspects mats like a building inspector.

!

A full set of quality bath mats and tub strips costs under $50 CAD at any Canadian hardware or department store.

Take care: Throw rugs without rubber backing are banned from bathrooms. They slide on wet tile like tiny magic carpets — minus the magic.

SIT DOWN TO SHOWER

Shower Seats and Benches

Standing on one soapy foot to wash the other is advanced gymnastics. A shower seat turns it into a relaxing sit-down.

Choose a seat › Test stability › Add handheld spray › Shower seated

1. Pick your perch — Freestanding stools ($40–$80 CAD), tub-edge benches, and wall-mounted fold-down seats all work. Match the seat to your tub or shower size.

2. Rubber feet are mandatory — Every leg needs a non-slip rubber foot. Test the seat on a dry floor first: push it hard. No skating allowed.

3. Add a handheld showerhead — A handheld wand ($25–$60 CAD) pairs perfectly with a seat. You stay seated, the water comes to you, and hoses beat acrobatics.

4. Keep soap within reach — A corner caddy or suction shelf at seated arm height ends the bend-and-stretch soap retrieval mission.

TALE

E STORY

Bill resisted a shower seat for a year, calling it surrender.

Now he calls it the best seat in the house — and his back agrees.

!

Occupational therapists can recommend the right seat height — your hips should sit slightly above your knees for easy standing.

Take care: Plastic patio chairs are not shower seats. They can crack, tip, and slide. Use equipment designed for wet bathrooms.

THRONE UPGRADE

Raised Toilet Seats

Low toilets demand deep knee bends twice a day or more. A raised seat shortens the journey and spares your joints.

Measure your toilet › Choose the type › Clamp it on › Sit and rise

1. Measure first — Standard toilets sit about 15 inches high; comfort height is 17–19. Measure yours so the seat adds the right lift.

2. Choose your type — Clamp-on raised seats ($30–$70 CAD) fit most toilets without tools. Full replacement comfort-height toilets cost more but feel best.

3. Lock it down — Clamp-on seats must lock firmly with no wobble. Test with a firm side push before trusting it. Wobble means re-clamp, not tolerate.

4. Add a bar nearby — Pair the seat with the grab bar from page 7. Pushing up with your arms while the seat boosts your hips makes rising almost effortless.

TALE

STORY

Phyllis, 80, got her raised seat and announced she could now 'rise like royalty.' Her knees sent a thank-you note.

! Some raised seats include side handles — a two-in-one that adds arm support where toilets offer none.

Take care: Portable raised seats are not for travel — an unstable seat on an unfamiliar toilet is worse than a low familiar one.

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