



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington
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PRESS RELEASE:

Online Falls Prevention Class Available This Spring for Older Adults

A free, online version of the award-winning *A Matter of Balance* falls prevention class for adults age 60 and older is being offered this spring by Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW). The evidence-based class helps adults who are concerned about falling maintain their independence while safely staying involved in activities they enjoy. Those who take this class will learn how to reduce their fear of falling and engage in more activities this spring and summer.

People who wish to enroll should do so no later than Monday, April 4th for the online class that will be held Tuesday and Thursday afternoons over five weeks starting Tuesday, April 12th. Phone 509-458-2509 x336 for more information and to register.

“A fall that happens in a moment can drastically alter the rest of one’s life,” said Kathy Hill, an ALTCEW *A Matter of Balance* master trainer. “But most falls can be prevented. *A Matter of Balance* encourages older adults to find healthy ways to prevent falls and stay active.”

Falling is NOT a normal part of aging, and yet many older adults regularly deal with falls, near falls, and losses of balance. Each year in Washington State, about one in four adults age 65 and older reports falling. Nationwide, about 37% of falls tend to result in injury that restricts activity or require medical treatment, including broken bones and brain trauma (1).

Falls taken by older adults are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations and deaths in Spokane County, according to the City of Spokane and Spokane Valley fire departments (2020).

An online *A Matter of Balance* class consists of nine two-hour sessions for a group of eight to twelve participants led by two certified coaches. Sessions include group conversation, problem solving, gentle physical exercise, and assertiveness training. Class-related tech support and computer skills training are included with the free class.

More than 500 people have completed in-person *A Matter of Balance* classes held in communities in Spokane County and, through a partnership with Rural Resources Community Action, in northern Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Whitman counties since the fall of 2015, when ALTCEW brought the class to the area.

What Participants are Saying

- “I am grateful this class is offered. This is a tremendous help to the community.”
- “I’ve become more aware of all my surroundings.”
- “I learned what I really needed for the future.”
- “I was amazed to learn how much feet & ankle strength & feeling contribute to balance.”



Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) is a social service agency that supports the well-being of older adults, adults living with disabilities, and their care partners. The goal is to connect such individuals with the best home and community-based services to support healthy living and aging in their homes in their communities. ALTCEW is the local Area Agency on Aging for northern Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Whitman Counties.

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(1) (July 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/data/falls-by-state.html>)