

# Leaves Fall... But You Don't Have To



**Older adults participating in a tai chi demonstration at 1 Centre Street for Falls Prevention Awareness Week**

As the weather gets cooler and leaves begin to turn, we look forward to getting together to watch sports with friends and family, exercise outside in the nice cool air, and of course, take part in the events that are being hosted by Older Adult Centers across the city. September also includes the annual Falls Prevention Awareness Week, a time dedicated to informing older adults how to prevent themselves from accidentally falling.

Recognized across the country, Falls Prevention Awareness Week overlaps

with the first day of fall, and the New York City Department for the Aging, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and local health care organizations, hosted in-person and online events to help residents remain healthy and active. The informational seminars are not just for older adults, they are also for healthcare professionals and caregivers – those who are taking care of an older adult at home. This year, the week culminated with a fun-filled event at 1 Centre Street, on Friday, September 23, with featured speakers and a tai chi class to build strength.

Falls are more common than you think. The most recent data from the Department of Health shows that over 30,000 older adults in New York City were admitted to the hospital because they fell, and falls continue to be the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. But you are not alone if it happens

to you, and you can prevent yourself from falling.

There are several steps though you can take to prevent yourself from falling:

- Visit an eye doctor at least once a year to make sure you can see properly and get prescription glasses if you need them.
- Hearing is closely linked to how well you are able to balance yourself, so look into the new opportunity to purchase a hearing aid over the counter at your local pharmacy, or be sure to make an appointment with your doctor to see if a hearing aid can help you.
- Since most accidents happen at home, keep paths around you clear, place a nonslip mat in your bathtub, and do not use throw rugs, because you can slip while walking on them. If you want to keep your rug, secure it with double sided tape.

• Take your medications correctly. Prescriptions can have different effects on different people, making it important to take them the way your doctor prescribed.

• Exercising is also an important part of preventing yourself from falling because it increases your balance. This is in addition to both the physical and mental benefits exercising provides.

While Falls Prevention Awareness Week takes place in September, there are resources available all year long that can help prevent you from falling at Older Adult Centers in your neighborhood, in addition to all the activities and resources they provide. I encourage you to visit yours today.



*NYC Department for the Aging  
Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez*