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## How To Discuss

Older adults highly value their independence and worry about the implications of being labeled as a fall risk. They may not openly discuss their concerns about falling. As such, it may be necessary for you to initiate the discussion.

It is important to highlight to your patient that the goal of this program is to keep him or her independent, active, and at home for as long as possible.

You should emphasize that the program will provide education and support that will help your patient stay active and reduce his or her risk of falling. It may also be useful to highlight the social benefits of the program and the fact that many patients like him or her have benefited greatly.

### ➔ WHAT IS IT?

A **group-based, exercise and education program** for older adults developed in Washington State with support from the CDC. The program is **delivered by health professionals with experience in fitness or exercise science that have completed SAIL training**. Exercise sessions are offered for **1 hour 3 times per week for up to 1 year** and are combined with **falls prevention group education**. The exercise sessions include a combination of **aerobic conditioning, progressive strength training, and balance exercises known to impact fall risk**. The **education component** is delivered as “health tips” during stretching exercises and covers topics such as falls risk and prevention, exercising after illness or injury, home safety, medication safety, footwear, use of gait devices, and strategies for exercise adherence.

### ➔ WHO IS IT FOR?

Any **community-dwelling older adult (age>65)** with a fear of falling or prior fall. Because the program focuses heavily on in-person and group-based exercise, it is **ideal for individuals that want to stay active and need accountability and structure**. It is also great for people that are lonely and could benefit from ongoing social interaction. This may be a good falls prevention program for individuals that do not want to be labeled as attending a “falls prevention program” or for those that have “graduated out” of a Matter of Balance.

### ➔ WHAT DOES IT DO?

The program **focuses on teaching and practicing exercises** that improve strength and flexibility and reduce the risk of falling. [Original RCT of the 12-month program](#) showed a **25% reduction in falls** among community-dwelling adults age >65, but lacked statistical power. Significant improvements were seen in **balance** (Berg Balance), **mobility** (Timed Up and Go), and **leg strength**. The more sessions participants attend, the greater the benefits. [Follow-up translational study in 2011](#) showed participant-reported improvements in **performance of daily activities, strength, balance, fitness, and flexibility**. 80% found the education component helpful.