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Reducing the incidence of falls by older adults: I didn't think it would take this long

When we initially undertook our studies of falls by older adults in the late 1980s, the impact of falls by older adults spans the range from individual to societal, it was consistently reported that about one-third of older adults fall each year, and exercise was a leading candidate for successful fall-prevention intervention. All of this remains true today. Our efforts have led us along a pathway of discovery that has included a biomechanical "reductionism" and motor control and learning "holism". Results from the former suggested to us that interventions affecting whole-body function might not be adequately informed from function of individual body segments. This was later confirmed by application of motor learning principles that preceded our work by decades. Presently, we believe that reducing falls may be better served by greater specificity of fall-prevention interventions. However, at this point, only time will tell.