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## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# **Regular Physical Exercise Keeps Older Adults Healthy and Independent Longer**

## *New Series of FREE Fit & Fall Classes Start in January*

Eastern Idaho Public Health District will be launching a new series of Fit & Falls classes this month. The FREE classes, designed to help seniors reduce falls, will be held the last week of January through the first week of April in many sites throughout Eastern Idaho.

Experts recommend older adults engage in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes five days a week. But statistics show that less than a third of Americans aged 65+ meet this level.

The ability to perform daily activities and maintain independence requires strong muscles, balance and endurance. Regular physical activity or exercise helps to improve and prevent the decline of muscle strength, balance and endurance, all risk factors for falling. Balance plays an important role in everyday activities such as walking, getting up out of a chair or leaning over to pick up a grandchild. Balance problems can reduce your independence by interfering with activities of daily living. The good news is that participating in regular physical activity can significantly improve balance and reduce your risk for falling!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an older adult is treated in a hospital emergency room for a fall every 18 seconds, and every 35 minutes an older adult dies as a result of a fall-related injury. In fact, among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. Nationally, falls among elderly persons account for approximately 16,000 deaths and 1.8 million emergency room visits annually. In Idaho, the fall death rate is almost 1.5 times the national rate.

The good news is that falls are preventable. A combination of interventions has been found to significantly reduce falls in the older adult population. Experts recommend a physical activity regimen such as Fit and Fall Proof classes with balance, strength training, and flexibility components; consulting with a health professional about getting a fall risk assessment, and making sure the home environment is safe and supportive.

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Fit and Fall Proof classes begin the week of January 25 and end the week of April 5, 2010. Classes are free and available to the public. Beginning dates, times, and locations are as follows:

<p>Monday, January 25 Ammon LDS Centennial Bldg 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p>	<p>Monday, January 25 Idaho Falls Senior Center 10:30 – 11:15 a.m. Monday and Thursday</p>	<p>Monday, January 25 Milo LDS Church Building 75<sup>th</sup> East Milo Road 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>
<p>Monday, January 25 Brenchley Apartments Rexburg 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>	<p>Monday, January 25 Teton View Apartments Rigby 3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 25 Liberty Square Ammon 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>
<p>Tuesday, January 26 Ririe Senior Center 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 26 Madison County Senior Center 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 26 Rigby LDS Stake Center 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>

Additional classes are held at the Mackay Senior Center.

For additional information, please contact Timalee Geisler at Eastern Idaho Public Health District by calling 533-3149 or by e-mail at [tgeisler@phd7.idaho.gov](mailto:tgeisler@phd7.idaho.gov).

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