

# STRENGTH AND BALANCE CLASSES

## Overview for Class Instructors

One in three New Zealanders over the age of 65, will injure themselves in a fall this year. For our over 80's this rate rises to one in two. Falls aren't a natural part of the ageing process and can be prevented. Improving strength and balance is one of the most effective ways our elders can work towards reducing their risk of falling.

ACC, the NZ Health Sector and Regional Sports Trusts have joined forces to support the development of Approved Community Group Strength and Balance Classes throughout New Zealand, to help reduce the number of falls in our elder population.

Sport Canterbury has been chosen as the lead agency for the Canterbury District Health Board region to implement this initiative.

Community Group Strength and Balance Classes will target the younger, less frail populations of 65 years and over. Classes will meet 9 agreed criteria and the needs of the community they serve, to ensure that they are effective in reducing the risk of falls to the older population. When done effectively, evidence shows a 29% decrease in fall rates.

### What is Sport Canterbury's aim for this programme?

- Supporting our matua to stay independent and injury free in their own homes is our ultimate goal.
- To ensure that all community strength and balance classes are effective at reducing falls.
- To ensure that community strength and balance classes are accessible to older adults across the Canterbury region.



### What is an approved strength and balance class?

Programmes and classes that meet the nine evidence-based criteria will be recognised as approved community group strength and balance classes and will be entitled to use our Approved Quality tick. See below for additional information about the criteria ACC have set.

### How can your programme or class become approved?

Your programme may already meet, or be close to meeting, the nine evidence-based criteria. Sport Canterbury will observe your programme or class to ensure that it meets the criteria. If you are not there yet, Sport Canterbury will work with you and help to modify your programme or class to meet the criteria.

## What are the benefits of becoming an approved strength and balance class?

- Help older adults to stay independent and well at home.
- Be part of the wider network of approved community strength and balance providers.
- Your class will be recognised through the "quality tick" logo and benefit from national recognition.
- FREE training, support and ideas on how to set up or modify your class so that it becomes Approved.
- Ongoing support from Sport Canterbury.
- Approved classes will become part of a referral pathway so health care providers and other community organisations can refer older adults to the programme. This will potentially lead to new members for your class.

## Can I keep my class name?

Absolutely, there is no need to change the programme or class name. The tick logo on your own promotional materials and certificate of approval, will provide recognition that the programme or class is approved.

## Are there any health & safety requirements to run a class?

- Every provider will need to have procedures and processes around hazard identification and risk assessment.
- If any incidents were to happen during a class, an incident form will need to be completed.
- Sport Canterbury can provide templates and support around any health and safety requirements.

## Who do I contact for more information?

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## **Criteria for Becoming an Approved Strength and Balance Class**

Sport Canterbury will work with you to help you achieve the below criteria.

### **Criteria 1: The main purpose of the class is to improve leg and core strength and balance.**

- Balance exercises need to be completed standing and should be progressed over time.
- Leg and core strength should also be a focus of the exercise programme/class.

### **Criteria 2: The programme should include a baseline assessment tool which can be used to measure improvement.**

- Your programme must include baseline measurements of participant's physical function, including the Timed Up and Go fitness assessment (TUG).
- The baseline and ongoing assessments should be used to enable individualised progression of exercises and to measure their success within the programme.

### **Criteria 3: The programme must allow for individual needs and should show progression.**

- Programme allows for progressive challenge over the 10 weeks.
- Programme is adaptable for different levels within the group.

### **Criteria 4: The programme challenges balance within the individual's level.**

- 30% or total of at least 15 minutes of the class is standing with reduced base of support.
- Participants are challenged within their ability level and are encouraged to pass up balance exercises if too difficult, or, extend themselves further if they find the exercise too easy.

### **Criteria 5: The class should include resources, information and reminders to support weekly home-based exercise.**

- Classes should be one hour long and can include time for explanations and falls prevention education. Sport Canterbury will provide you with information and resources around preventing falls.
- As well as coming to a class once a week, participants need to be encouraged to do the exercises at home at least once a week. Sport Canterbury will provide with exercise sheets with suggestions of at home exercises.



**Criteria 6: The programme should have a strategy to support ongoing regular physical activity.**

Ideally participants will continue to attend a strength and balance class for an ongoing period. If the class becomes too easy or too hard for a participant, Sport Canterbury can assist you in finding a more suitable class or activity for them.

**Criteria 7: Instructors should be specially trained and have received appropriate supervision.**

- Instructors should have a current first aid certificate and have completed the appropriate training within their organisation to enable them to facilitate the group workout programme. This allows for volunteer and peer leadership.
- Instructors should also be aware of minimum health and safety guidelines.

**Criteria 8: The class must have multiple referral pathways for a participant to attend.**

- Participants can be referred to your programme through health professionals, and community and self-referrals.
- Instructors should actively promote other agencies that may be beneficial for the participant's current needs or can support the health and wellbeing of the older adult. Referrals should be done only with participants consent.

**Criteria 9: The class must accommodate people identified at high risk of falling, with options for further referral for those at a very high risk of falling.**

- An exclusion criteria should be established for participants who would be considered very high risk of falling.
- The instructor should actively promote other more suitable agencies for those at a very high risk of falling, to support the participants' current needs and well-being.
- Sport Canterbury can help you establish an exclusion criteria as well as a referral pathway for those whom are considered as very high risk of falling.