



APTA GeriatricsSM

An Academy of the American
Physical Therapy Association

Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Credential

A 2-course series offered by APTA Geriatrics

Background and Description

The Balance & Fall Prevention Professional credential will provide a national, uniform indicator that a physical therapist possesses specialized, advanced knowledge, skills and competence in the practice of balance and fall prevention in community dwelling older adults. This interactive credential course series is designed for experienced physical therapists pursuing advanced expertise.

Credentialed Balance & Fall Prevention Professionals will demonstrate current and comprehensive knowledge, expert analysis and clinical reasoning, mastery of psychomotor skills, and the capacity to advocate for fall prevention. In-depth lab and learning experiences allow immediate application of knowledge and skills to clinical practice. Emphasis on integrating community and aging services resources enhances the ability of credentialed professionals to bridge the clinic-to-community gap and serve as regional fall prevention experts.

The curriculum builds across the two-course sequence and an independent portfolio to promote mastery of hands-on skills and management of the multi-faceted complexities of balance interventions and broader fall prevention strategies.

Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Course 1

This course will focus on comprehensive assessment, using objective measures for fall risk stratification, and developing effective, individualized balance intervention strategies for community dwelling older adults. Interactive labs provide opportunities for mentored skill building and clinical reasoning. A focus on community evidence-based fall prevention programs is included to extend the clinic-to-community continuum. Participants will leave this course with immediate tools and skills for implementation into clinical practice.

Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Course 2

This course builds on the first course to expand participants' intervention approaches for complex patients. Special focus on vestibular rehabilitation considerations for older adults and utilization of technology for balance training and fall prevention are included. Interactive labs and activities allow dedicated time to advance care of the complex patient and to experience advanced technology. Technology stations will allow participants to experience virtual reality and other technology to enhance balance training, participation, and home safety. Emphasis on expanding the clinic-to-community bridge and building healthy lifestyles will be highlighted to integrate holistic fall prevention. Participants will leave this course with increased knowledge of and confidence for complex patient management, networking with professional and community partners to promote clinical services, and serving as a regional fall prevention advocate and resource.

Find current dates and locations at
https://geriatricspt.org/events/courses/balance_and_falls

Examination Requirements for Certification

Individuals who want to achieve the credential of Balance and Fall Prevention Professional will need to complete advance preparatory work, participate in the two courses (in sequence), complete portfolio assignments (including a comprehensive case study, community program analysis, and the Otago Exercise Program online training), and successfully complete two skills checks and an online exam with passing scores.

All attendees who sign in and out each day will receive a certificate of attendance for continuing competence purposes. However, to receive the Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Credential, individuals must successfully complete both skills checks, the online exam (within 6 weeks of taking course 2), and portfolio assignments. Participants will have two attempts to successfully complete the on-site skills checks and the online exam. Failure to pass either of the skills checks or the exam will result in not obtaining the Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Credential.

Participants will receive a certificate to recognize their credential as a Balance and Fall Prevention Professional after successful completion of all credential components as described above.

Balance and Fall Prevention Professional Credential Faculty

Faculty vary from course to course but are experts in the field of geriatrics and specifically balance and falls prevention, and are approved by the APTA Geriatrics Board of Directors (see website for faculty list). All faculty have advanced training and have successfully completed the Balance and Falls Prevention Credential course series. Course administrators are Lori Schrod, PT, PhD and Judy Dewane, PT, DSc.

Continuing Education Credit (total 40.75 contact hours)

- Course 1: 17.5 contact hours (2 for advance preparatory work and 15.5 for onsite course)
- Individual portfolio: 10 contact hours
- Course 2: 13.25 contact hours

PLEASE NOTE: Participants are urged to check with their State Licensure Board to see if the courses count towards continuing education credit.

Objectives

Upon completion of the 2 course series and related work the participant will:

1. Utilize current regional falls and resource data to advocate for evidence-based fall prevention programs and clinical and community services.
2. Analyze multi-factorial screening results to determine relative fall risk level and appropriate follow-up care in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention situations.
3. Select, administer, and interpret clinically meaningful objective measures of fall risk, balance, and gait based on individual client presentation and goals.
4. Develop and implement population-based and individualized preventative and rehabilitative strategies to reduce fall risk.
5. Monitor treatment outcomes with appropriate objective measures and modify the care plan as indicated.
6. Design and improve interprofessional practice strategies; including communication, collaboration, and referral.
7. Demonstrate the capacity to act as an effective fall prevention clinical expert, educator, facilitator, and advocate in their community, region, and state.