

# Staying Steady



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

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## Aims

- To highlight the effectiveness of the Staying Steady community-based falls prevention service
- Share the improved outcomes in the physical functioning of older people
- Raise awareness and encourage appropriate referrals to the Staying Steady Service

## Background

- Staying Steady is a community-based falls prevention programme, adapted from the Falls Management Exercise intervention (Skelton et al, 2005)
- Staying Steady is a collaboration between Healthworks (a Newcastle-based health charity), Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle City Council.

# Staying Steady

## Information for health care professionals

Staying Steady is a 27 week long, evidence based strength & balance community exercise class. We are open and classes are running! You can refer people to the service via the Healthworks referral form on their website:

<https://www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk/service/preventing-falls/>

### People need to meet the following to access the class:

- Registered with a Newcastle GP
- History of falls (injurious or non-injurious)
- Fear of falling
- Feeling off balance or unsteady
- Low bone density and / or family history of osteoporotic fracture

To access the class, patients must be able to walk with a stick (in class) and get to and from classes themselves.

Classes are held in four venues - The Lemington Centre, The Health Resource Centre in Benwell, East End Pool in Byker and Trinity Church in Gosforth.

Contact Susan Davison – Staying Steady physiotherapist on 0191 2823593 or e-mail: [susan.davison2@nhs.net](mailto:susan.davison2@nhs.net), if you have any queries or visit the Healthworks website at the link above.

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the community health charity

## Evidence

- James et al (2022) The effectiveness of the Healthworks Staying Steady community-based falls prevention exercise programme to improve physical function in older adults: a 6-year service evaluation was published in July. It is a retrospective evaluation of Staying Steady by collecting and analysing the routinely used outcome measures (30-second sit to stand test, Timed Up and Go, 4-stage balance test and Patient Reported Outcome Measures).
- There were 1426 referrals, of which 185 were inappropriate. 406 declined to participate in the programme. Of the 835 starting the programme, 451 participants completed and 384 dropped out.
- 30-second sit to stand scores improved significantly in all participants. TUG scores improved in those unaided and aided at baseline only. Four-stage balance scores improved in all participants.
- Participants self reported an improvement in ability to manage their health, improved confidence and reduced fear of falling. 95.8% of people felt Staying Steady made a difference to them, with 92.6% of people finding the education sessions useful.

## Discussion

- The James et al paper highlights that Staying Steady is clinically effective at improving physical function in older adults and that participants are highly satisfied with the service.
- The paper highlights a number of people decline an invitation to Staying Steady – why? Is this more prevalent in certain areas of the city? Linked to social deprivation? (Anecdotally, we know the classes in the Inner West and East areas of Newcastle are quieter)
- There are a number of people drop-out of the programme – why? Is this worse at certain venues?
- The James et al paper has collected data over a 6-year period that overlaps with the Covid-19 pandemic and how does this impact on the data that was collected? Could results have been even better? The number of drop outs / declines may have been influenced by the pandemic.
- Future work is needed around drop-outs and decliners
- Meeting with the Director of Health Inequalities at NHS England & NHS improvement in October 2022

## The physiotherapist role

- To triage new referrals to the Staying Steady service to ensure suitability to the group
- To provide the 1<sup>st</sup> education session at Week 9 in the programme around falls prevention and home hazards
- To complete one-off home visits to check environment / issue walking aids etc
- To complete onward referrals, as required
- To work alongside Healthworks if any 'problems' arise
- To raise the profile of Staying Steady – encouraging appropriate referrals from fellow Health Care Professionals

## References

James et al (2022) The effectiveness of the Healthworks Staying Steady community-based falls prevention exercise programme to improve physical function in older adults: a 6-year service evaluation. BMC Public Health 22 p. 1457

Skelton et al (2005) Tailored group exercise (Falls Management Exercise – FaME) reduces falls in community-dwelling older frequent falls (an RCT). Age & Ageing vol 34(6) p. 636-639



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