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To find out how strength and balance exercises can help you stay stronger for longer and information on classes in your area, visit: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger (<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/strongerforlonger>)

A major new strength and balance campaign is launching this International Older People's day to help people in Cambridgeshire stay stronger for longer.

After breaking a bone in her back two years ago, Margaret found that normal activities were extremely difficult.

However, thanks to some simple regular strength and balance exercises at Brampton Memorial Hall, she is now on the road to recovery and doing the things she enjoys again.

The 74-year-old, who lives in Brampton, is now reaping the rewards of regular exercise after signing up in January.

On October 1, Cambridgeshire County Council along with partners including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT), is launching a new strength and balance campaign to help people like Margaret stay stronger for longer.

Strength and balance exercises at least twice a week have the power to reverse age-related loss of strength, bone and balance - they can keep you fit, active and independent and doing the things you enjoy for longer.

The exercises will help you to carry on with leisure time activities like gardening, walking the dog, trips out with loved ones or even simple domestic tasks we all take for granted.

"When I first broke a bone in my back, a simple task like ironing was agony," said Margaret. "I saw an advert in The Brampton Parish Magazine for strength and balance classes and thought I'd give them a go. As a result I am now definitely stronger, even my husband has noticed how my confidence and mobility have much improved. I can do simple tasks again that I once took for granted and also do the things I enjoy like gardening. I would certainly encourage all older people to give the strength and balance exercises a go to make sure they are getting the most out of life and stay stronger for longer."

Research shows that group and home-based exercise programmes can reduce the rate of falls by a third while Tai Chi reduces the risk of falls by a third as well.

Angelique Mavrodaris, Consultant in Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said:

“Falls are not an inevitable part of getting older. There is much that can be done to reduce the risk – especially by regularly doing the right kind of exercise. All adults in later life should be aiming to do strength and balancing activities twice a week, alongside aerobic exercise such as brisk walking. Attending strength and balance classes is not only good for health but also a great way to make new friends. The sooner people start the better!”

Simon Hanna, Clinical Exercise Specialist, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Maintaining strength and balance throughout life is essential both for maintaining independence and quality of life. Loss of strength and balance makes everyday tasks more challenging and ultimately too risky to do. However, simple strength and balance exercises can make a huge difference and reverse this loss, increasing confidence and reducing the need to rely on others for help.”

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