



**For Immediate Release:**

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**News  
Release**

**Adults With Arthritis: Physical Activity Really Works!**  
*Get moving to reduce risk of falls, hospital stays*

(Salt Lake City) – Every day in Utah, 8 adults aged 65 and older are hospitalized due to serious injuries they’ve suffered in a fall. Many of those hurt will never go home, as falls are the leading cause of injury-related death for Utah seniors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reported that in 2012, adults with arthritis were one-and-a-half times more likely to fall and be injured than adults without the disease. Fortunately, the debilitating effects of arthritis are manageable, and falls are largely preventable with evidence-based exercise programs designed especially for older adults with conditions such as arthritis.

Contrary to the belief that exercise worsens joint pain, the best prescription for arthritis is exercise or physical therapy to improve strength, gait, and balance. Studies show that low to moderate physical activity can reduce pain, and improve function and mood.

Enhance®Fitness is a group exercise program sponsored by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and developed by experts to help older adults get active and stay independent. Participants say the class is fun and dynamic, and the CDC says it and similar evidence-based exercise programs reduce the risk of falling by 14-37%.

Theresa Brandon of Draper joined Enhance®Fitness because she felt her balance “was really off for a healthy 62-year-old.” After just three months, Theresa reported, “Enhance®Fitness saved my health care plan hundreds of dollars, saved me many expensive copays, accelerated my return to normal balance, and produced normal test results in balance for my age and health.”

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According to the Senior Functional Fitness test, more than half of all Enhance®Fitness participants show improved agility and balance, and more than three out of every four seniors show improved arm and leg strength after four months of participation. Theresa says, “I have seen three other people in that class who came in with walkers and now use canes or walk by themselves. This class is valuable beyond words.”

Many people with arthritis may feel hesitant to begin exercising because of their pain, stiffness, and simply not knowing what and how much to do. Appropriate activities include brisk walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, and water aerobics.

For more information about how to manage your arthritis, visit <http://health.utah.gov/arthritis/>, or contact Brittany Brown, UDOH, at (801) 538-6215 or [brittanybrown@utah.gov](mailto:brittanybrown@utah.gov). To find out how you can attend an Enhance®Fitness class in your area, contact Nichole Shepard, Salt Lake County Active Aging, at (385) 468-3083 or [NShepard@slco.org](mailto:NShepard@slco.org), or visit <http://slco.org/aging/pdf/WebCalendar.pdf>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*