

# FEAR OF FALLING: REGAINING THE BALANCE

*Creativity applied to fear (Activity 7/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

Fear of falling was first described as “ptophobia”, which means a phobic reaction to standing or walking and was subsequently classified as a “Post fall syndrome”. Fear of falling means a patient’s loss of confidence in his or her balance abilities and as an ongoing concern about falling that ultimately leads to avoidance of the performance of daily activities. Others have suggested this fear has to do with an unhealthy lack of activity avoidance due to fear of falling. This activity has a transversal character – may be appropriate in the situation when the senior feels fear, but also anxiety, sadness, or loneliness. It’s dedicated to seniors in a good condition regarding mental health and cognitive abilities.

## OBJECTIVES

The aim behind this tool is to combat the fear that elderly people might feel when it comes to falling, either because they have had a previous fall experience or because they do not feel confident with their body balance. As in the case of the fear of death, one of the most vital things in creating activities is to combat the fear without the elders directly thinking that they are fighting it. This activity involves gaining balance and body stability by playing within a group.

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Technological tools: Wii (only if the nursing home has one)
- Tangible games: skittles, pétanque (bowls/boules) or marbles

## IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

For this activity, the carer will be needing a Wii. If this technological tool is not available, the caregivers will look for some bowling pins to play as a group. In both cases, the aim is to play the game holding the body with only one foot. They can also hold on to a surface or their partner/caregiver if it is too difficult for the elderly. This activity even allows for modifications such as playing using both legs and lowering the danger if the caregiver detects that the participants need to do so.

Options:

### IN CASE YOU HAVE ACCES TO A Wii DEVICE

This activity will be done in pairs that will be rivals. They will play bowling with the Wii, a digital console that uses a controller that each player must hold with one hand and that is activated by the movement of the arm. NOTE: For this activity to go well, it is important that participants are in a physical condition that allows them to move their arms and body with relative flexibility. The crucial thing is to exercise the balance that leads them to fall.



## IN CASE YOU'RE USING SKITTLES, BOWLS/BOULES, MARBLES

This activity will be done in pairs too. They will play bowling with real skittles, keeping the aim originally set: the opponents must try to throw as many pins as possible using only one leg or both (depending on the physical condition of the players).

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The elderly will work in this group game on the control of their balance and their own body in each throw. As they will be focused on throwing the pins, they will not think about the fear of falling. If they do, they always know they can hold on to their partner to feel safe.

So, CI local testing this pair dynamic is also about trust. It is not about giving them obstacles but helping them regaining the balance without thinking about the purpose of the activity. In the end, seniors will pay real attention to the skittles or the pétanque or the marbles (whatever materials are available in the care houses).

- Regaining balance
- Trust in other people and yourself
- Overcome fears from past experiences
- Enjoy playing games they use to play in their youth