



## An Exercise Intervention Study for Seniors Age 65+ with Difficulty Walking

### A Novel Approach to Preventing and Treating Mobility Limitations

Mobility limitation, defined as difficulty walking 2-3 blocks or climbing 10 steps, affects nearly 30% of community-dwelling older adults and has a profound impact on independent functioning. Emerging evidence suggests that mobility limitation may result from high energy requirements during walking, which may also lead to high levels of fatigue during walking and activity restriction to avoid fatigue. Targeted exercise may be able to reduce the energy requirements of walking thereby reducing fatigue and increasing daily activity. The HealthySteps team will evaluate the effect of three different 12-week exercise programs on walking in older adults. The exercise programs include 1) outdoor walking, 2) stretching and relaxation techniques, and 3) stepping and walking pattern practice. We will assess participants before beginning their program, immediately after their program ends, and three months later. All exercise programs and assessments will occur on site at the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, led by certified instructors and trained research staff.

The older-adult population in Canada will almost double in the next 20 years. Therefore, the prevention of age-related mobility limitation is a major clinical and public health priority. Results from this study may be used to develop programs to promote mobility, prevent disability, and maintain functional autonomy in vulnerable older adults by making walking less fatiguing. This strategy may delay or prevent more severe disability and long-term institutional care.

The HealthySteps study is a pilot study affiliated with Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute, and is funded by the Drummond Foundation.

The Healthy Steps Team:

Dawn Mackey, BSc (Hon), MSc, PhD  
Principal Investigator  
Simon Fraser University  
8888 University Dr. Burnaby  
P | 778-782-9330  
E | dmackey@sfu.ca

Michelle Scheier, BSc  
Project Coordinator  
Centre for Hip Health and Mobility  
2635 Laurel St. Vancouver  
P | 604 675-2588  
E | michellescheier@hiphealth.ca

