

SAFE FALLING TECHNIQUES

Date/Time: **Monday, 28 January 2008** 12-2 pm (36th of the Series)

Location: **Hawaii Academy**, 1314 Mo'onui Street, Honolulu, HI 96817 — In Kalihi
(Off Waiakamilo at Chevron Station, Makai of King Street, Houghtailing Exit; near Farrington High School)

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Instructor: Max Vercreuyssen, PhD, Ergonomist & Human Performance Specialist; Director of Hawaii Academy, Elite Trampoline-Tumbling Coach, and Senior FlexFit Exercise Program Head; Safe Falling Program Creator

Assistants: Trampoline-Tumbling & Gymnastics Coaches and Safe Falling Instructors

Attire: Bring a notebook for the academics and clothing to roll on soft mats.

Audience: ALL AGES and ALL Abilities—*Everyone benefits from learning to fall safely*

Lecture: Classroom discussion of problems and possible solutions
Orientation/Introduction/Significance of Injuries from Falls/Causes/Fixes
Investigation of Existing Methods of Safe Falling
Development of Essential Principles of Safe Falling and Landings

Practical: Practicing Fundamentals of Safe Falling Techniques to Minimize Injury
Essential Skills Training: Breakfalls, Rolling, and Fitness
Practice Maneuvers for Falling: Forward, Backwards, Sideways, Other
Help in recognizing greatest vulnerability to a fall injury

Cost: \$30 per session for participants to receive Certificate of Participation
\$75 for three sessions to attain the Instructor's Training Certificate
(All proceeds go toward production of materials, manuscripts, and a book on safe falling)

Limit: 30 students per session, maximum

2008 Workshops: Nearly monthly throughout the year (phone 842.5642 for details)

Position: All children should learn how to fall safely and practice falling techniques throughout their lives. However, the current focus on falling is almost entirely on senior citizens. Probably because the consequence of falls by children is much less expensive than the costs of fatalities and medical care of the elderly caused by falls. Our seniors of tomorrow are our children today so it only makes sense to simultaneously teach fall training to young and old alike. However implemented, the sooner we start teaching techniques in safe falling the sooner we will see reductions in medical care needs (read this as cost to everyone). The loss prevention rationale should be sufficient grounds for arguing this case. Having families exercise together and having shared multi-generational activities is a social bonus.

Safe falling should be required training in schools according to national and local strategic plans but it may be some time until this happens. Meanwhile, parents should be encouraged to enroll their entire family in programs that teach rolling and falling in some form, if even for a only a short exposure. There are many private gyms, studios, and dojos that provide lessons in gymnastics, trampoline-tumbling, martial arts, acrobatics, and stunting. Everyone in the family should benefit from finding a nearby program and learning techniques of safe falling that helps prevent or reduce injuries from future falls. Those that are already participating in such activities must be vigilant in maintaining safe falling habits. If anyone can recall a fall-related death or injury that could have been avoided by safe fall training should feel guilty about not doing something more when seeing it happen again. Hawaii Academy is acting to prevent future guilt by initiating a safe fall training campaign in Hawaii. If the reader shares such guilt, please join the campaign to make available safe falling education. Someday we will have educational curricula for improving falling ability. If Hawaii currently has the worst fallers in the US, wouldn't it be gratifying to reverse this statistic? It's possible with a commitment to this one single educational mandate.

Because we stand and move upright, on a very small base of support, stability is easily compromised, especially as we get older.

FALLS ARE INEVITABLE but INJURIES ARE PREVENTABLE! Do what you can for your family, NOW!