

# Instructor

Max Vercruyssen PhD MPH

Academy Director, Research Dept Chair &  
Senior FlexFit Program Head



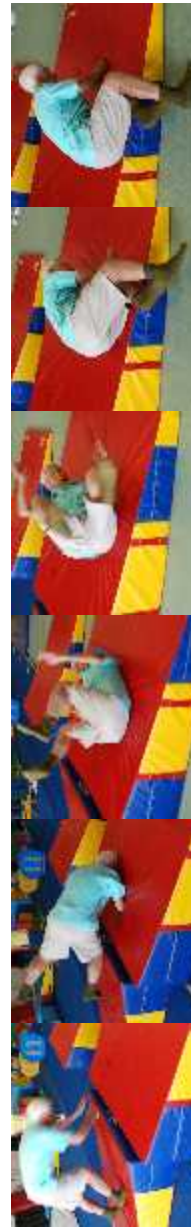
Dr Max has Post-Doctoral training in Ergonomics and Applied Physiology; advanced credentials in Gerontology; a PhD in Neuromuscular Control; masters degrees in Exercise Science, Physiological Psychology, and Public Health; and a Bachelors degree in Experimental Psychology. At the Penn

State University, he conducted research in the ergonomics unit of the Noll Laboratory for Human Performance Research. At the University of Southern California, he was the head of Ergonomics, first director of the Human Factors Laboratory, and a co-director of the Laboratory of Attention and Motor Performance (Andrus Gerontology Center). At the Eindhoven University of Technology (The Netherlands), he was the second International Fellow of the Institute for Gerontechnology and helped create the emergent academic field of gerontechnology. Presently, he is Director of Hawai'i Academy and a father of four girls (all competing on HA Trampoline Teams). His primary fundamental research interests have been on changes in the central nervous system and functional abilities across the life span. His applied research has been concerned with the effective use of technology to extend the years of functional ability. For eleven years he has spent his Monday mornings with seniors helping them cope with the challenges of aging and disease through exercise and humor. His students have recovered balance and functional abilities. He coaches senior extreme athletes and recently he started a campaign to teach techniques for safe falling. He describes himself as a fall advocate encouraging everyone to practice safe falling techniques.



*Falls are inevitable — injuries are preventable!*

**Hawai'i Academy**  
1314 Moonui Street  
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[www.HawaiiAcademy.com](http://www.HawaiiAcademy.com)



*Hawai'i Academy — a private school for the advancement of lifetime fitness, gymnastics, and human sciences for ALL ages and abilities.*

Monthly

# Safe Falling Workshops



80yr old student Izumi Hirano

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# Safe Falling Program

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 special 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, trampolining, 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!

HA provides monthly workshops on falling, integrates this information in recreation classes and team training, special outreach lectures to private groups, and offers special training for select groups by contract.



## Typical Workshop Schedule

### First Hour Lecture:

- Classroom discussion of problems and possible solutions (personal and community)
- 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
- Identification of Personal Strategy for Helping Immediate Family

### Second Hour Practical Training:

- Practicing Fundamentals of Safe Falling Techniques to Minimize Injury Essential Skills Training: Breakfalls, Rolling, and Falling Fitness
- Drills to develop Ground Contact Energy Control to minimize injury
- Practice Maneuvers for Falling: Forward, Backwards, Sideways, Oblique and Other
- Identification of Each Participant's Greatest Vulnerability to a Fall Injury

## Hawai'i Academy

A Private School for the Advancement of Lifetime Fitness, Gymnastics, and Human Sciences, with Research, Education and Activities for ALL Ages and Physical Abilities



## Meeting Times

### Monthly on Different Days and Times

*Phone to schedule a workshop, presentation, group excursion, or private contract.*

## Prices & Information

**Certificate of Participation** **\$30**  
(1 2-hr session)

**Instructor Certificate** **\$75**  
(3+ 2-hr sessions)

**Special On-Site Demonstrations** **Fee Negotiated**

**Group Excursions to Academy** **Fee Negotiated**

**Contracted Engagements** **Fee Negotiated**

**All proceeds go toward production of safe falling materials, manuscripts, and a book**

**Tax deductible donations are greatly appreciated**

## Training at Hawai'i Academy

Hawai'i Academy has training facilities designed for research, education, and activities. We have a full range of state-of-the-art competitive and recreational equipment for artistic gymnastics, power tumbling and trampoline, martial arts, dance, and fitness training, including a power tumbling rod floors, eight overhead bungee systems, and two overhead traveling spotting systems. Basic research focuses on changes in central nervous systems functioning and physical fitness across the life span. Applied research involves topics in such multidisciplinary fields as developmental ergonomics, transgenerational design, and gerontechnology.