

Instructor

Max Vercruyssen PhD MPH

**Academy President, 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. As a research associate at the Penn State

University, he conducted environmental stressor 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. At the University of Hawaii he had multiple appointments in Psychology, the Center on Aging, and Geriatric Medicine. 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 many functional abilities. He coaches senior extreme athletes and recently started a campaign to teach techniques for safe falling. He describes himself as a fall advocate encouraging everyone to practice safe falling techniques. His work has led to an international certification program.



Falls are inevitable — injuries are preventable!

Hawai'i Academy
1314 Moonui Street
Honolulu, HI 96817 USA
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

**For all ages (1-100+ yrs) and abilities
(novice/remedial to expert), conventional
to extreme activities**



86 yr 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. The seniors of tomorrow are 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 instruction should be required training in schools according to national strategic plan and a single curriculum 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 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.

Anyone who 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.

In Hawaii we are creating educational curricula for improving falling ability and have many success stories to date. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries and hospitalization for those 65 and older. 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. This means...

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

HA provides monthly workshops on safe falling, integrates this information in recreation classes and team training, offers special outreach lectures to private groups, and provides special training for select groups by contract. Workshop participants have been students of all ages, teachers, therapists, coaches, medical practitioners, and really extreme sports enthusiasts and professional athletes.



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: Break falls, Rolling, and Falling Fitness
- Drills to develop Ground Contact Energy Control to minimize injury
- Practicing Maneuvers for Falling: Forward, Backwards, Sideways, Oblique and Other
- Identification of Each Participant's Greatest Vulnerability to a Fall Injury
- Advanced topics appropriate to each group



Hawai'i Academy

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



Meeting Times

Monthly on Different Days and Times

Phone to schedule a workshop, presentation, group excursion, or private contract. See the Hawaii Academy Calendar for additional information.

Prices & Information

Certificate of Participation **\$20**
(one 2-hr session)

Instructor Certificate **\$50**
(three plus 2-hr sessions)

Special On-Site Demonstrations **Fee Negotiated**

Group Excursions to Academy **Fee Negotiated**

Contracted Engagements **Fee Negotiated**

Private Lessons/Training **Fee Negotiated**

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

Donations are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

Training at Hawai'i Academy

Hawai'i Academy has training facilities designed for research, education, and physical 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 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.