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ART OF FALLING: St. Louis Park man, 94, trains with trampoline

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MINNETONKA, Minn. (KMSP) - The [trampoline training](#) facility in Minnetonka called Minnesota Twisters has a client list that includes a lot of athletes looking to refine their agility, but it also includes a St. Louis Park senior practicing the art of falling down.

It's something that every child knows how to do instinctively, but as people age, it becomes weird to allow yourself to fall. Yet, that is exactly what 94-year-old Elliot Royce does for the sole purpose of [learning](#) to get back up.

Royce took to the trampoline a couple of years ago because when he was younger, he lived in a [senior home](#) and learned about the risks of falling.

"They have many [courses](#) in fall prevention but nothing in how to fall," Royce said.

Royce found a class in Hawaii on how to fall safely and to this day, he practices safe falls on an [air mattress](#) at his apartment each morning. Three times a week, he spends an hour training on the trampoline to work on balance, strength and falling.

"I fall a lot of times. Sometimes I fall hundreds of times in here," Royce said. "That's the point: Overcome the fear of falling."

Falling is a serious problem for seniors and they say avoiding falls altogether is their biggest focus.

"The immediate risk is blood clots, but the longer-term risk is mobility," Dr. Jennine Speier told Fox 9 News.

Speier says seniors are slower to heal and breaking a hip or other bone can quickly lead to other problems.

"Of course, if you get injured, you have [depression and anxiety](#), which makes you less active," she explained. "Overall, that affects your cardiac function, your immune function."

Royce is supervised by coach Pat Henderson, a one-time Olympic judge, but not all seniors are capable of what he's up to -- certainly not many 94-year-olds. Yet, it's working for him. His goal is to do a flip before he hits 100.

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