

Safer Landings from a Fall

with

DYNAMIC BALANCE FOR LIFE™

June 2025

PROGRAM INFORMATION



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Why this program is important!

The World Health Organisation (WHO) lists accidental falls as the second major cause of injuries leading to death and a high cost of medical care

One-in-four older people aged over 65 have a fall each year and 30% require medical attention as a result

Falls can lead to major issues:

- fear of falling
- social isolation
- reduced activity
- reduced quality of life

Dynamic Balance for Life is part of the solution for this problem.

It fills the gap between falls prevention and falls recovery!

Dynamic Balance for Life™ (DBfL)

DBfL is an innovative Judo-based program developed for older adults to avoid a fall if possible, and to learn to land safely in the event of a fall!

The program was developed by Adelaide University Judo Club (AUJC) and tested in collaboration with Adelaide University's Department of Gerontology (G-TRAC Centre).

In late 2021 the partners conducted an ethics-approved Pilot Study. The study showed that the **Intensive Introductory program** is *safe and feasible* for older adults. The results of the study were published in The Journal of Frailty and Ageing. The oldest participant in the study was 87 years old.

The Intensive Introductory program is run over 8 weeks, with 2 sessions/week. Each session is 60 minutes. The sessions are a combination of low intensity strength and balance work combined with learning to land safely from a fall and get up and down from the floor confidently. Class sizes are limited to maintain a safe coach to participant ratio. Participants are introduced to judo-based ukemi to land safely from backwards, sideways and forward falls.

The **Introductory Program** has a similar structure to the Introductory Program and is run over 10-weeks with one session per week.

Continuing Balancers Program is for older people who have completed the Introductory Program and wish to improve and maintain their safe-falling skills. Participants attend one or two sessions per week and practise advanced balance skills and modified ukemi, as well as learning the low intensity kata of judo to progress to DBfL-modified judo belt grades. A syllabus has been developed for each grade from DBfL Yellow to DBfL Green belt.

Judo Australia endorses the Dynamic Balance for Life™ Program.

Next steps

In 2024, AUJC in partnership with the University of Adelaide research team received a grant from The Hospital Research Foundation, Adelaide SA, to run a larger clinical trial over 2 years on the effectiveness of the Program, as well as to upskill health professionals with no experience in judo in delivery of DBfL program to older adults. The Study is in progress and will be completed in late 2025.

The Dynamic Balance for Life™ Program is now available for licencing from AUJC. Judo Coaches from around the World are encouraged to undertake the training and licence to run this important program in their dojo and support the ageing community in their local area.

International Interest

Over 40 judo coaches and physiotherapists have been trained, around Australia and Internationally, to deliver the program and the Introductory Program has been licensed to a Community Judo Club in England and to a University Judo Club in Japan.

AUJC and research partners participated in the International Consensus Conferences on Safe Falling for the Elderly through Judo, in Tokyo in Nov 2023 and Dec 2024. Lecture presentations and practical demonstrations on Dynamic Balance for Life™ were made at both events. We are co-authors on The International Judo Federation (IJF) Consensus Statement published in the IJF Journal in July 2024.

Train-the-Trainer

It is essential that the Judo Coaches delivering this program to novice older adults are properly trained, so they minimise the chance of any injury or damage to this vulnerable population. The program is based and inspired by judo, but it is not sport-judo ukemi. Older people are learning to fall safely when they are on hard surfaces outside the dojo, such as pavements, so it is important to introduce them to the correct method for this possible outcome.

AUJC runs a Train-the-Trainer program for judo coaches over two days. Topics covered include:

- Physiology of the ageing body and frailty syndrome
- Physics of falling
- Stages of motor learning and adaption for older adults
- Teaching ushiro, yoko and mae ukemi by micro-progressions
- Posture, stability, core strength and balance exercises
- Risk management for individual physical challenges
- Equipment required and dojo set-up

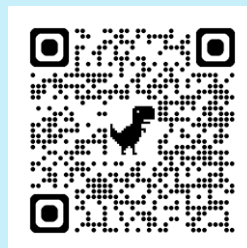
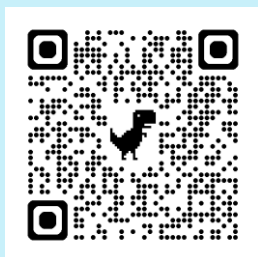
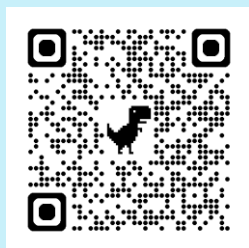
Coaches are assessed and certified after they successfully complete the Training Program.

Purchasing a Licence for the Dynamic Balance for Life™ program gives the coach access to all resources needed to deliver the Introductory Program in their dojo, including:

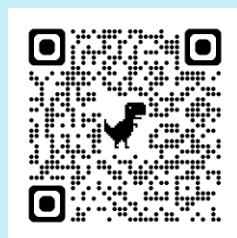
- Program Manual with lesson plans for each session
- Detailed videos to teach each ukemi and the exercises
- Document templates for Brochures, Enrolment Forms, Medical Clearance etc.

Participants in Action!

Participants over the course of the Intensive Introductory Program 2025 and at the end of the program 2024



Continuing Program Participants in 2022 and 2023



Key people

Mr. Michael Headland Rokudan (Program Developer)
Head Coach, AUJC

Dr Meera Verma PhD Godan (Program Developer)
Beginners Coach, AUJC

Dr Agathe Daria Jadczyk PhD (Chief Investigator/Course Instructor)
Research Fellow | Exercise Professional
G-TRAC Centre, Adelaide Medical School, University of Adelaide

Mr. Michael Peachy Shodan (Course Instructor)
Physiotherapist, Director Homecare Therapies

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Clinical Director | Gerontologist
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