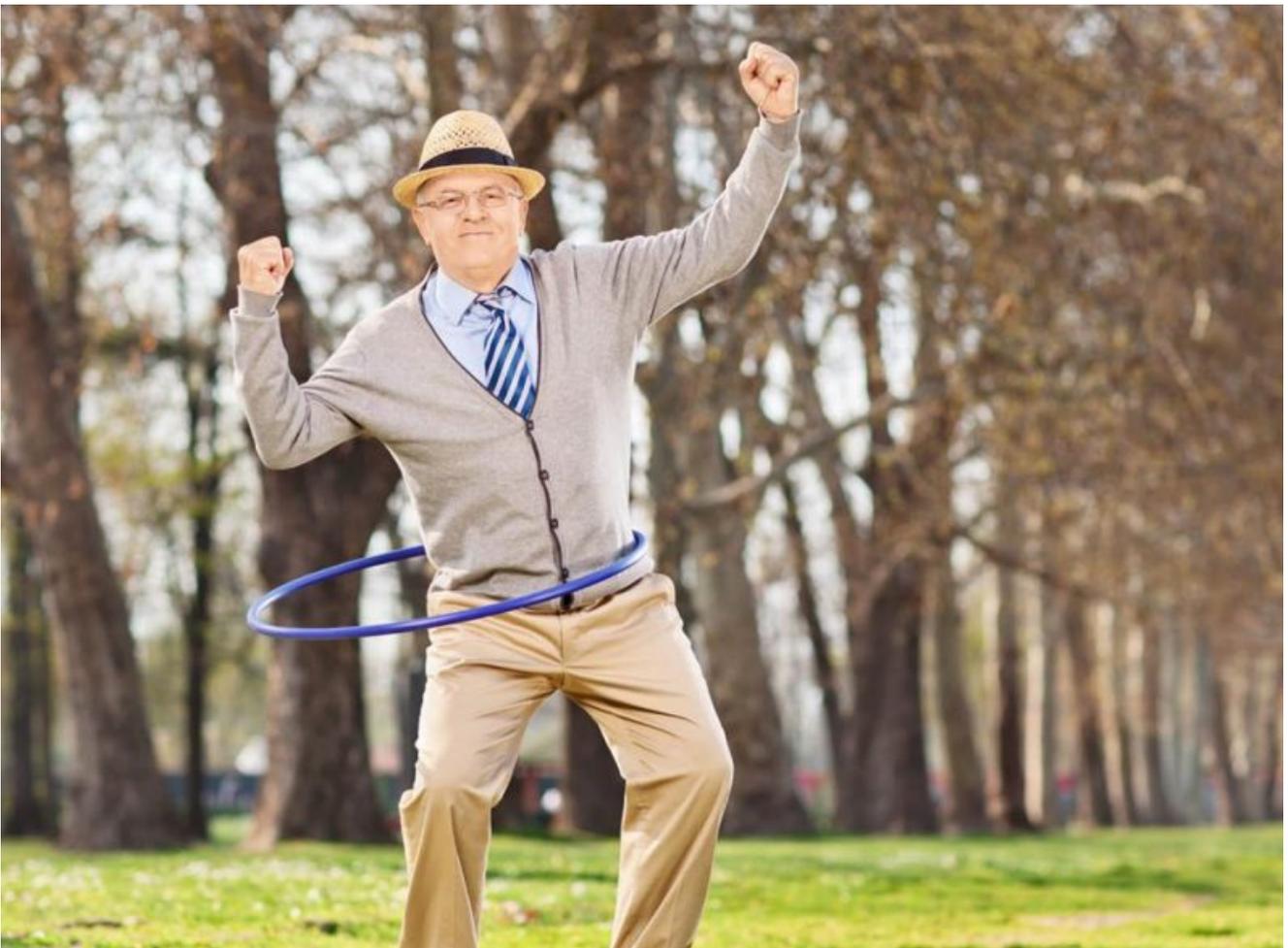


ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE AND LIFE TO YOUR YEARS



Nearly half over 65s are frail or at risk of frailty, study shows!

Nearly half Australia's over 65s living in their own homes are frail or at risk of becoming so, putting them at risk of disability and accidents such as falls, according to a new study.

Aged care provider Benetas said its government-funded study of 3,000 older Australians who still live in the community assessed them using an online FRAIL test with a short list of questions on fatigue, resistance, ambulation (walking), illnesses and loss of weight.

The research found 6% were frail, 38% were pre-frail and 56% were robust. 5% of men were found to be frail, compared with 8% of women. Among those classed as pre-frail, 34% were men and 41% women.

Benetas' Stephen Burgess said identifying frailty was key to helping older Australians live longer, healthier lives. "For older people, frailty is the 'canary in the coal mine' that can detect a rapid decline before it happens," he said.

“Frailty, including pre-frailty, is an invisible condition. Many who are frail appear to function reasonably well in the community. As a result, individuals and family members are often unaware frailty is present.

“By detecting and addressing frailty, we can change its trajectory, and help older people live better for longer. That means keeping people in their homes and out of hospitals and residential aged care for as long as possible.”

Aged Care Minister Ken Wyatt said frailty was not present in all seniors surveyed, suggesting it was not an inevitable result of ageing and could be prevented or treated.

“Importantly , the study recommends that with the right support at the right time , frailty can be halted or even reversed by consulting with health professionals for safe, simple, inexpensive, practical interventions,”Mr Wyatt said.

- **These included:**

- **Modifying diet to include more protein**

- **Taking Vitamin D supplements**

- **Increasing activity, including light resistance exercise and walking**

- **Evaluating prescription medication intake, in consultation with your GPs.**

“We know Australians overwhelmingly want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and that staying strong and healthy is the best way to achieve this ,”Mr Wyatt said.

