



Falls

Simple changes you can
make to reduce your
likelihood of falling

For a better life



As we get older, we may lose mobility and could be at greater risk of falling over. People may walk unsteadily, drop things or bump into things more often. On top of this, medical conditions such as arthritis, the effects of a stroke or dementia can make things worse.

We can advise you or your carers on how to reduce the likelihood of falling and make your home environment safer. There are also some simple changes you can make yourself.

What you can do

- Take daily exercise, such as walking, to keep your muscles strong and joints supple
- If you use a mobility aid, make sure it is safe and that you are using it properly
- Some medication may affect your mobility. If you experience any side effects please discuss these with your GP
- Have regular eye tests. Our eyesight deteriorates with age and eye conditions such as cataracts and macular degeneration affect our vision
- Avoid poorly fitting shoes or slippers, high heels and slip-on shoes. Walking in socks, tights or stockings on non-carpeted floors can also be very slippery
- Wear well-fitting clothes and be aware of trailing belts or hem-lines that could trip you up
- If you have a history of falling or are frightened of falling over, using a call alarm could help make you feel more confident that you can get help quickly
- Get up slowly from laying down or sitting. If you feel dizzy when changing position please talk to your GP

The most important advice is - don't rush! If the telephone or doorbell rings, take your time. Perhaps using a cordless handset or mobile phone could save you from rushing for calls.

Around the house

- If you have rugs or mats, please be aware that these can be a tripping hazard
- Reorganise your kitchen, bathroom and bedroom so that items you use frequently are easy to reach. This will reduce the need for you to stretch or bend
- If you need to climb, always use proper steps. Never stand on items of furniture such as tables, stools or chairs, which may be unstable
- Consider fitting a letter tray/basket to your letter-box, so you don't have to bend
- Stairs can seem daunting. Fit hand-rails on both sides of the stairs to make them safer. Don't try to carry items upstairs in your hands; keep your hands free and make sure you take your time
- Keep your home well lit
- Use non-slip rubber mats in the bath/shower. Adding hand/grab rails in bath, shower and toilet areas will help you to move more safely
- Don't leave objects in areas you use to move around your home. Be aware of trip hazards such as flexes and cables around your home
- Pets are fun but can also trip you up! It may be of help to know the whereabouts of your pet/s as you move around your home

What to do if the person you are caring for falls

- Don't panic – they may feel shocked and shaken, but try to stay calm
- Assess the situation – if they are hurt and unable to get up themselves, then call for assistance and wait for help
- Keep them warm by covering them with a blanket, towel or rug and try to minimise draughts as much as possible
- If they need to empty their bladder while on the floor, use a newspaper or spare item of clothing to soak up the urine

If the person you care for lives alone, plan in advance as to who will deal with a fall. Agreeing ways of summoning help could make them feel more secure. For example they could alert you via a pendant alarm, banging on the wall, calling out for help or crawling towards a telephone.

All falls are potentially serious and the person should see their GP afterwards to have a check-up. If persistent falls are happening, the person may need to be referred to a specialist service.

If you would like this information in another format or another language:

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