

If you have a history of falls, you should always have a plan to summon help if needed. There are many care alarm systems available, or you can use a mobile phone. Whatever system you use you must always keep it with you day and night. If using mobile phones, make sure you have numbers saved as favourites or on fast dial, and keep your phone switched on and charged.

## Keep active, keep moving

At any age it is important to avoid sitting for long periods of time. This can make us weaker and quickly lose muscle. If you have a mobility aid make sure you always use it, ensure it is the right height for you, and avoid rushing.

All adults should do some physical activity each week to improve muscle, balance, and coordination. This can be simple activities such as gardening, housework, walking and dancing, or specialist training programmes.

Doing regular strength exercises and balance exercises can improve your strength and balance and reduce your risk of having a fall.



# Reducing your risk of falls at home

## Further information

The following websites have lots of information about how to reduce your risk of falls:

- The NHS website – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Age UK – [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - [www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/falls-prevention](http://www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/falls-prevention)

If you require a copy of this information in any other format or language please contact your line manager or your healthcare worker at the Trust.

**This leaflet gives you information about what can cause falls and how you can prevent them from happening. If you are worried about falls or experiencing physical or mental health issues, please speak to your health professional or GP.**

## Physical health

### Vision

Reduced vision can increase our risk of tripping and falling. It is recommended that our eyesight is checked every two years. Always wear clean glasses and hearing aids if you need them.

### Feet

Worn-out or sloppy slippers contribute to falls. All footwear should be supportive and have a good grip. Look after your feet, long toenails, corns and calluses can affect your balance.

### Medication reviews

Always attend medication reviews. These will help you understand any potential side effects from your medication such as dizziness or drowsiness.

### Drugs and alcohol

Drinking alcohol or taking drugs increase the risk of falls at any age. Sometimes we might start to use these to help with sleep or pain. Try to reduce using these as much as possible.

### Pain

Pain can contribute to falls, sometimes due to the pain relief you are prescribed, but many times pain affects sleep, or concentration that can lead to a fall.

### Blood pressure

If standing up too quickly causes you to be unsteady or dizzy, seek advice from a healthcare professional.

### Food and drink

It is important to drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated and prevent falls. This is around 6 to 8 glasses per day. With calcium rich



foods and sunlight (vitamin D) bones can keep strong and healthy.

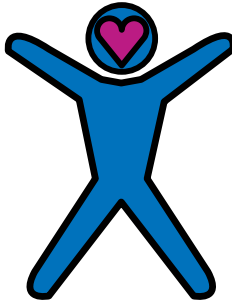
### Continence

If you need to get to the toilet quickly or get up in the night to use the toilet, this can increase the risk of falls. It is worth thinking about how far you walk to the toilet at night and if it is safe. Considering a commode by your bed could help to reduce the risk of falling.

## Mental wellbeing

**Your mental wellbeing can also have an impact on your risk of falls. Worrying or feeling anxious about falling is normal and understanding the changes you can make to reduce the risk of a fall can help.**

- Low mood can impact on your attention, concentration and planning
- Dementia can change your ability to recognise objects, distance and space
- Delirium can affect balance and muscle strength
- A learning disability can cause complex health needs
- A neurological condition such as Parkinson's disease, stroke, ataxia or brain injury can affect balance and blood pressure.



## Reduce risks in and around your home

- Make sure all rooms, passages and staircases are well lit.
- Look out for trip hazards such as worn carpets, rugs, trailing wires, and clutter. Mop up spillages straight away.
- Organise your home so that climbing, stretching, and bending are kept to a minimum, and to avoid bumping into things. Wait for help to do things you're unable to do safely on your own.
- Don't walk on slippery floors in socks or tights and wear well-fitting clothes. Loose fitting, trailing clothes might cause you to trip.
- If you have a pet, be aware of where they are.
- Think about fitting grab rails or safety rails around the home, particularly in bathrooms, on stairs or by external doors.
- Keep paths free of leaves and moss and repair any uneven/cracked pathways.

