

Out and about

- ◆ Take your time and do not rush. Scan the area for trip hazards, cracked pavements, obstacles and uneven surfaces.
- ◆ Carrying shopping bags can obstruct your view of the pavement; consider using a rucksack instead.
- ◆ If going from indoors to outdoors and vice versa, give your eyes time to adjust to the change in light conditions.
- ◆ Do not be afraid to ask bus drivers to wait until you are seated before the move off.
- ◆ Do not worry if you think you are being slow and inconveniencing others: staying safe is more important.
- ◆ Do not be embarrassed to use a walking aid if it helps you stay steady. Check it is the correct height for you and the rubber ends (ferrules) are not worn down.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Falls Advice

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

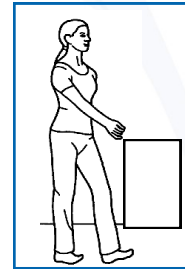
Am I at risk of falling?

Everyone is more at risk of a fall as they age; it is a big cause of hospital admissions and can result in serious injuries and long-term complications. Falling can also contribute to a loss of confidence and independence.

Falls can happen anywhere, at any time. This leaflet explains how to try and prevent a fall and what you can do if you do fall.

Factors contributing to the risk of falls.

- ◆ Ageing process (risk increases over 65 years)
- ◆ Poor mobility
- ◆ Confusion and agitation
- ◆ Continence problems
- ◆ History of falls
- ◆ Medical conditions
- ◆ Poor vision or hearing
- ◆ Poor nutrition
- ◆ Emotional distress or depression
- ◆ Medication known to affect balance
- ◆ Some combinations of medicines
- ◆ Lack of exercise
- ◆ Environmental hazards (steps, stairs, worn mats, spillages, clutter)



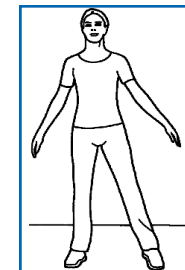
Heel - Toe walking

Stand tall, with one hand on a support like a kitchen cabinet. Look ahead and walk 10 steps forwards, placing one foot directly in front of the other so that the feet form a straight line. Aim for a steady walking action. Take the feet back to hip width apart, turn around and repeat the steps in the other direction.



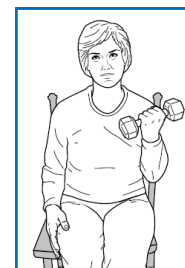
Heel - Toe stand

Stand tall, with one hand on your support. Put one foot directly in front of the other to make a straight line. Look ahead, take your hand off the support and balance for 10 seconds. Take the front foot back to hip width apart. Then place the other foot in front and balance for 10 seconds



Sideways walking

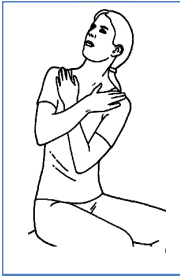
Stand with your hands on your hips (or hands on the worktop if you need more support). Take 10 steps to the right then 10 steps to the left. Repeat 10 times.



Arm strengthener

Sitting with your back straight. Hold a tin/ water bottle in both hands. Keeping your elbow by your side, slowly bend your elbow towards your shoulder then in a slow and controlled manner straighten your elbow again.

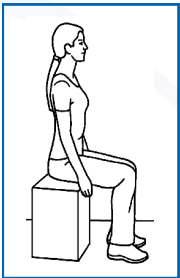
Repeat 10 times on both arms.



Trunk rotation

Standing or sitting if your balance is unsteady, cross your arms across your chest. Rotate to your left, come back to the centre and rotate to your right.

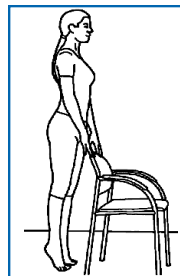
Repeat 10 times.



Sit to Stand

Sit tall near the front of your chair, put your feet behind your knees, lean forwards to stand up using the chair arms to push up if required. Stand tall then slowly lower yourself down in a controlled manner.

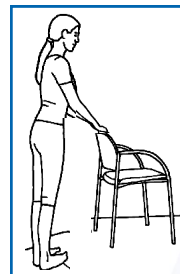
Repeat 10 times.



Heel raises

Stand tall, holding the back of a sturdy kitchen type chair or kitchen worktop, then lift your heels off the floor, taking your weight onto your big toes. Hold for 3 seconds, then lower with control.

Repeat 10 times.



Toe raises

Stand tall holding the same support, raise your toes - taking weight on your heels. Do not stick your bottom out. Hold for 3 seconds, then lower with control.

In hospital

As a patient you can help to reduce your risk of falling by:

- ◆ Bring into hospital any equipment you normally use, such as walking aids.
- ◆ If you use a walking aid, make sure it is in good condition and that you use it rather than using furniture or walls for balance.
- ◆ Making staff aware when you feel anxious about moving around.
- ◆ Let the staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet.
- ◆ Use the nurse call bell to ask for help to move around.
- ◆ Be careful when standing up or getting out of bed. Take your time.
- ◆ Wear comfortable clothing that is not too long or too loose.
- ◆ Wear comfortable, low-heeled, non-slip shoes and slippers that fit properly.
- ◆ Familiarise yourself with your bed area, its furniture and where the bathrooms are located. Look out for any hazards such as spills and clutter that may cause a fall.
- ◆ Tell staff about any hazards.
- ◆ Keep your fluids up by drinking plenty of fluids.

At home

Make your home safe:

- ◆ Remove any clutter
- ◆ Ensure carpets are firmly secured
- ◆ Always take care on the stairs
- ◆ Ensure the hallway and stairs are well lit, and keep a night light by your bed
- ◆ Do not stand on chairs and stools. Use stepladders if you need to reach high
- ◆ Clean up spillages immediately
- ◆ Be aware that pets can be a tripping hazard
- ◆ Keep warm - cold muscles lead to accidents

Wear sensible shoes and keep your feet healthy:

- ◆ Wear well-fitting, low-heeled shoes
- ◆ Avoid wearing worn out or loose slippers
- ◆ Avoid wearing slippers without a back
- ◆ Have regular foot care

Eat well and drink plenty of fluids:

Eat food rich in Vitamin D and Calcium - they are essential for healthy bones e.g. dairy produce, eggs and green leafy vegetables.

Dizziness and weakness can be reduced by eating regular meals and drinking at least eight cups (one litre) of fluid (preferably water) a day.

Check your sight and hearing:

Have your eyes tested yearly - it is free if you are over 60 years. Be sure to wear the correct glasses, and take care when using bifocals or varifocals, especially on the stairs.

Poor hearing can affect your balance - see your nurse or GP for advice.

Understand you medicines:

Some medications can cause drowsiness, dizziness or weakness and affect your balance, so take your time when rising from a chair or bed.

Ask your GP for a medicines review if you are taking four or more medicines.

Do not mix alcohol with medication - it may cause dizziness and loss of balance.

Be Active!!

Physical activity - walking, gardening, dancing, swimming. Tai Chi etc. - can help improve mobility, strength, balance and flexibility.

Try these simple exercises two or three times a week and you should soon notice improvements to your strength and balance.

- ◆ Make sure the chair you use is sturdy
- ◆ Wear supportive shoes
- ◆ If you experience chest pain, dizziness or severe shortness of breath, stop and call your GP or call 111
- ◆ A slight soreness the day after is quite normal