

STEADY ON YOUR FEET

Swindon



Falls Prevention Information Pack

Information & Advice



Information and Advice

Falls

If you do experience a fall, it's important to talk to your GP or a health professional. They will help to identify potential causes and ensure you receive appropriate care.

Gathering Information About Falls

The more details you can remember about a fall, the easier it is to pinpoint a cause. Take some time to reflect on the following things:

When it happened: Note the time of day and your activities leading up to the fall. Was there anything specific you were doing at that moment?

How it happened: Try to remember whether it was a loss of balance, tripping on an object, feeling dizzy, or might you have had a blackout? These details can be useful in working out why it happened.

Where it happened: Think about where you were when you fell. Are there any potential trip hazards that could be removed? Have you fallen in the same place more than once? Are you aware of any reasons for this?

Multiple Risk Factors

Falls often result from a combination of risk factors. Common risks and tips to reduce them include:

Muscle weakness: Strengthening exercises can help make your muscles stronger, and help you to respond to overbalancing more effectively.

Poor balance: Moving more and doing some balance exercises can help you feel more stable when moving around.

Dizziness: Consult a health professional to identify the cause of dizziness and receive appropriate treatment.

Environmental hazards: Remove or address potential trip hazards in your home to create a safer environment.

Vision and hearing problems: Regular eye and ear check-ups can find issues early and allow for appropriate treatments.

Foot problems: Foot pain, deformities, or numbness can be helped with proper footwear and foot care, giving you a more stable base to stand on.

Footwear: Make sure that your shoes are supportive, comfortable, and fit well.

Memory loss or confusion: Keeping your brain healthy is essential. Stay mentally active with puzzles and brain exercises and consult a health professional if you're noticing memory changes.

Poor nutrition: A balanced diet can support overall health and reduce the risk of falls.

Dehydration: Dehydration can lead to dizziness and falls. Make sure you are drinking enough water throughout the day, especially in hot weather.

Pain and other Health Conditions: Managing any co-existing health conditions well, and reducing pain, will help optimise your body and reduce the risk of falling. Speak to a health professional for advice if this concerns you.

Medications: Review your medications at least once a year with your GP or pharmacist to minimise side effects that may contribute to falls.

Bladder and bowel difficulties: Problems such as urgency can increase the risk of falls. Speak to a health professional for advice or support.

Drinking: Limit alcohol and consider caffeine intake, as drinking these can affect response, balance and coordination.

The Confidence Factor

Anxiety and experiencing a fall can affect your confidence, potentially leading to a cycle of reduced activity and an increased risk of falls. Being proactive is essential, even if you haven't yet had a fall. This approach helps you to take control of your situation, enabling you to remain active and independent for longer, with an improved quality of life in the long run.

Social Prescribing

Did you know that your GP Practice also has a service called Social Prescribing? Social Prescribers can provide support and advice on non-health-related issues, such as stress, loneliness and debt. They can also help to connect or signpost you to local support services, activities or groups. To access this service, contact your GP surgery and request a referral.

Links and Resources

To learn more about falls, explore the following resources or to complete a self-assessment and develop your personalised action plan:

[NHS UK: Falls overviews and prevention](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council's care and support information and advice [website](#)

Live Well Swindon

Live Well Swindon provides advice and support about being active, falls prevention, stopping smoking, weight management, connecting to communities and volunteering, managing long-term health conditions and staying independent. It also delivers a range of activities and programmes designed to inspire, motivate and assist people to live well and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about Live Well Swindon:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793 465513)

Email: livewell@swindon.gov.uk

Visit Website: [The Live Well Swindon Hub](#)

Otago

Otago is an evidence-based falls prevention programme for adults aged 65 and over. Sessions are delivered by Live Well Swindon as a 16 week course across Swindon for a small fee. Sessions involve strength exercises to help strengthen the muscles around the hips, legs and ankles, and balance exercises to help increase stability and improve confidence when walking and performing everyday activities.

For more information, please contact the Live Well Hub:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793 465513)

Email: livewell@swindon.gov.uk

Visit Website: [OTAGO](#)

NHS Choices

NHS Choices is really helpful for all aspects of health and wellbeing on their website. You can find useful resources on falls prevention here at www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls

What's on When Guide

A WOW Guide is produced by Home Instead and lists some local activity and exercise groups. This is available through website: [The Swindon WOW Guide](#) or by phoning Home Instead on [01793 988537](tel:01793 988537)

Age UK Wiltshire

Age UK Wiltshire provides a range of services to help older people stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected. For more information about our services please contact [0808 196 2424](tel:0808 196 2424) or see www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk.

As part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative, through our Supportive Independence project, we support people 65+ to become more active and better connected to their community. [Web link will be available

in the next couple of weeks.]

We run three Fitness and Friendship Clubs in Swindon - Social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active which are open to all older people who would like the opportunity to take part in activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

The Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.

Telephone [01793 463333](tel:01793463333)

Support for Carers

If you look after an ill, frail or disabled family member, partner or friend then you are a carer. Swindon Carers Centre can help carers by making their caring role more manageable.

If you are an adult carer please call [01793 401090](tel:01793401090).

For young carers please call [01793 401091](tel:01793401091).

More information is available at [The Swindon Carers website](#)

NHS 111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. Call [111](tel:111) to speak to a trained advisor supported by healthcare professionals. Alternatively you can visit <https://111.nhs.uk>

Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on [01793 607710](tel:01793607710)

Swindon Community Hub

Sanford House brings together under one roof, a wealth of help, advice and information for the residents of Swindon. Located in Sanford Street in Swindon, it is a hub for a range of organisations including Citizen's Advice, the Carers Centre, Healthwatch Swindon and Swindon Mind. They provide information and advice face to face or by telephone on [01793 466633](tel:01793466633).

Healthwatch Swindon

Healthwatch Swindon is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services, there to make sure that people are put at the heart of care. Share your views, feedback, experiences and questions regarding health and social care with them. Visit www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk for more information.

Blackouts

Identifying the causes of blackouts is important for keeping you safe, well and steady on your feet.

Recognising Blackouts

Blackouts can sometimes be challenging to identify, particularly when they are brief. However, it's essential to suspect a blackout if:

- You fell and cannot remember what happened.
- You have injuries to your face, indicating that you may not have had a chance to put your hands out to save yourself.

Common Causes of Blackouts

Blackouts become more common as we age, and they can be caused by a number of things including:

- **Drop in blood pressure:** A sudden drop in blood pressure, often experienced when changing position (e.g., standing up from a chair).
- **Heart disorders:** Certain heart conditions or irregularities in heart rhythm can affect our consciousness.
- **Anxiety, panic attacks, or stress:** Emotional factors such as anxiety, panic attacks, or stress can trigger blackouts in some individuals.

Taking Action

If you suspect that you may have had a blackout, it's essential to tell your doctor as soon as possible. This will help with finding the cause and choosing the right treatment to prevent future episodes.

Preventing Blackouts and Staying Safe

There are some practical steps you can take to reduce the risk of having a blackout, including:

- **Stay well-hydrated:** Dehydration can affect your blood pressure, making you feel faint, so make sure you drink enough water all through the day.
- **Sit or stand up slowly:** When changing positions, do so slowly to minimise sudden changes in blood pressure. Moving your arms and legs before you stand up (after sitting for longer) can help get your blood flow moving and reduce feelings of dizziness and blackouts.
- **Manage stress and anxiety:** Consider techniques such as relaxation exercises, mindfulness, or counselling to address emotional triggers.
- **Follow your GP's recommendations:** If you have a medical condition contributing to blackouts, follow your doctor's advice and treatment plan.

To find out more about blackouts and fainting, explore the following resources or use our Self-Assessment Tool:

[NHS UK: Fainting](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

Dizziness

Common Causes of Dizziness

Identifying the possible causes of dizziness is an important part of finding the right treatment. Dizziness can be related to several things, including:

Drop in Blood Pressure:

A sudden drop in blood pressure, is often experienced when changing position (e.g. on first standing up from a chair). To minimise the risk:

- Change position slowly.
- Move your arms and march your legs before getting up.
- Sit back down if you feel dizzy and wait until it passes.
- Take your time - Stand still or walk on the spot when you first get up, avoiding sudden movements.*

Dehydration:

Not drinking enough fluid can contribute to dizziness. To stay well hydrated:

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day (aim for 6-8 cups).
- Sip water regularly.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption, as they can lead to dehydration.

Inner Ear Disorders and Vertigo:

If you experience a sensation that the world is moving or spinning, especially on turning; or if dizziness is accompanied by nausea, vomiting, visual changes, or hearing disturbances, it may be a sign of inner ear issues.

Consider the following steps:

- Contact your GP surgery for further advice and assessment.
- Make sure you have had a recent hearing test.

Medications:

Dizziness can be a side effect of some medications, especially those you take for high blood pressure. If you experience dizziness while taking medication: particularly blood pressure medication:

- Consult your GP or a community pharmacist for potential adjustments to your prescribed medication(s).

Underlying Medical Conditions (e.g., Diabetes, COPD):

Certain medical conditions may increase the likelihood of dizziness:*

- Make sure that any medical conditions are well-managed through regular check-ups.
- If you think your medical condition may be causing dizziness, consult your GP or a health professional.

- Mention to your health professional if you have had one or more falls.

Anxiety:

Stress and anxiety can contribute to dizziness. To ease symptoms:

- Try relaxation techniques like mindfulness or deep breathing exercises.
- If symptoms persist or are severe, discuss them with your GP for further guidance.

To find out more about dizziness, explore the following resources or use our Self-Assessment tool:

[NHS UK: Dizziness Information](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

Medication

If you are taking four or more medications, the risk of falls can further increase.

Regular Medication Reviews

It's very important to have your medications reviewed regularly by your doctor or pharmacist. Make sure you let them know if you have fallen over recently. These professionals can monitor your medications for any potential side effects that might increase your falls risk and change the prescription if necessary. This becomes especially important as we age as our response to individual medicines can change, and dosages may need to be modified accordingly.

Following Medication Instructions

Taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor is vital to their effectiveness. Be mindful of specific instructions, such as taking them at a certain time of day, on an empty stomach, or with food. If you have any questions or concerns about your medications, don't hesitate to consult your pharmacist or a health professional.

Interactions and Considerations

It's important to be aware of potential interactions between your medications and other substances, such as alcohol or over-the-counter drugs. These interactions can make your medications less effective or lead to side effects. Here are some tips to consider:

- **Alcohol:** Be cautious when consuming alcohol while taking medications, as it can interact with certain drugs. It's advisable to discuss alcohol consumption with a health professional.
- **Over-the-counter medications:** Inform the person prescribing your medication about any over-the-counter medications or supplements you plan to take, as they can interact with prescription drugs.

Pharmacist Support

Your pharmacist is able to talk with you about your medications, any possible side effects and concerns you might have. They can also provide guidance on your medication dosages, potential interactions, and proper usage.

To read more about the services a pharmacist can provide, follow the link below:

[NHS UK: How your pharmacy can help](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

Environment

Slips, trips, and falls

Challenges at home can include:

- **Daily activities:** Everyday tasks like getting in and out of bed or the bath, and getting on or off a chair or the toilet, can become harder as we age, increasing the risk of falls.
- **Home hazards:** Hazards such as loose rugs, cluttered walkways, inadequate lighting, and slippery floors, can all lead to falls.

Preventing Falls in and Around the Home

Falls prevention in and around the home often relies on "common sense," but it's not always easy to identify potential dangers.

Our home safety section is designed to help you to recognise and address these hazards effectively:

- **Identify hazards:** Discover potential slip, trip, and fall hazards within your home. Learn how to spot risks like loose rugs, slippery surfaces, and poor lighting.
- **Take action:** Find practical tips and step-by-step instructions on how to remove or reduce these hazards to create a safer living environment.

Explore More Advice

For detailed guidance on identifying and minimising home hazards, visit our home safety section or explore the other resources:

[NHS Inform: Preventing falls by identifying hazards at home](#)

[Visit the Home Safety Section](#)

Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council's care and support information and advice [website](#).

Warm & Safe Wiltshire

Ensure you keep your gas and electricity bills affordable and your home warm and safe with this free and impartial Council backed energy saving advice service. Call [0800 038 5722](tel:0800 038 5722) or see [The Warm and Safe Wiltshire Website](#) for more information

The Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support for your caring role.

Telephone 01793 463333

Fire Service Safe & Well Assessment

Consider a free home fire safety check from the local fire service. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will visit your home, provide safety advice, install smoke, carbon monoxide and heat detectors where necessary and help you create an escape plan.

For more information and to request your free visit go to www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits or telephone 0800 038 2323

Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, HCRG Care Group on 01793 607710

Movement and Exercise

The Impact of Ageing

Between the ages of 50 and 70, it's natural to experience a decline of about 30% in muscle strength, and our balance reaction times also slow down, making it harder to maintain stability, especially during faster movements. Physical inactivity can also lead to weaker bones and a higher risk of fractures.

The Power of Exercise

Strength and balance exercise programmes are highly effective in preventing falls, regardless of age. These classes can help make everyday tasks like getting up and down stairs, on and off the floor, boarding buses, and walking on uneven surfaces easier and safer.

[Click here for some strength and balance exercises to get you started](#)

Getting Started

Remember that “physical activity” includes any movement that increases your heart rate and breathing – choose something you enjoy!

While exercising is safe and beneficial for most people, it's essential to listen to your body. If you experience chest pain or feel faint during exercise, stop immediately and consult your doctor.

If you're new to exercise, start slowly and progressively increase your activity level.

Aim for:

- Physical activity on most days, adding up to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week (e.g., walking, swimming, cycling).
- Strengthening exercises 2-3 times per week (e.g., gym workouts, carrying heavy bags, yoga).
- Activities that challenge your balance 2-3 times per week (e.g., tai chi, bowls, dancing).

Even small steps count, such as breaking up long periods of sitting with short walks around the house or doing exercises while seated. However, please note that chair-based exercises, while beneficial for many aspects of health, do not effectively prevent falls. Exercises must challenge your balance to be effective.

If you're unsure about which activities are best for you, cannot access community classes or you need personalised guidance, consider consulting a physiotherapist or a qualified exercise professional. They can provide tailored advice to help you make the most of your physical activity routine.

To learn more about physical activity and discover exercise ideas and local services, visit our “Staying Active” section or explore the other resources:

[Steady On Your Feet: Staying Active](#)

NHS UK: Physical activity guidelines for older adults

For further information regarding community exercise opportunities for older people:

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activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

Local Leisure

You can find information about local leisure centres and the accessible services they run in Swindon at www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/swindon

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, HCRG Care Group on [01793 607710](tel:01793607710)

Physiotherapy

You can be referred to a physiotherapist by your GP, self-refer in some areas or find a local private physio at www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/find-physiotherapist

Walking football

Walking football Designed for the over 50's, the game is a wonderful way to get back into the sport or even try it for the first time. It is perfect for those who had previously given up playing football due to illness or injuries. Email lyndon.taylor@wiltshirefa.com or see www.wiltshirefa.com/players/ways-to-play/walking-football. Swindon Town FC Community Foundation also offer a range of activity programmes for older people – more information at www.stfcfoundation.com.

Step Out Swindon - Well Being Walks

This group of friendly volunteers provides a programme of free short walks from several locations across Swindon. All walks are weekly and last for about an hour, and they also offer a shorter mobility walk. Walks are varied and visit many of Swindon's beautiful green spaces. For more information, please telephone [07932 109209](tel:07932109209) or go to: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/wellbeing-walks>

Vision

It's important to be aware of potential changes in our vision and take proactive steps to address them.

Understanding Age-Related Changes in Vision

As we grow older, we may not always notice gradual changes in our vision. However, ageing can affect our ability to adapt to different lighting conditions, distinguish colours, and accurately perceive depth and distance. These changes can pose challenges, especially for individuals who wear bifocals or varifocals. If you wear these types of lenses, take extra care when navigating steps, stairs, or uneven surfaces. See your Optician for advice on the most appropriate glasses for you.

The Importance of Regular Eye Tests

With advancing age, certain eye conditions become more prevalent, including cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. It's encouraging to know that many of these visual problems are correctable.

Regular eye examinations are essential for maintaining good vision and preventing falls. These tests not only assess your vision but also help detect and manage eye conditions early. Useful Information:

- Eye tests are free for individuals aged 60 or over.
- If you have difficulty going out, many opticians will offer home visits instead.

Additional Resources for Eye Health

To learn more about eye health, explore the following resources:

[Age UK: Eye Health information and Advice](#)

[NHS UK: Find an Optician Near You](#)

[Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\): Eye Health](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

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Memory

Understanding Memory Changes with Age

Memory issues, including memory loss, confusion, and difficulties in problem-solving, can develop gradually as we grow older. These changes may be associated with ageing itself, or influenced by various things including:

- **Stress:** High levels of stress can impact memory, clarity of thought and cognitive function.
- **Sleep:** Poor sleep quality or not enough sleep can affect memory.
- **Infections:** Certain infections may temporarily affect cognitive abilities.
- **Medications:** Some medications can have cognitive side effects.
- **Dementia:** Dementia is associated with significant cognitive decline.
- **Substance use:** Excessive consumption or withdrawal from drugs or alcohol can impair memory and cognitive function.

‘Cognitive’ is a term used to describe anything related to thinking, learning, and understanding.

Managing Memory Challenges

For individuals experiencing minor memory issues, there are strategies that can help maintain cognitive function:

- **Brain Stimulation:** Engaging in puzzles, games, and mental exercises can help keep your brain active.
- **Visual Prompts:** Using visual reminders, lists, and calendars can aid memory and organisation.

However, more significant memory problems may affect our judgement, reasoning, and insight, which can lead to taking more risks and falling. These challenges can also affect our senses such as sight, sound, and touch, which may result in communication and mobility difficulties.

Seeking Professional Guidance

If you or your loved ones have noticed a significant change in your memory or behaviour, it is essential to discuss these concerns with your GP or another health professional. Early recognition and assessment of potential cognitive changes can help to plan and receive timely support, advice and care.

Additional Resources

To learn more about memory and cognitive health, explore the following resources:

[NHS UK: Memory Loss Information](#)

[Age UK: Dementia Resources](#)

[Swindon Borough Council](#)

Swindon Dementia Care

Forget Me Not Centre

Complete your Self-Assessment now

Nutrition and Hydration

Unintentional weight loss is not a normal part of ageing. If you find yourself losing weight without a clear reason, it's essential to consult your GP, as it could be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

The Impact of Nutrition and Hydration

Poor nutrition can lead to a weakened immune system, difficulty in absorbing medications, slower wound healing, and weaker muscles and bones. These factors can contribute to an increased risk of falls. Even if your weight falls within a normal range, consuming a limited variety of foods may result in malnourishment.

Hydration is just as important, as water makes up two-thirds of our body and is essential for digestion and flushing out toxins. Dehydration can lead to a number of issues, including headaches, confusion, dizziness, constipation, and urinary tract (water) infections. All of these can increase the risk of you falling. Signs of dehydration may include:

- Feeling thirsty
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth or lips
- Confusion
- Dark or foul-smelling urine
- Constipation

Assessing Your Diet and Fluid Intake

If you are uncertain about the quality of your diet or whether you are drinking enough fluids, consider keeping a food and drink diary and compare it to the following guidelines:

- Aim for 2-3 portions of high-protein foods every day, such as meat, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses, soya, tofu, and other meat-free protein sources.
- Include 2-3 portions of dairy foods daily, such as cheese, milk, yoghurt, or non-dairy alternatives like soya, almond, or coconut milk.
- Include a serving of starchy food at each meal, such as bread, cereals, potatoes, pasta, or rice (wholemeal if possible).
- Consume a variety of fruits and vegetables daily, whether fresh, frozen, tinned, dried, or juiced. Aim for 5 portions a day.
- If you enjoy fish, prioritise oily options like mackerel, salmon, herring, trout, pilchards, or sardines, as they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Aim for 2 portions a week.
- Maintain proper hydration by drinking at least 6-8 glasses or mugs of fluids every day. Keep caffeine intake low, as it can worsen dehydration.

Overcoming Dietary Challenges

There are various reasons why your diet may not be as nutritious as it should be, including:

- a reduced appetite

- swallowing difficulties
- trouble sourcing or preparing food
- Illness
- dental health issues.

If you struggle with shopping or meal preparation, reach out to family and friends who may be able to assist, or consider using meal or grocery delivery services. If daily activities – including meal preparation – become challenging, you can contact Adult Social Care for potential assistance.

Diabetes Considerations

If you have diabetes, it's important to consult your GP, nurse, or dietitian before making any significant dietary changes.

Additional Resources

To find out more about nutrition and healthy eating, explore these resources:

[NHS UK: Eat Well](#)

[Age UK: Healthy Eating](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

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Bone Health

Some people also develop a condition called osteoporosis, which leads to reduced bone density and a higher risk of fractures.

Understanding Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition characterised by decreased bone density, making bones more likely to fracture, even from minor bumps or falls. It is more common in women, particularly after menopause when bone loss tends to happen more quickly. It is also more common amongst people from certain ethnic backgrounds, such as Caucasian and Asian. Several factors can increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis:

- **Previous bone fractures:** If you've experienced a bone fracture following a minor incident or fall and you're over 50.
- **Low BMI:** Having a low body weight / body mass index (BMI) can contribute to the development of osteoporosis.
- **Family history:** A family history of osteoporosis or hip fractures.
- **Smoking & alcohol:** Current smoking and heavy alcohol consumption (more than 3 units per day).
- **Oral corticosteroids:** Taking oral corticosteroids, such as prednisolone, for more than 3 months. (Talk to a Health Professional if you are concerned, before making any changes).
- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** Having a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Certain medical conditions:** Conditions like Type I diabetes, untreated hyperthyroidism, chronic malnutrition/malabsorption, and chronic liver disease.
- **Premature menopause:** Experiencing menopause before the age of 45 without hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Taking Steps for Strong Bones

Regardless of whether you have osteoporosis or not, you can take steps to promote and maintain strong bones:

- **Quit smoking:** Smoking can harm the bone-building cells in your body, making it important to kick the habit.
- **Limit alcohol intake:** Excessive alcohol consumption can damage bones and affect balance.
- **Engage in weight-bearing exercise:** Participate in exercises that involve moderate impact to support bone health, such as jogging, aerobics or dancing depending on your ability.
- **Consult a professional:** If you think your current health or medication may be a factor. If you've had a prior fracture or are diagnosed with osteoporosis, consult with your physiotherapist or the Royal Osteoporosis Society for guidance on suitable exercises.
- **Ensure adequate vitamin D:** Vitamin D is essential for bone health, and sunlight is the primary source. However, in the UK, it's advisable to take vitamin D supplements, from October to March or if you have limited outdoor exposure. These supplements are readily available in supermarkets and pharmacies.
- **Include calcium in your diet:** Aim for a daily calcium intake of 1000mg by including calcium-rich foods in your diet (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt).

Additional Resources

To explore further information about bone health and osteoporosis, visit:

[The Royal Osteoporosis Society: Information and Support](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

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Foot Care for Independence

Being aware of and keeping an eye out for possible foot health concerns can help you to identify problems earlier on, allowing you to seek support before they become a bigger issue.

It's important to wash and dry your feet well, and regularly check for any new concerns, such as corns & calluses, over-grown or in-grown toenails, bunions, or sore areas.

One simple step you can take to maintain your foot health is trimming your toenails. Doing so after bathing, when they are softer, can make the process more manageable.

Professional Foot Care

If you are unsure about the best way to care for your feet or have specific foot concerns, consider consulting a podiatrist or chiropodist. They are trained professionals who can provide expert guidance on foot care and address any issues you may be experiencing.

This is particularly important for individuals with diabetes, as foot complications can be more severe in this group.

Choosing the Right Footwear

The type of footwear you choose can significantly impact your comfort and stability.

Here are the 6x "S" recommendations for safer footwear:

1. Supportive heel: squeeze the heel cup and it should be firm and supportive, replace when worn.
2. Stable base: firm outer sole, wider than your heel, maximum heel height of 1.5 inches, grippy surface and with rounded edges.
3. Secure fixing: Velcro or laces fixing to keep the shoe secure, and to provide adjustment if needed.
4. Sloppy slippers: backless and squishy slippers are the most common footwear worn by fallers in the home.
5. Socks: slippy and loose-fitting socks can also increase your risk of falls.
6. Soles of your feet: walking barefoot is another risk for falls, wearing indoor shoes is more likely to keep you safe and on your feet.

Be aware: If you shuffle your feet when walking, shoes with a grippy outer sole may stick to the floor too much and actually increase your risk of falls.

If you have any doubts about what shoes to wear, seek advice from a Podiatrist.

Additional Resources

To find a podiatrist in your area, explore the following resource:

[NHS UK: Find a Podiatrist](#)

Royal College of Podiatry: Ageing Feet

Complete your Self-Assessment now

For further information:

For more information contact the Swindon MSK Podiatry Team on 01793 607860 or email gwh.podiatryadmin@nhs.net

Bladder / Bowel

Being proactive by staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet, and seeking professional guidance if needed, can help to reduce the risk of falls associated with bladder and bowel problems.

Bladder and Bowel Challenges that increase the Risk of Falls:

- **Strong urge to urinate:** Rushing to the toilet due to a sudden and strong urge to urinate can make you more likely to stumble or fall.
- **Urine / water infections:** Infections in the urinary tract can cause discomfort and confusion and affect mobility.
- **Frequent urination:** Passing urine more than 10 times in 24 hours or having to visit the toilet more than twice during the night can disrupt your sleep and increase falls risk.
- **Constipation:** Experiencing hard bowel movements and opening your bowels less than three times a week can lead to discomfort and contribute to falls.
- **Diarrhoea:** Urgent and loose bowel movements can lead to quick and sometimes unsteady movements and also cause dehydration.
- **Difficulty accessing the toilet or adjusting your clothes:** can make you more unsteady and more likely to stumble or lose balance.

These issues may be aggravated by factors such as dehydration and consumption of caffeine or alcohol. You can take proactive measures to support your bladder and bowel health:

- Aim to drink 6 to 8 cups of fluids daily, but minimise drinks containing caffeine or alcohol.
- Maintain a balanced diet rich in fibre, including wholegrain bread, cereals, peas, beans, fruits, and vegetables, to alleviate constipation.
- If you experience nighttime difficulties accessing the toilet, consider using a commode or urinal by the bed for convenience.

Seeking Professional Guidance

If you encounter ongoing issues related to your bladder or bowel health, it's essential to speak with your GP or health care professional. They can refer for a continence assessment and offer further support or guidance tailored to your needs.

Pelvic Floor Exercises for Additional Support

To strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and enhance bladder and bowel control, consider incorporating pelvic floor exercises into your routine. These exercises can be particularly beneficial for women. For more information on pelvic floor exercises, explore the following resource:

[NHS UK: Pelvic Floor Exercises](#)

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

[Swindon Continence Service](#)

Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.

Telephone 01793 463333

Fear of Falling

Breaking the Cycle of Fear

Falls can happen to anyone, and you are certainly not alone – they are more common than you'd think.

It's essential to recognise that the more fear and anxiety you feel, the less likely you are to remain physically active. Being less active can lead to weaker muscles, reduced balance, and a higher risk of having future falls. You may find yourself walking more cautiously, slowing down your pace, or even feeling nervous to leave your home. These are common reactions and often signal a decrease in your confidence in moving around and getting out and about.

Creating a Falls Plan

It's advisable to have a plan in place for if you fall. This can significantly reduce anxiety and minimise the likelihood of prolonged periods on the floor.

If you are on the floor hurt or unable to get up, consider these steps:

- **Summon help:** If you are hurt or unable to get up, use your pendant alarm, mobile phone, call out for assistance, crawl to a telephone, or make noise by banging on a wall or radiator.
- **Stay warm:** Make sure you have blankets and a cushion that are accessible from floor level where possible, to help you stay warm and comfortable while waiting for help.
- **Move safely:** If you are able, move to a softer surface and change your position regularly.

If you find yourself unhurt and capable of getting up after a fall:

- **Roll over:** Roll over onto your hands and knees.
- **Crawl to support:** Crawl to a stable piece of furniture, such as an armchair, to assist you in getting up.
- **Take your time:** Turn and sit on a chair or bed to rest for a while.



Assistive Devices for Added Security

If you worry about falling when you are alone at home, consider using a pendant alarm that enables you to call for help, even if you can't reach the telephone. There are also telecare sensors available, such as

falls detectors, designed for individuals who may not be able to press a pendant alarm. There are lots of different pendant alarm and telecare providers, which can be found by searching online.

Rebuilding Your Confidence and Reducing Your Risk

Keep in mind these essential points:

- Try not to let having a fall worry you too much. Many steps can be taken to minimise the risk of it happening again.
- If your worries continue, consider talking to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Set achievable goals to gradually regain your confidence and return to your usual activities. For example, start by walking short distances before progressing to longer ones.
- If you are worried to complete a particular activity, think about all of the times you have done that activity successfully, instead of focusing on a previous fall.

There are a number of steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling and rebuild your confidence. A great starting point is using the Self-Assessment tool available on our website. This tool can help you identify areas where you can make changes and improvements to feel safer.

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

[NHS Inform: Fear of Falling](#)

If you would like some support to increase your activity levels, consider contacting your local Social Prescribing service through your GP or via the Live Well Team below.

Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, HCRG Care Group on [01793 607710](tel:01793607710)

Live Well Swindon

Live Well Swindon provides advice and support in areas such as being active, falls prevention, stopping smoking, weight management, connecting to communities and volunteering, and managing long-term health conditions and staying independent. It also delivers a range of activities and programmes designed to inspire, motivate and assist people to live well and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about Live Well Swindon:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793465513)

Email: livewell@swindon.gov.uk

Visit Website: [The Live Well Swindon Hub](#)

Age UK Wiltshire

Age UK Wiltshire provides a range of services to help older people stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected. For more information about our services please contact [0808 196 196](tel:0808196196)

2424 or see www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk.

As part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative, through our Supportive Independence project, we support people 65+ to become more active and better connected to their community. [Web link will be available in the next couple of weeks.]

We run three Fitness and Friendship Clubs in Swindon - Social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active which are open to all older people who would like the opportunity to take part in activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

Sleep and Falls

What I can do:

- Limit your daytime sleep
- Be as active as you can during the day
- Have a set bedtime routine
- Milky drinks before bedtime may help
- Tea and coffee later in the day are likely to keep you awake. Try switching to decaffeinated versions of your favourite drinks
- Play relaxing music, rather than watching TV before going to bed
- Try not to worry about the things you cannot change

It is important to sleep in bed whenever possible. This helps to improve circulation, helps prevent sore skin, reduces swelling in limbs, and ensures all your muscles are relaxed.

Sleeping pills are a common risk factor for falls, especially if you find yourself falling in the night or in the morning. If you are on regular sleeping pills, you may wish to speak to your GP about this.

Fatigue and boredom can also affect how alert we feel, which can increase falls risk. Keep to a good routine and try to keep your mind active by doing crosswords, puzzles and reading the paper etc. Avoid sleeping for too long during the day, and pace yourself to manage fatigue.

Rolling out of bed

If you are rolling out of bed, onto the floor, consider;

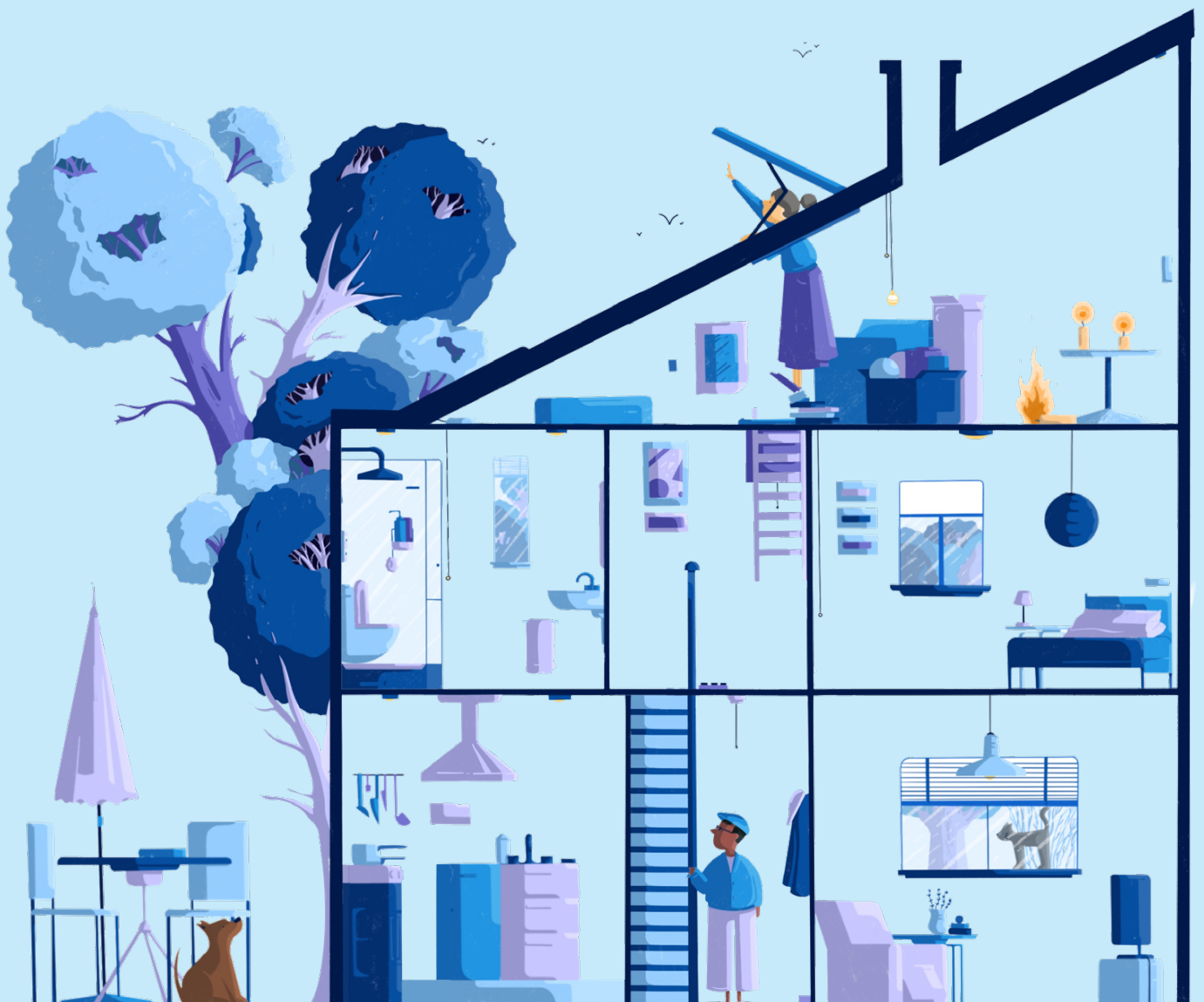
- Changing the side of bed you sleep on, or sleep more centrally in the bed.
- Speak to your GP if you're taking sleeping tablets or sedatives
- Place a small towel under the edge of the fitted sheet to create a small barrier to alert you to being near the edge of the bed.
- Elevate the edge of the mattress

If you are falling from the bed when you are trying to get in or out, consider:

- Adapting the height of the bed - if it is too low it might be easy to get in, but harder to get out
- If the bed is too high - it will be hard to get in, and you may 'slide' off. Remove casters, or invest in a shallower mattress.
- Whether the sheets are too slippery.
- Whether the edge of the mattress is too soft (especially if the mattress is older).
- Bed "handles" to assist with your bed transfer. Speak to occupational therapy or other health professionals for advice.

[Complete your Self-Assessment now](#)

Home Safety



Home safety

Living Room or Lounge

Your living room is often where you spend most of your day. That's why it's essential to make sure it's a safe space for you to move around in freely. Our guidance helps prevent falls and ensure your comfort.

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Here are some tips to help you spot hazards and reduce falls risks in your living room:

- **Chair castors:** Are there castors under your chairs that make them slide when you're trying to get up? While castors make furniture easier to move, they can be risky. Consider removing them or replacing them with cup-shaped carpet savers to prevent unwanted chair movement.
- **Chair height:** Can you get in and out of your chair comfortably? If your chair is too high or too low, it may make sitting or standing more difficult, and increase your risk of falls. Adjust the chair's height if needed or consider swapping it with one that suits you better.
- **Obstructed windows:** Do you have to lean or reach to open windows or curtains because furniture is in the way? This can lead to you over-balancing or be a tripping hazard. Ask for assistance to rearrange your furniture, making sure that windows and curtains are easily accessible.
- **Clear pathways:** Do you have objects or furniture on the floor which may block your pathway when walking around the room? This can make walking more difficult if having to step around things and poses a trip hazard. Make sure you create enough space to walk around freely.

Creating a safe living room environment is essential for preventing falls and ensuring your comfort. If you need further assistance or information, consider reaching out to local resources such as social services, or the fire brigade.

Fire Safety

- Make sure electrical wires and plugs are kept in good condition, and don't overload sockets.
- Don't dry clothes too close to a heat source – they may catch fire from radiated heat.
- If you smoke make sure you put it out fully in an ashtray and empty ashtrays regularly.

Kitchen

Your kitchen can be a bustling area, but it's important to maintain safety here to minimise your risk of falling. Our easy-to-follow advice helps you identify hazards and reduce falls risk in the kitchen.

Your kitchen can be a bustling area, but it's important to maintain safety here to minimise your risk of falling. Our easy-to-follow advice helps you identify hazards and reduce falls risk in the kitchen:

- **Wet flooring:** Is there a chance of slipping on wet floors, especially near the sink and washing machine? To reduce the risk, use non-slip mats, fitted carpets, or carpet tiles in wet areas. Promptly mop up wet floor areas to prevent accidents.
- **Accessibility:** Are your everyday items within easy reach, or do you find yourself stretching or climbing on chairs or stools? Make sure that frequently used items are placed on easily reached shelves. And try to avoid reaching above head height, as it can lead to dizziness.
- **Steps and ladders:** If you have to use steps, are they secure, with a handrail and a system to keep the legs locked? Never use chairs or stools to stand on because they may tip over easily. Properly designed steps with an effective handrail and leg-lock mechanism can be used safely if you are physically fit.
- **Carrying items:** Do you struggle to carry items from the kitchen to the dining area? If so, a kitchen trolley might be helpful. However, keep in mind that trolleys are not meant as walking aids but for transporting items. If you have concerns about your stability, consult with a mobility aid shop, or request a referral to an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.

For adaptations and other solutions, including handrails, consider speaking to organisations specialising in home modifications or social services. Their expertise can help ensure your kitchen is a safe and functional space.

Fire Safety

- Stand by your hob, and make sure you don't get distracted when cooking; (Chip pans can be particularly dangerous) if you need to leave the room turn it off.
- Don't put metal in the microwave.
- Be aware of draping curtains and clothing when cooking and keep tea towels away from the hob and toaster.
- Washers and dryers can cause fires so only use when in the home and switch off when not in use if you can.

Bedroom

Your bedroom is a place of relaxation and sleep, but also a place where the risk of falls can be higher. By making small changes, you can create a safer and more comfortable environment.

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Here are some tips to help you identify hazards and reduce falls risk in your bedroom:

- **Getting in and out of bed:** Do you feel safe getting in and out of bed? Bedding or clothing that trails onto the floor or is made of a slippery fabric might increase the risk of tripping or slipping. An unsupportive mattress or a bed that is not the correct height can make it more difficult for you to get on and off safely and increase the risk of you rolling or sliding out of bed.
- **Bedside lighting:** Make sure there's a convenient way to turn the bedroom light on and off from your bed. Installing a pull cord for the main light within arm's reach is ideal. Alternatively, use a bedside lamp, a battery-powered push light, or sensor lights by the bed and in the corridor.
- **Telephone accessibility:** Having a telephone in your bedroom can be useful. If you have one, make sure that your pendant alarm or mobile phone is within easy reach when you are in bed, and take it with you if you leave the bed, even for a short time. Try to charge mobile phones during the daytime to avoid leaving them plugged in overnight, as this can pose a fire risk.
- **Clear pathways:** Do you have furniture or objects on the floor which may block your pathway when walking around the room? These items can make walking more difficult if having to change direction and pose a trip hazard. Make sure you create enough space to walk around freely, especially with a clear path between the bed and the toilet.

For adaptations and other solutions, including handrails, consider speaking to organisations specialising in home modifications or social services. Their expertise can help ensure your bedroom is a safe and functional space.

Bathroom

Your bathroom can be one of the most high-risk places for potential slips and falls. But by applying the following safety advice, you can greatly reduce the risk.

Your bathroom can be one of the most high-risk places for potential slips and falls. But by applying the following safety advice and tips, you can greatly reduce the risk:

- **Flooring safety:** Wet vinyl, laminate or tile flooring can pose a high risk of slipping. To prevent accidents, consider using sturdy, non-slip mats, fitted carpets, or carpet tiles in your bathroom. If the floor gets wet, dry it as soon as possible to minimise risk.
- **Bathing and showering:** Make sure that you can access the bath and shower safely. Non-slip rubberized mats are readily available to provide stability. Consider installing a fixed grab rail, which can significantly reduce risk and increase confidence when entering or exiting the bath or shower. If you find it challenging to bathe safely, consider seeking advice regarding additional safety measures or support.
- **Toilet height:** Getting on and off the toilet should be safe and comfortable. A toilet that is too high or too low may be more difficult to use and can increase falls risk. Seek further advice if you are unsure or concerned about the height of your toilet.
- **Toilet accessibility:** If you use your hands for support when getting on or off the toilet, installing a fixed grab rail or frame around the toilet is a safer option than using a radiator or other bathroom fitting. These options provide more stable support and can be installed by a handy person if help is required.
- **Clear pathways:** Having a clear, well-lit space to move around in is very important, especially if you might be rushing to get to the toilet. Avoid having thick or fluffy mats by the bath or toilet that could be a trip or slip hazard. Make sure you have a clear, well-lit pathway to access the toilet at all times, including during the night.

For adaptations and other solutions, including handrails, consider speaking to organisations specialising in home modifications or social services. Their expertise can help ensure your bedroom is a safe and functional space.

Moving Around Indoors

Safely navigating your way around your home is essential for preventing falls. With our assistance, you can identify and address hazards, reducing falls risk.

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Here are some tips to help you optimise safety inside your home:

- **Adequate lighting:** Are staircases and landings well lit? It's important to have enough light to spot any potential hazards. Make sure that light switches are easily accessible; two-way switches for up and down stairs can help with this. You can seek the support of a handyperson to help if needed.
- **Stairway stability:** If you have stairs, do you feel safe and steady when using them? Always use the handrail, and consider installing a second one if you need more support. A local handyperson can assist with this if needed. Consider minimising journeys up and down the stairs if you're feeling unsteady or tired. You could use a basket or bag to carry items in to free up your hands. If you use a walking frame, make sure you have one on each level, as it is not safe to carry these on the stairs.
- **Clear pathways:** Throughout the house, it's important to create enough space to move around and access all of the rooms freely without obstacles in the way. Keep your space clear by rearranging furniture and removing any unnecessary items. If you have a walking aid, always use it as instructed.
- **Floor hazards:** Objects like papers, books, shoes, boxes, clothes or linen are all potential trip hazards when on the floor. It's important to keep your space clear of items such as these. Consider using a 'helping hand' tool to reduce stooping or overreaching if needed.
- **Cord and wire management:** Do you have to walk over or around cords or wires, such as those from lamps, extension leads, or telephones? These can cause you to trip, and it's important that they are tucked away or secured down. If needed, consult an electrician to install additional sockets. For fire safety, consider a home safety check from your local fire brigade, which can provide advice and fit smoke alarms if required.
- **Letterbox convenience:** Do you have a letterbox cage to avoid stooping to pick up letters? Installing one is an easy solution that not only saves you from stooping but also prevents papers from spreading across the floor just inside the doorway. You can find these at DIY stores or online, and a local handyperson can assist with installation if needed.
- **Loose rugs:** Loose rugs or runners can be a big trip hazard, particularly if they move on the floor or have curled edges. The safest option is to remove these altogether. However, at the very least these should be taped down or secured with a non-slip material underneath.
- **Carpet condition:** Are your carpets in good condition and not frayed? Worn carpets are a significant falls risk and should either be replaced or secured as soon as possible.
- **Calling for assistance:** If you were to fall, do you have a plan in place for calling for help? This is particularly important if you live by yourself. It's a sensible idea to carry a mobile phone or have a landline telephone that you can reach from floor level. A pendant alarm is another reliable option, as you can wear this on your wrist or around your neck.

For adaptations and other solutions, including handrails, consider speaking to organisations specialising in home modifications or social services. Their expertise can help ensure your home is a safe and functional space.

Fire Safety

- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on each level of your home and test it regularly.
- For support with fire and smoke alarms, as well as specialist alarms for sensory loss, contact your local fire brigade.
- Have an escape plan in case of fire, make sure exit routes are not blocked and keys are to hand.
- If people in the house need assistance to exit, then make sure this is considered.

Moving Around Outdoors

Navigating the outdoor areas around your home, including paths, steps and the garden, requires attention to safety.

Navigating the outdoor areas around your home, including paths, steps and the garden, requires attention to safety.

Here are some tips to help you identify hazards and reduce the risk of falling in your outdoor surroundings.

- **Clear pathways:** Are your paths clear of leaves and overgrown plants? Maintaining tidy outdoor areas, free of obstacles, is essential for safety. Regularly clear away leaves and trim overgrown plants to keep pathways clear.
- **Slippery surfaces:** Are your walkways free of moss and algae? If not, this can become slippery when wet. Prune overhanging plants and branches to improve lighting. You can purchase products to remove algae or get help from someone to clean it with a pressure washer.
- **Uneven or broken paving:** Do you have any uneven or broken paving slabs? These can be trip hazards. Arrange for someone to replace or straighten them to make sure your walking surface is level.
- **Gardening considerations:** Are your flower beds at ground level? They can be easier to access if they're in containers or raised beds. When you are in the garden, avoid spending too much time in one position and be cautious when standing up from a bent-over position as this may cause dizziness.
- **Access steps:** Do you have steps to get in and out of your home? If these are difficult, consider installing an additional step, grab rails, or a ramp depending on your needs, to increase stability and safety. If you're concerned about accessing your property, seek professional advice or assessment to help identify a solution.
- **Walking aids:** If you use a walking aid, do you have an appropriate one to use outdoors? "Zimmer" type frames (even with wheels) are not safe for outdoor use. If a walking stick does not provide enough support, consider an outdoor walker with wheels and brakes. These are available for purchase from mobility shops or the internet.

For adaptations and other solutions, consider speaking to organisations specialising in home or garden modifications or social services. Their expertise can help ensure your outdoor area is safe and functional.

Fire Safety

- Store wheelie bins and rubbish securely away from property.
- Bring bins back in as soon as possible after rubbish collection.

Sensory Support

Navigating your home safely is essential for everyone, especially for those with sensory impairments or loss.

Navigating your home safely is essential for everyone, especially for those with sensory impairments such as hearing or visual difficulties. Vision and hearing are both very important in helping you to move around safely. Vision plays a vital role in maintaining your balance, and hearing allows you to have a better awareness of your surroundings.

Here are some tips to help you create a safe environment tailored to the needs of those who have sensory impairments:

- **Good lighting:** For individuals with visual impairments, proper lighting is vital. Choose bright bulbs to minimise shadows and make sure there is enough light throughout your home.
- **Consistent Lighting Levels:** Maintain uniform lighting levels across different rooms to avoid sudden changes in brightness. Consider adding lighting to dimly lit areas and using curtains or shades to minimise glare.
- **Night-Time Navigation:** Turn on or install night lights along pathways from bedrooms to bathrooms to assist with walking at night-time, for example to get to the toilet. Night lights can provide enough light for safety without disrupting sleep. Some lights can automatically turn on when they sense lower light levels, saving energy.
- **Regular Eye Checks:** Schedule routine eye examinations with opticians to address vision-related concerns. Updated visual aids, such as glasses or magnifiers, can significantly improve safety and independence at home.
- **Regular Hearing Checks:** Make sure you have your hearing checked regularly. If you have them, keep your hearing aids in good condition and wear them as advised. Ask for aids to be reviewed if they are uncomfortable or you have concerns.
- **Preventing Trips and Falls:** Eliminate tripping hazards by keeping pathways clear of clutter, loose rugs, and obstacles. Secure carpets and rugs to prevent slips and falls.

Fire Safety

- Make sure that you have smoke alarms on each floor, and that they are loud enough for you to hear them. The Fire Service can advise on alternative light-based or vibrating alarms if needed. Regularly test alarms to check they are working.
- Make sure you have a plan for how to get out in the event of a fire.
- Minimise fire risks by following safe practices. Keep electrical items clean and turned off when not in use. Don't overload sockets and keep cords and wires in good condition.
- Minimise cooking-related hazards by never leaving stove tops, toasters and microwaves unattended.

Fire Safety

Ensuring fire safety in your home is very important, not only for preventing fires but also for reducing the risk of falls. These key considerations and tips will create a safer home environment.

Ensuring fire safety in your home is very important, not only for preventing fires but also for reducing the risk of falls.

Here are some key considerations and tips to keep both you and your home safe:

- **Smoke alarms:** Do you have working smoke alarms in the correct places in your home? Smoke alarms are vital for early detection of fires. Ensure you have them installed on every floor of your home, especially in hallways and near bedrooms. Test them regularly to make sure they are in good working condition.
- **Fire home safety check:** Consider a safety check from your local fire brigade. Many fire departments offer this service. During a home safety check, experts will provide valuable safety advice, make recommendations, and even install and test smoke, carbon monoxide or heat~ alarms if needed. The team can also advise specialist alarms and equipment for users with sensory loss.
- **Clear escape routes:** To reduce the risk of falls during an emergency, make sure your escape routes are clear. Keep hallways and staircases free from clutter and obstacles. In the event of a fire, you'll need a safe and clear path to exit your home quickly.
- **Fire prevention:** Take measures to prevent fires in your home. Avoid overloading electrical sockets, keep flammable materials, such as curtains or paper away from heat sources, and be cautious with cooking appliances.
- **Cooking:** minimise cooking related hazards by never leaving stove tops, microwaves or toasters unattended.

Consider a free home fire safety check from the local fire service. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will visit your home, provide safety advice, install smoke, carbon monoxide and heat detectors where necessary and help you create an escape plan.***For more information and to request your free visit go to www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits or telephone [0800 038 2323](tel:08000382323)

By recognising and addressing potential fall hazards at home, you can significantly reduce the risk of falls, accidents and injuries. We'll help you spot common causes, and discover easy ways to make your home safer.

Staying Active



Staying Active

Guidelines and Preparation

Before diving into an exercise routine, we've also included important preparations to ensure your safety and well-being. Explore these expert recommendations and take your first steps towards healthy, independent, and safer ageing.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults

For individuals aged 65 and over, the following information provides a guide for staying physically active:

- **Daily activity:** Try to do some form of physical activity every day, even if it's light in intensity. This could involve a leisurely stroll, gentle stretching, or basic mobility exercises.
- **Strength, balance, and flexibility:** Include activities that specifically target the improvement of strength, balance, and flexibility on at least two days a week. These exercises are key to maintaining stability and preventing falls.
- **Moderate or vigorous activity:** Aim for at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate-intensity activity each week. If you are already active, consider doing 75 minutes of more vigorous-intensity activity weekly. Alternatively, you can combine both moderate and vigorous activities to reach your target.
- **Break up sitting time:** Reduce long periods of sitting or lying down by breaking them up with short bursts of physical activity. Even simple movements, like standing up and stretching, can help prevent stiffness and keep you more mobile.

Before starting your activity, it's essential to make some necessary preparations: it would be a good idea to get ready:

- **Sturdy support:** Make sure you have something sturdy and stable to hold onto during exercises. A kitchen worktop is an ideal choice.
- **Supportive footwear:** Wear supportive footwear that fits well and is stable and comfortable.
- **Stay hydrated:** Keep a glass of water within reach to stay hydrated whilst you are active.
- **Start slowly:** Begin with exercises that you can comfortably manage. Start at a slow pace and build it up slowly.
- **Medical consultation:** If you have a heart condition or any other medical condition that may affect your ability to exercise, it's advisable to consult with your GP or healthcare provider before starting exercise.

Find Local Exercise Classes

As well as the physical benefits, joining an exercise class can help you meet new people and creates opportunities for new friendships. A group dynamic can also help keep you motivated and committed to your goals.

Find the Right Class

Seek out exercise classes specifically designed for older individuals. Ideally, consider classes aimed at falls prevention, often labelled as "postural stability" or "Otago" programs.

Local leisure centres, authorities and voluntary organisations can provide more information on available classes:

[View the WOW Guide](#)

[Move It Or Lose It: Find My Nearest Class](#)

[Age UK Wiltshire's Fitness & Friendship Classes](#)

Exercise at Home

If you're not quite ready for group classes or prefer exercising at home, explore the pages in our 'Staying Active' section for simple exercises that you can do in the comfort of your own space.

[View exercises at home](#)

Evidence Based Exercises

The 'Otago Exercise Programme' is led by trained Otago Leaders, and the 'Falls Management Exercise Programme (FaME)' is led by Postural Stability Instructors (PSIs).

These two programmes are recommended for those at high risk of falls as they have been shown to both reduce falls and improve strength and balance. Sometimes they have different names (e.g. Strong and Steady), but they are led by trained instructors who can adapt and progress the programme to meet your specific needs.

Staying active is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of falling and maintain your independence. The videos below, developed by Professor Dawn Skelton – a renowned expert in falls prevention and healthy ageing at Glasgow Caledonian University – offer a few of the evidence-based exercises designed to help improve strength, balance and confidence.

Before starting, please make sure the exercises are right for you. Everyone's ability is different, so it's important to match the exercises to your own level of mobility. To help you decide, start by watching the two short videos first:

- Falls Prevention Exercises: An Introduction
- Exercise Level Test

You will find these videos below.

These will help you understand which level of exercise is suitable for you. If you're unsure or have any medical conditions, speak to your GP or physiotherapist before beginning.

Video Resources

These evidence-based exercise sessions are structured in levels. Start at the right level for you and build up gradually.

Falls Prevention Exercises: An Introduction

A short video to help you understand the benefits of strength and balance exercises.

Exercise Level Test

A quick test to help you work out which level is right for you.

Strength and Balance: Level One

A gentle introduction to strength and balance movements for beginners.

Strength and Balance: Level Two

A moderate session for those who are already fairly active.

Strength and Balance: Level Three

A more advanced session designed for those with good mobility and balance.

Can you get up from the floor if you fall?

Being able to get up from the floor is important, as if we fall, we may not injure ourselves, but may have to spend a long time on the floor if we cannot get up. This leads to concern about falls and avoidance of activity, which can just make things worse.

Getting up from the floor is like any movement, it needs practice or we get rusty. If you can get up from the floor, even with difficulty, practice this skill more regularly, and it will get easier. Take a look at the [videos on NHS Inform](#) that show you how to practice at home (but always have someone around just in case).

We thank Professor Dawn Skelton (Glasgow Caledonian University and Director of Later Life Training) for allowing us to share these videos. We would also like to acknowledge the following content resource: www.fallsassistant.org.uk/exercise-centre.

Sitting Exercises

If you are able to complete exercises while standing up, this is the most effective way to improve your strength, balance and mobility.

However, if you are not able to exercise in standing, you can still gain benefits by completing seated exercises. These can help you to start improving your strength, flexibility and joint condition, which may allow you to progress to standing exercises in the future.

Getting Started

Before you begin, make sure you are using a solid, stable chair without wheels. Your chair should allow you to sit with your feet flat on the floor with your knees comfortably bent at right angles. Chairs with armrests should be avoided as they can restrict your movement.

Dress Comfortably and Stay Hydrated

Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows easy movement. Keep some drinking water within reach to stay hydrated during your exercise session.

Gradual Progression

Remember, building up your exercise routine **gradually** is the key to success. Start with a manageable number of repetitions for each exercise, and over time, aim to increase the repetitions at your own pace.

Consistency Is Key

To get the most out of exercise, aim to do it regularly and make it part of your daily routine. 'Little and often' may be the best approach to start with. You can increase or decrease the amount or frequency, depending on how you feel – listen to your body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LlscrsIMxc> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gZZFUbsvpw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZpp5xcleVw> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2w8OGul-Syl>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9jj_vD5GM

[50m MIND & BRAIN low impact seniors workout](#)

[We Are Undefeatable Chair Exercises](#)

[Wake up routine](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Seated Leg Raise](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Shoulder Press](#)

[Foot exercises](#)

[NHS Sitting Exercises](#)

[View other types of exercises](#)

Strength Exercises

Getting Started

To maximise your safety, consider performing strength exercises near a stable chair or surface (such as a kitchen worktop) just in case you need support. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows easy movement, and have some drinking water within reach to stay hydrated during your workout.

Gradual Progression

Remember that progress happens gradually. Begin with a manageable number of repetitions for each exercise, and as you become more comfortable, aim to increase the repetitions over time.

Consistency Matters

To get the most out of exercise, aim to do it regularly and make it part of your daily routine. 'Little and often' may be the best approach to start with. You can increase or decrease the amount or frequency, depending on how you feel – listen to your body.

[Move It or Lose It: Shoulder Press](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Standing Push Ups](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Strengthen Your Hips](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Standing Up From The Floor](#)

[We Are Undefeatable: Strength With Alex](#)

[Sit to stand](#)

[Cuppa routine](#)

[Easy exercises to build into everyday](#)

[Guided squats](#)

[Exercise with everyday objects](#)

[We Are Undefeatable Strength Exercises](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Seated Leg Raise](#)

[NHS Strength Exercises](#)

[Strength and balance videos \(Wesport\)](#)

Fallproof Resources (Wesport)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv0IgUuQosE> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqltYG4Bfes>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ampRReDXA> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9jj_vD5GM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Khz0gNmug>

General & Flexibility Exercises

Getting Started

Make sure you have a comfortable, uncluttered space for your exercises. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows easy movement. Keep some drinking water handy to stay hydrated during your routine. Have a support nearby (either a stable chair or surface) if you feel you might need it.

Progression and Consistency

To get the most out of exercise, aim to do it regularly and make it part of your daily routine. 'Little and often' may be the best approach to start with. You can increase or decrease the amount or frequency, depending on how you feel – listen to your body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cH6gfWu216A> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2w80Gul-SyI>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv0lgUuQosE> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7BcXbsy1_Q

[Afternoons with move it or lose it 1](#)

[Freedom to move](#)

[Chair yoga for flexibility](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Pelvic Floor Exercises to Improve Continence](#)

[Easy Exercise to build into every day](#)

[The cuppa routine](#)

[Move it or lose it Sit to Stand](#)

[Move it or lose it Foot exercises](#)

[Move it or lose it seated leg exercises](#)

[Move it or lose it exercises to strengthen hips](#)

[Move it or lose it challenge of the month](#)

[NHS Flexibility Exercises](#)

Balance Exercises

Getting Started

To maximise your safety, consider performing strength exercises near a stable chair or surface (such as a kitchen worktop) just in case you need support. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows easy movement, and have some drinking water within reach to stay hydrated during your workout.

Progression and Consistency

If it's been a while since you last exercised, don't worry. These balance exercises are suited for beginners. Begin with a comfortable number of repetitions for each exercise, and gradually increase them over time. Patience and consistency will help you make steady progress.

To get the most out of exercise, aim to do it regularly and make it part of your daily routine. 'Little and often' may be the best approach to start with. You can increase or decrease the amount or frequency, depending on how you feel – listen to your body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujoD1l4fnP4> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0nVlrJ26dw>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A28iwva1J_M <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrPjjFlp9wo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0Mez6c7Pk0> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtE2_SmXmT8
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jrC9NdH3EE> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiDpYePaUHg>

[Move It or Lose It: Improve Your Balance in 5 Minutes](#)

[Move It or Lose It: Walk the Plank](#)

[We Are Undefeatable: Balance With Sandra](#)

[Improve your balance routine](#)

[NHS Balance Exercises](#)

[Strength and balance videos \(Wesport\)](#)

[Fallproof Resources \(Wesport\)](#)

Freedom To Move with Bill Bailey

Being active doesn't have to require a costly investment. Teaming up with Bill Bailey, We Are Undefeatable has created three easy-to-follow videos that show you the free ways you can stay active through everyday activities that are suited to everyone's capabilities.

We Are Undefeatable - Freedom To Move With Bill Bailey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbfOPpHfLoc>

Video Resources

We Are Undefeatable - Kitchen Routine With Bill Bailey

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs_r9WEkg6w

We Are Undefeatable - Garden Routine With Bill Bailey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMAxBbFd1cg>

We Are Undefeatable - Morning Bedroom With Bill Bailey

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDz_MRkJFC4

Links and Resources

[We Are Undefeatable: Freedom To Move](#)

[We Are Undefeatable Campaign](#)

5 Five In Five

If you want to start building small amounts of activity into your day, the Five in Five workouts from We Are Undefeatable can help you to get moving.

Designed for people living with long term health conditions but also useful for older adults, these five-minute mini workouts are completely customisable to help you move in whatever way works for you.

Getting started is simple. [Download the Five in Five booklet](#) to find different mini workouts. Each one includes five movements which you can do seated or standing for one minute each, to build a five-minute workout.

Whether you want to improve your strength, unwind and relax, or just have a bit of fun, there's bound to be a Five in Five that suits you.

[We Are Undefeatable: Five in Five](#)

[Click here to download the booklet](#)

The Importance of Physical Activity

Maintaining an active lifestyle is essential for reducing the risk of falls, and for promoting overall health and well-being as you age. It can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and a number of other health problems. However, before starting a new exercise routine, it's advisable to consult your GP, especially if you haven't been active for a while or if you have specific medical concerns. They can provide advice on appropriate activities and intensity levels tailored to your fitness level and health status.

Remember that something is better than nothing, even if it is just breaking up long periods of sitting with regular walks around the house or doing some exercises in your chair. If you're already reasonably active, it is still worth making sure your strength, balance and bone health is at its best. Tai chi, dancing, swimming and bowls are all great options and choosing something you enjoy will help you make it part of a routine.

Swindon WOW Guide

Swindon WOW Guide is a listing of groups and activities suited to older people. It includes details of local social and support groups, lunch clubs, activity and exercise sessions, memory cafes and much more.

[View the WOW Guide](#)

Care Homes



There are many things that contribute to this increased risk including, (but not limited to):

- Frailty
- Presence of long-term conditions
- Physical inactivity
- Taking multiple medications
- Memory problems or cognitive decline
- Being in new or unfamiliar surroundings

However, in many cases taking action at the right time can actively support an individual and reduce the risk of falls and harm from falls.

The factors that contribute to a person's risk of falling are unique to them. For this reason, it is important that the approach to managing and preventing falls in care homes is person-centred and tailored to each individual resident. Implementing successful strategies to reduce falls risk can have a huge impact on a resident's level of independence, participation, and enjoyment in life.

This page is designed to provide information and useful resources for carers and care providers working in the community.

Guidance for managing falls in care homes

The World Guidelines for Falls Prevention and Management for Older Adults (2022) and NICE Guidance ng249 – Falls Assessment and prevention in older people and in people 50 and over at higher risk (2025) provide some clear and useful guidance on how best to assess for and manage falls risk for residents of care homes. This guidance is summarised below:

- All residents should be considered at high risk of falls
- A comprehensive falls risk assessment should be completed on admission to identify factors contributing to falls risk. Appropriate interventions should then be implemented to avoid falls and falls-related injuries. Factors to include can be found [here](#)
- Following a fall, an assessment should be completed in order to reassess falls risk factors, adjust the intervention strategy for the resident and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.
- All staff should be offered falls prevention training
- Physical activity and exercise should be promoted to residents (when feasible and safe)
- Nutrition for residents should be optimised, including eating food rich in calcium and proteins
- Vitamin D supplementation is advised for care home residents, as most residents are deficient
- Use of physical restraints should be avoided for the purpose for falls prevention

For full guidance visit

<https://www.bgs.org.uk/world-guidelines-for-falls-prevention-and-management-for-older-adults-a-global-initiative> and <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng249>

Recording & Reporting Falls

An important part of falls prevention planning in the care home is learning from falls that have happened previously, to help reduce the risk of a similar fall happening again. Recording and reporting falls consistently is key, to allow for review and analysis of potential themes or patterns.

Things to remember when recording falls:

- Record accurately
- State fact and not what you think happened
- State who was involved
- State where the fall happened
- State the activity that was being carried out
- State what happened if observed
- State any injuries
- State any intervention
- Then what actions are you going to take to reduce the risk of them falling again?

Follow your local policy for reporting and post fall checks for your resident.

Falls Prevention & Post-Fall Management Resources

React To Falls

An excellent online training package designed specifically for staff working in care homes. The package includes educational videos, print-outs, and a phone app to help staff learn about falls risk factors and interventions to reduce them.

[Visit React To Falls](#)

**STEADY ON
YOUR FEET**

www.steadyonyourfeet.org