

STEADY ON YOUR FEET

Devon



Falls Prevention Information Pack

Information & Advice



Information and Advice

Falls

The more details you can remember about a fall, the easier it is to pinpoint a cause so think carefully about:

- When it happened – was it related to time of day? Were you doing something specific at the time?
- How it happened – was it a loss of balance? Did you trip on something? Did you feel dizzy? Did you blackout?
- Where it happened – is there a trip hazard you could remove? Have you fallen in this place before? If so, why could this be?

If you are falling it can be helpful to keep a falls diary so you can track your falls over time. This allows for any trends to be identified and find strategies to prevent or reduce your falls.

Often, rather than one specific reason, there may be a number of underlying risk factors which have played a part, many of which can be reduced by following some simple advice.

These issues may include: -

- Memory loss or confusion
- Dizziness
- Vision and hearing problems
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Medications or poor pain control
- Alcohol consumption
- Bladder and bowel conditions (including incontinence)
- Muscle weakness
- Poor balance
- Foot pain, deformity or numbness
- Badly fitting or unsupportive footwear
- Environmental hazards

Falling can have an impact on your confidence which may then lead to a vicious cycle of reduced activity and a further increase in falls risk.

Taking a pro-active approach, even if you haven't had a fall, will help you take control of the situation and allow you to remain active and independent for longer with an increased quality of life in the long term.

Other medical conditions and Falls

It is well known that some medical conditions, such as Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis and a history of a Stroke can increase your risk of falls. If you are concerned about how your past medical history may be affecting your falls risk, please discuss this with your GP or an appropriate healthcare

professional, such as a specialist nurse who can help you manage your falls risk with your individual needs.

Useful links on falls and how to prevent them:

Saga - Get Up and Go Guide

NHS Supporting Older People

NHS Falls Prevention

Age uk- staying steady links

RoSPA Home Safety Videos

Blackouts

Blackouts can be difficult to identify, particularly if they are brief, but they should be suspected if you cannot recall the fall and / or have injuries to your face, as this suggests you did not put your hands out to save yourself.

Blackouts are very common and happen more often as we age. Common causes include:

- A drop in blood pressure when changing position (e.g. standing up from a chair)
- Heart disorders
- Anxiety / panic attacks / stress

If you think you may have had a blackout, it is important that you inform your GP so the cause can be investigated.

[More information can be found here](#)

Dizziness

It can occur for many reasons, e.g:

- A drop in blood pressure when changing position (e.g. standing up from a chair)
- If you feel dizzy when you first stand up:
 - Keep yourself hydrated, you could drink a glass of water whilst sat on the edge of the bed.
 - change position slowly and exercise your arms and legs before rising
 - Sit back down again if you feel dizzy and wait until it passes
 - Stand still or walk on the spot when you first get up and don't rush

Dehydration

- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids during the day (6-8 cups per day)
 - please note this is good general advice unless you have been prescribed diuretics 'water tablets'. These tablets are designed to make you pass more urine, drinking more will negate the effect of the tablets. So if this applies to you, you should only drink normal amounts or, if you have been given a 'fluid restriction' (an upper limit to the amount you can drink per day) please continue to observe that.
- Drink regularly throughout the day
- Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake

Inner ear disorders / vertigo

- If you feel like the world is moving or spinning, or your dizziness is associated with nausea, vomiting, visual changes or hearing disturbances contact your GP surgery for further advice
- Ensure you have had a hearing assessment recently

Medications

- Discuss your symptoms with a community pharmacist if you are taking medication, particularly medication related to blood pressure

Medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, COPD)

- Consider whether your condition is well managed and discuss with a health professional if you need further advice

Anxiety

- Try some relaxation techniques such as mindfulness or deep breathing
- Talkworks is a Devonwide (excluding Plymouth) initiative, if the way you are feeling is affecting your daily life. It can help you to feel better and giving you the tools and techniques to improve your mental and physical wellbeing.
- Discuss with your GP if severe

Further information

[TALKWORKS | Mental Health Support for Devon](#)

[NHS information on dizziness](#)

Medication

It is important to have your medications reviewed regularly by your GP or pharmacist so they can ensure each medicine is still needed and appropriate, keep an eye on any side effects and alter dosages if necessary. This is particularly important as we age as our sensitivity to medicines increase and dosages may need to be adjusted accordingly.

Do not stop taking medications, or take self-purchased medications or herbal remedies without first consulting your GP or pharmacist.

Make sure you take your medications as prescribed by your GP. There may be specific instructions such as taking them at a certain time of day or on an empty stomach etc., that are important to their effectiveness.

Consider filling a dosette box to help organise your medications and/ or using an alarm to prompt you to take them.

Drinking alcohol may increase the risk of drowsiness whilst taking some medication so always check with a pharmacist or GP if this is safe to do

Your pharmacist may also be able to advise you of alternatives if struggling to swallow tablets.

Pain relief and falls

Pain can affect the way you mobilise, and poor gait pattern increases the risk of falls.

What I can do:

- Take pain relief as prescribed. Regular pain relief helps you remain active in a safe way. If you do not like taking pain relief regularly, make sure you take some before you are active, for example going out shopping or to an appointment
- Speak to your GP about your pain relief if you are concerned about taking it, or you do not feel it is effective
- Consider alternative forms of non-pharmaceutical pain relief such as heat, ice or TENS machines. They may not cure the pain but may make it more manageable

Help from a Pharmacist

Environment

Often this is because of hazards within the home or difficulty with daily activities such as getting in / out of bed, on / off a chair or toilet, or in / out of the bath may also cause falls.

Falls prevention in and around the home is often described as 'common sense', however, it isn't always easy to recognise the things that can cause trips, slips and falls.

Use our home safety section to help you identify and remove hazards within your home

[View Home Safety Section](#)

Movement and Exercise

Between the ages of 50 and 70 we lose about 30% of our muscle strength and, as we age, our balance reaction times get slower which makes it harder to stay steady, especially if we are doing something quickly. Without physical activity, it is also difficult to maintain strong bones.

There is strong evidence that strength and balance exercise programmes are effective in preventing falls, regardless of age. Exercise classes designed for older people are particularly beneficial as they aim to improve balance and strength, making it easier to get in and out of chairs, on and off buses and up from and down to the floor.

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

Generally speaking, physical activity is any movement that results in a small increase in your heart rate and breathing. Exercising is safe and beneficial for the majority of people, but, if you experience chest pain or feel faint while exercising you should stop exercising immediately and contact your doctor. To minimise the risk of adverse effects, if you are new to exercise, begin slowly and gradually build up to the recommended amount:

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

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. Please note that chair based exercises, while beneficial for many other things, DO NOT prevent falls – exercises must challenge your balance if they are to be effective. If you are already reasonably active, you still need to ensure your strength, balance and bone health is at its best. Tai Chi and any form of dancing are great activities to help your bones, muscles and balance.

If you need help or advice about the best activities for you, speak to a physiotherapist or appropriately qualified exercise professional.

"Remember – Keeping active is vital. If you feel unsteady and a walking aid helps you feel steady and keep active this is your ticket to freedom.

Using a walking aid is not 'giving up', it is a way of enabling you to maintain fitness including strength, balance and stamina. All of which support independence.

Further Information

For further information regarding community exercise opportunities for older people:

[Active Devon: Active Ageing - Active Devon](#)

[Pinpoint Devon: Support services for older adults in Devon](#)

Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes

Vision

You may not notice that your vision is changing but, as we age we become less able to adapt to changes in light and darkness, to tell colours apart and to accurately see depth and distance. This can cause problems with bifocals / varifocals, even if they have been worn for years so if you do wear this kind of lens, take care on steps, stairs and patterned or uneven surfaces.

The older we get, the more common eye conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration become but, with 70% of visual problems being correctable, it is extremely important to ensure that you have regular eye tests. Remember that eye tests are free if you are 60 or over and many opticians can visit you at home if you are unable to go out and about.

It is important to tell your optician if you are worried about falling or if you have fallen over. They may can take this into consideration when reviewing your treatment plan.

Further Information

Further information can be found here:

[NHS eye health advice](#)

[Age UK eye health advice](#)

[Find an optician](#)

[Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)

Memory

This may just be a gradual deterioration associated with ageing but can also be associated with stress, poor sleep, infection, certain medications, dementia and excessive consumption or withdrawal from drugs or alcohol.

If your memory issues are minor, you may find that keeping your brain active with puzzles and games or using visual prompts and lists as reminders can help.

Keep yourself oriented by reading or listening to the news and making a note of the date each day.

If memory problems are severe they can impair judgement, reasoning and insight which can then result in risk taking behaviour which may then lead to falls. The ability to recognise and interpret sight, sound and touch may also be affected which can lead to communication and movement difficulties. If you or your friends and family have noticed a change in your memory or behaviour, it is important that you discuss this with your GP or other health professional.

Further Information

For further information follow the links below:

[NHS information on memory loss](#)

[AgeUK Advice on Dementia](#)

Nutrition and Hydration

It is important to speak to your GP if you are losing weight for an unknown reason as it could be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

Poor nutrition can result in a weakened immune system, difficulties absorbing medication, impaired wound healing and a reduction in muscle and bone strength which may then lead to an increase in falls. Even if your weight is normal, if you are eating a limited range of foods, you could still be malnourished.

Good hydration is equally as important as water makes up two thirds of our body and is vital to help digestion and flush out toxins. Being dehydrated can cause headaches, confusion, dizziness, constipation, urine infections, etc. which may all increase the risk of falls. Signs that you are not drinking enough can include feeling thirsty, headaches, tiredness, dry mouth / lips, confusion, dark / smelly urine, constipation.

If you are unsure if you are eating a balanced diet or drinking enough fluid, try keeping a food / drink diary and comparing it to the guidelines below. There are many reasons that your diet may be poor such as small appetite, swallowing difficulties, difficulty sourcing or preparing food, illness and problems with dental health. If you have difficulty shopping or preparing food, speak to family / friends who may be able to help or consider a meal or shopping delivery service. Contact social services if you are having particular difficulties preparing meals and other daily activities as they may be able to help.

Try to eat a varied, balanced diet and maintain good hydration by eating / drinking:

- 2-3 portions of high protein foods every day such as meat, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses, soya, tofu and other meat-free protein foods
- 2-3 portions of dairy foods every day such as cheese, milk and yoghurt or non-dairy alternatives like soya, almond or coconut milk
- 1 serving of starchy food at each meal (e.g. bread, cereals, potatoes, pasta or rice)
- Some fruit and vegetables every day (fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced)
- If you enjoy fish, go for oily fish such as mackerel, salmon, herring, trout, pilchards or sardines as these are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Aim for 2 portions a week
- At least 6-8 glasses/mugs of fluid every day – keep caffeine intake low as this can worsen dehydration
- If you have diabetes please consult your GP, nurse or dietician before making any changes

Further information

[NHS Eat Well](https://www.nhs.uk/eatwell/)

[AgeUK Health Eating](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-eating/)

[British Dietetics Association - Older Adult food facts | British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](https://www.bda.uk.com/en/older-adult-food-facts)

[Care Direct - Support and advice for older adults living in Devon | Devon County Council](https://www.caredirect.org.uk/support-and-advice-for-older-adults-living-in-devon)

[Find a Dentist: Find a dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/find-a-dentist/)

Bone Health

Osteoporosis is a condition which causes reduced bone density and increases susceptibility to fracture (breaking a bone). It is more common in women due to bone loss occurring more rapidly after menopause. The likelihood of having osteoporosis increases if you:

- Have ever broken a bone following a minor bump or fall (over the age of 50)
- Have a low BMI
- Have a family history of osteoporosis or hip fracture
- Are a current smoker or drink more than 3 units of alcohol per day
- Have taken oral corticosteroids (e.g. Prednisolone) for more than 3 months
- Have a diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Have Type I diabetes, untreated hyperthyroidism, chronic malnutrition/ malabsorption, chronic liver disease
- Have gone through a premature menopause (<45 years) without taking HRT

If you have broken a bone after a minor bump or fall and haven't discussed your bone health with another professional, it is important to see your GP so your bone health can be assessed. Diet and lifestyle changes can help to keep your bones as strong as possible, regardless of whether you have osteoporosis or not:

- Stop smoking as this can damage the bone building cells in your body
- Keep your alcohol intake low – excessive alcohol can destroy bones and make you unsteady
- Try to take some sort of weight bearing exercise
 - If you have not broken a bone before, exercise which encourages moderate impact as jogging, jumping, stamping would be beneficial.
 - If you have had a previous fracture or are diagnosed with osteoporosis, The Royal Osteoporosis Society can guide you as to which exercises may be suitable for you. Alternatively speak to your physiotherapist
- Ensure your Vitamin D intake is sufficient. We get most of our vitamin D from sunlight and most people in the UK get enough vitamin D by spending 15 minutes in the sun three times a week. It is recommended to take Vit D supplements, particularly over the winter months or if you do not go outdoors. These are available in supermarkets or pharmacies
- Ensure you include plenty of calcium in your diet (1000mg a day)
- if you eat all of the below you will achieve 1000mg calcium:
 - 2 whole grain bread,
 - 2 slices of gouda, edam or emmental cheese,
 - 1 serving of broccoli,
 - 2 glasses of mineral water, and.
 - 1 pot of yoghurt (200 g).

The Royal Osteoporosis Society



Trimming your toenails using a long handled file after bathing, when they are softer, can make them easier to manage independently. If you struggle or you have foot problems that you cannot manage yourself, a podiatrist or chiropodist can help. This is especially important if you have diabetes.

Try to wear footwear that protects and supports your feet with non-slip soles that are not too thick. Avoid high heels or backless footwear as they are more likely to cause you to trip.

Further information

[Find a Podiatrist](#)

Bladder / Bowel

Some bladder and bowel problems can increase the risk of falls:

- Strong urge to urinate
- Urine infections
- Passing urine more than 10 times in 24hrs
- Having to go to the toilet more than twice nightly
- Constipation - having hard bowel movements less than 3 times a week
- Diarrhoea - loose watery faeces that need to be passed urgently
- Difficulty accessing toilet

These issues can be exacerbated by poor hydration and high caffeine and / or alcohol intake. You can help to keep your bladder and bowel healthy by drinking 6 to 8 cups of fluid per day (unless advised otherwise) and minimising any drinks containing caffeine or alcohol.

Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fibre e.g. wholegrain bread, cereals, peas and beans and fruit and veg, can help to ease constipation. If you find it difficult getting to the toilet at night, a commode or urinal may be helpful. Speak to your GP about a continence assessment if you are having on-going issues and require further support.

Pelvic floor exercises

Fear of Falling

The more worried you become about falling over, the less likely you are to keep active which, in turn, makes you more likely to fall again. You may find that you are more careful with your walking, start to slow down your pace or you begin to leave the house less often. These are very common behaviours and it may mean you've lost some of your confidence when getting around. It is important to remember that there are lots of things that you can do to reduce your risk of falling and improve your confidence. It is really important to keep moving as this maintains muscle strength, see the movement and exercise section for more information. Working through the self-assessment tool on this website is a great start.

Having a falls plan in place can help to reduce anxiety and will reduce the likelihood of being on the floor for a long time. You may want to consider the following as part of your falls plan:

- Have a pendant alarm or mobile phone with you at all times. It may also be helpful to keep a phone at a lower level.
- There are also telecare sensors available such as falls detectors for people who would not be able to press a pendant alarm.
- Keep a dining chair in any room that doesn't have furniture that might help you stand up.
- Make sure there are blankets in each room so that you can keep warm

If you are hurt or unable to get up:

- Summon help by using your pendant alarm, calling out, crawling to a telephone or banging on a wall
- Use a blanket to keep warm.
- Move to a softer surface if you are able
- Change position regularly if you are able

If you are unhurt and feel you can get up:

- Roll over onto your hands and knees
- Crawl to a stable piece of furniture such as an armchair and use this to assist you with getting up
- Turn and sit on a chair or bed and rest for a while

If you are worried about falling when you are alone at home, you might want to get a pendant alarm to enable you to call for help even if you can't reach the telephone.

There are also telecare sensors available such as falls detectors for people who would not be able to press a pendant alarm.

Remember

- If you have had a fall, try not to worry about it too much. There are plenty of things you can do to minimise your risk of it happening again
- If you do fall, even if you're not injured it is really important to let someone know. It may also be helpful to keep a falls diary to track and falls you have. This may allow patterns and trends be identified and reduced.
- If your worries are not going away, try talking to someone about it
- Set yourself small goals to build back up to your usual activities – e.g. walk for a short distance first
- Think about all the times you haven't fallen and try to maintain your usual levels of activity

Complete a self-assessment and develop an action plan

Further Resources/Pendant Alarms

East Devon: About Home Safeguard

Exeter: Home Call alarm service

Middevon: Lifeline alarms

North Devon, Care Direct

Talking Therapy, Devon (excluding Plymouth) TALKWORKS | Mental Health Support for Devon
(dpt.nhs.uk)

Talking Therapy, Plymouth Plymouth Options | Livewell Southwest

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 music you enjoy or that is especially good for relaxation before going to bed
- Try not to worry about the things you cannot change

It is important to sleep in bed whenever possible as it helps to improve circulation, to reduce swelling in limbs, and ensures all muscles in the body are in a relaxed state when lying in bed.

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, 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 as you are asleep consider;

- Try to sleep more centrally in the bed.
- Ask your GP to review night time sedatives (sleeping tablets) as this could contribute to this.
- Elevate the edge of the mattress

If you are falling or slipping 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 is easy to get in but hard to get out off.
 - If the bed is too high- it will be hard to get in, and you may 'slide' out. You could remove casters, or invest in a shallower mattress
 - If the bed is too low- it will be hard to stand from. You could raise the bed, a mobility shop or the independent living centre can help advise on this
- If you are struggling to stand from the bed and the height is correct for you, try building in some strengthening exercises into your daily routine (see exercise tab)
- If you are struggling to get in and out of the bed a bed leaver could help. Speak to a mobility shop or the independent living centre. If you have an electronic bed you could try to flatten the knee break on an electronic bed.
- Other factors which may increase your risk of falling are; the sheets are too slippery or the edge of the mattress is too soft.

Bed handles to assist with bed transfer, for this speak to Occupational therapy or other health professionals for advice.

Further Information

Independent Living Centre: <https://www.independentlivingcentre.org.uk/>

Mobility Shops

Community Rehabilitation Team:

Axminster: [01297 630435](tel:01297630435)

Crediton: [01363 777561](tel:01363777561)

Exeter Central and East: [01392 465666](tel:01392465666)

Exeter South and West: [01392 908616](tel:01392908616)

Exmouth, Budleigh & Woodbury: [01395 282021](tel:01395282021)

Okehampton: [01837 658029](tel:01837658029)

Seaton Rehab: [01297 626740](tel:01297626740)

Sidmouth: [01395 519909](tel:01395519909)

Tiverton: [01884 235492](tel:01884235492)

North Devon & Torridge: please contact your GP for referral to the rehabilitation team.

Further Help and Contacts

For General Advice

AGE UK

Contact number: 0800 678 1602

Tackling the issues of loneliness and isolation to improve wellbeing. We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on topics as diverse as claiming benefits to care homes

Care Direct

Contact Number: 0345 155 1007

They can provide advice and support working with adults in Devon for whom activities of daily living (because of illness, older age, or a disability) can be difficult. They can also support people who have sensory difficulties such as hearing or sight loss. The aim is to help people to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible. They are able to support with getting a personal pendant alarm.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Contact number: 01392 872200

Website: <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/>

They can carry out Fire Home Safety Check. Advice on fire safety, making an escape plan, fire safety equipment and what to do in the event of a fire. They also provide fire safety advice for people with sight, vision or hearing difficulties. Advice for disabled people and carers.

Independent Living Centre

Contact 01392 380181 or ilc-exeter@devon.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.independentlivingcentre.org.uk/> Twitter: @ILCDevon Facebook: @DevonILC

A Devon NHS and Devon County Council funded Equipment and technology centre based in Newton Abbot, offering free, impartial equipment and technology advice, information and

assessments. Contact for advice and information or to book an appointment to visit the centre where one of their specialist NHS therapists can assess your needs and demonstrate equipment and technology for daily living and mobility.

Local Mobility Shops

<https://www.independentlivingcentre.org.uk/local-suppliers/>

Pinpoint Devon

Website: <https://www.pinpointdevon.co.uk/>

Providing health and support information for living well and staying safe. They have a directory of community services across Devon.

Torbay and South Devon NHS Public Website

Website: [Healthy ageing and frailty - Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Healthy ageing and frailty information for a range of support to help you stay healthy and independent throughout life.

Plymouth Online Directory

Contact Number: [01752 668000](tel:01752 668000)

Website: [Plymouth Online Directory - Plymouth Online Directory](#)

A community-based directory with a focus on health, social and wellbeing services in Plymouth.

For personal alarm pendant:

Across Devon: The Independent Living Centre (details above) can provide advice and information around personal pendant alarms.

Website: <https://www.independentlivingcentre.org.uk/local-suppliers/>

East Devon: Home Safeguard Alarm Services.

Telephone: [0330 678 2381](tel:0330 678 2381) Website: [About Home Safeguard - East Devon](#)

Exeter: Home Call Alarms.

Telephone: [01392 682349](tel:01392682349) Website: [Home Call alarm service - Exeter City Council](#)

Middevon: Lifeline Alarms.

Telephone: [01884 255255](tel:01884255255) Website: [Lifeline alarms - MIDDEVN.GOV.UK](http://Lifelinealarms-MIDDEVN.GOV.UK)

**South Devon (Dartmoor National Park, Newton Abbot, Teignmouth and Dawlish):
Teign Housing**

Telephone: [01626 355135](tel:01626355135) Website: [Lifeline Alarms - Teign Housing](#)

Plymouth: Plymouth City Council.

Telephone: [01752 668000](tel:01752668000) Website: [Personal alarms, security systems and keysafes - Plymouth Online Directory](#)

[Or for further assessment if you are struggling to manage around your home](#)

Contact your Local Community Rehabilitation Team

Axminster: [01297 630435](tel:01297630435)

Crediton: [01363 777561](tel:01363777561)

Exeter Central and East: [01392 465666](tel:01392465666)

Exeter South and West: [01392 908616](tel:01392908616)

Exmouth, Budleigh & Woodbury: [01395 282021](tel:01395282021)

Honiton, Ottery St Mary and Cranbrook: [01404 540549](tel:01404540549)

Okehampton: [01837 658029](tel:01837658029)

Seaton Rehab: [01297 626740](tel:01297626740)

Sidmouth: [01395 519909](tel:01395519909)

Tiverton: [01884 235492](tel:01884235492)

Torbay and South Devon: Customer Service Centre for Falls, Mobility and Home Assessments
[01803 219700](tel:01803219700)

North Devon and Torridge: Please contact your GP for referral

Plymouth: Please contact your GP for referral

If you are unsure which team to contact, please contact the one closest to your GP.

Alternatively, you can contact your GP surgery and ask to be referred for an assessment.

Keeping Active

Active Devon

Website: <https://www.activedevon.org/>

They work together with communities and partners, to connect, advocate and enable people to move more

Chartered Society of Physiotherapists

Six exercises for staying steady.

Website:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/publications/get-go-guide-supplement-six-exercises-staying-steady>

Royal Osteoporosis Society

Contact number: [0808 800 0035](tel:08088000035)

Website: [Royal Osteoporosis Society | Exercise and physical activity for osteoporosis \(theros.org.uk\)](https://www.theros.org.uk/exercise-and-physical-activity-for-osteoporosis)

For information on osteoporosis and suitable exercises

Other Useful Links

RNIB

Contact number: [0303 123 9999](tel:03031239999)

One of the UK's leading sight loss charities and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people. We recognise everyone's unique experience of sight loss and offer help and support for blind and partially sighted people – this can be anything from practical and emotional support, campaigning for more accessible transport, reading services and the products we offer in our online shop.

OneSmallStep

Contact number: [0800 2982654](tel:08002982654) or [01392 908139](tel:01392908139)

A Devon County Council funded initiative that helps people lose weight, stop smoking, reduce alcohol intake and become more active.

One You Plymouth

Contact Number: 01752 437177

Website: [One You Plymouth | Become a healthier you](#)

Providing lifestyle advice for people who live in Plymouth

Home Safety



Home Safety

Living Room / Lounge

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

Do you have casters under chairs which makes them likely to slide as you get up?

Casters make furniture easier to move but can cause a problem if they slide back just as you are getting up. Either remove the casters or fit cup shaped carpet savers underneath.

Can you get in and out of your chair safely?

If your chair is too high or too low it may need adjusting to make it easier to get in and out of.

Do you have other chairs in your house which are a better height for you? Get someone to swap them over for you.

Do you have to lean or reach to open windows or curtains because furniture is in the way?

Curtain cords may help to help open and close the curtains without stretching.

Ask someone to help you re-arrange the furniture so that your windows are more accessible

Fire Safety

- Make sure electrical wires and plugs are maintained and don't overload sockets and if it is not in use **SWITCH IT OFF!**
- Don't dry clothes close to a heat source – they may catch fire from radiated heat
- If you smoke make sure you put it out, right out in an ashtray and empty ashtrays regularly

Kitchen

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

Is there a risk of falling on wet flooring especially near the sink and washing machine?

Non-slip mats, a fitted carpet or carpet tiles should be used. Wet floor areas should be mopped as soon as possible.

Is everything within easy reach without stretching or climbing on chairs/stools etc?

Stretching and reaching above head height can make you feel dizzy and there is a temptation to climb up on chairs to reach something. Things, which are used regularly, should be on the 'easy to reach shelves'.

If steps have to be used are they secure with a handrail and system to keep the legs locked?

Never use a chair or a stool to stand on. Properly designed steps can be used in reasonable safety if you are fit enough. They must be designed with an effective handrail and with an easily applied lock for the legs. If possible ask someone else to help.

Do you struggle to carry items from the kitchen to dining area?

You might benefit from a kitchen trolley. Trolleys are not recommended as a walking aid they are to carry items from one place to another. If you are unsteady on your feet you will need an assessment to see if a trolley is safe for you to use.

Fire Safety

- Chuck out your chip pan – they are very dangerous and cause thousands of fires each year across the UK
- Stand by your pan – make sure you don't get distracted when cooking if you need to leave the room turn it off
- Don't put metal in the microwave
- Don't wear loose clothing when cooking and keep tea towels away from the hob
- Washers and Dryers can cause fires so only use when in the home and switch off when not in use

Bedroom

Your bedroom should be a sanctuary. But it's also a place where the risk of falling increases. By making small changes, you can create a safer and more comfortable environment, while reducing risk.

Do you feel safe getting in and out of bed?

Consider if your bedding / clothing is increasing the risk of slipping from the bed. Consider if your mattress is too soft and not providing support, or your bed is too high or too low.

Is there a light that can be turned on and off from the bed?

Fit a pull cord for the main light within reach of the bed. A bedside lamp is an alternative though may be a fire hazard if it is permanently plugged in. A battery powered push light fitted next to the bed is a good solution.

Is there a telephone next to your bed?

It is useful to have a telephone in your bedroom. Ensure your pendant alarm, if you have one, is within reach when you are in bed. *DO NOT leave mobile phones charging overnight – Fire Risk*

Fire Safety

- Never smoke in bed
- Don't fold electric blanket and check for wear and tear before use – make sure you switch off before bed
- Have a bedtime routine – switch off electricals, close internal doors and make sure your escape route is clear
- Emollient skin products (for a variety of skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, ulcers and bed sores) are safe to use but can leave a flammable residue on clothes or bedding so no naked flames or cigarette.

Bathroom

Your bathroom can be one of the most high-risk places for potential slips and falls. But by addressing safety measures, you can minimise the risk of falls and ensure a secure and comfortable bathroom experience.

Is there a risk of falling on wet vinyl or tiled flooring?

Non-slip mats, a fitted carpet or carpet tiles should be used. Wet floor areas should be mopped as soon as possible.

Can you access the bath and/or shower safely?

Non-slip rubberised mats are readily available. A grab rail may improve your safety / confidence. If you are unable to bathe safely, you may benefit from further assessment.

Getting washed and dried can be very tiring and is hard on your balance, sit on the toilet or a suitable stool when able.

Can you get on and off the toilet safely?

A grab rail may be helpful instead of using a radiator or any other bathroom fittings for support. A handy person would be able to install one.

Is the toilet roll in easy reach, to prevent over stretching?

Avoid rushing, for example make sure you go to toilet in plenty of time

Do you only have a toilet upstairs?

If you struggle to get up or down the stairs, consider a commode or other aid downstairs, such as a urine bottle to enable you to get to the toilet in time. Remember you may need some assistance to empty it.

Stairs and getting about the house

Safely navigating your way around your home is essential for preventing falls. With our assistance, you can identify and address hazards, enhancing falls safety and quality of life inside the home.

Are staircases and landings well lit?

Routes should be kept illuminated when they are in use and ensure that light switches are easily reached.

Is there a two way light switch present (e.g. a switch at both the top and bottom of stairs)?

Have an electrician fit a two way lightswitch. Consider the local council 'handy person scheme'.

Do you feel stable when going up and down the stairs?

It is essential to have a handrail, even on small flights of stairs. Additional ones can be fitted by the local handyperson scheme. Consider minimising journeys up and down the stairs.

When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

Consider moving things so that your path is clear. Ask someone to help if needed and always use your walking aid as advised.

Do you hold onto the furniture when you walk around your house?

If you feel unsteady when you are walking, you might find yourself holding onto furniture to help you feel steadier. This can be dangerous as it can cause you to stoop and overreach.

If you feel unsteady and a walking aid helps you feel steady and keep active this it is your ticket to freedom.

Using a walking aid is not 'giving up', it is a way of enabling you to maintain fitness including strength, balance and stamina. All of which support independence.

If you are unsure which walking aid would meet your needs a mobility shop or the community rehabilitation can help advise on this.

Are there papers, magazines, books, shoes, boxes, blankets, towels, or other objects on the floor?

Pick up things that are on the floor and always keep objects off the floor. A 'helping hand' may reduce stooping / overreaching.

Do you have to walk over or around cords or wires (e.g. cords and wires from lamps, extension cords or telephone cords)?

Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so they are not a tripping hazard. If possible have an electrician put in another socket. Consider a fire home safety check from the local fire brigade who

can provide advice and supply / fit smoke alarms if required.

Do you have a letterbox cage to avoid stooping to pick up your letters?

These are quite easy to fit, and apart from saving you from stooping, will also stop papers being spread across the floor just inside the doorway which could make you slip. (Available at DIY stores and handy person can fit)

Do you have loose rugs or runners on the floor?

Remove the rugs and runners or use non slip matting beneath the rugs to prevent them from slipping.

If you fall do you have a system for calling assistance?

A personal alarm pendant is a good way of doing this, and there are a number of schemes available - see contact details

Are the carpets in good condition and not frayed?

Worn carpets are a major cause of serious falls and should be replaced or secured

Fire Safety

- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on each level of your home and test it regularly. Local fire services or handy man service can support with this. Assistive technology services can support with specialised alarms for those with sensory impairment

Garden and getting in and out of the house

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

Are paths clear of leaves and overgrown plants?

Keeping your garden tidy and free of obstacles will make it safer

Are your paving stones free of moss and algae?

Moss and algae can become slippery when wet; prune over hanging plants and branches to improve light and air circulation. You can buy products to remove algae or ask someone to remove it with a pressure washer

Do you have any uneven or broken paving slabs?

Ask someone to replace or straighten them up

Are your flower/vegetable beds at ground level (rather than in containers or raised beds)?

Try not to spend too long in one position and take care when standing up from a bent over position

Try to alternate activities between seated ones and standing ones

Make sure you take breaks to avoid becoming over tired

Consider container gardening or raised beds

Do you have high step(s) to get in and out of the property?

You may benefit from an additional step and / or grab rails

Remember to use your walking aid (if you use one) outdoors as well. Wheeled walking frames aren't recommended for use outside, four wheeled walkers may be a suitable alternative. Speak to the independant living centre, a mobility shop or your physiotherapist if you are unsure.

Fire Safety

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

Sensory Support

Navigating a home safely is essential for everyone, especially for those with sensory impairments.

Do you have adequate lighting in your home?

Ensure that you have the correct level of lighting in your home. If you need brighter lighting, LED bulbs are brighter and cost less to use

Are the lighting levels in your home consistent?

It is safest to have similar lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas and you can hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.

Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

Put in a night light so that you can see where you are walking. Night lights are low energy lights which plug into a mains socket. A dusk to dawn light will switch on and off automatically. You could also consider a sensor light.

Do you have regular eye checks?

Have your eyes checked by an optician at least once a year and update your glasses. Opticians can visit you at home if you are unable to get out.

Fire Alarms

Smoke alarms can be interlinked so you get warning wherever you are in your house. Vibrating-pad alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as monitored alarm systems that are linked to care assistance.

Fire Safety

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

Do you have working smoke alarms in the correct positions in your home and are you aware of the fire risks within your home?

Consider a Fire Home Safety Check from the local Fire & Rescue Service. Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service will visit your home, provide safety advice, make any recommendations and fit and test smoke alarms.

This checklist has been designed to help you identify hazards and reduce the risks that can contribute to you falling in your own home.

Click on the rooms and you will be provided with a series of questions and tips to help you to identify hazards and improve the safety in your home

Staying Active



Staying Active

Introduction

Aim to do some form of daily physical activity for example Gardening, Walking or specific exercises, building up gradually to 2.5hrs of moderate intensity activity every week.

To prevent falls, exercises and activities must challenge your balance, therefore need to take place in standing, with strengthening exercises to support this. The aim should therefore be, within your daily activity Strength and Balance related exercises 2-3 times a week for 30 minutes.

If you are already reasonably active, you still need to ensure your strength, balance and bone health is at its best. Postural Stability Strength and Balance classes, Tai Chi, and dancing, etc. are all great activities to help with balance, fitness and wellbeing. Aim to choose something you enjoy, this will help you stick to it in the long term.

Joining an exercise class has the added benefit of increasing your social contact and can help to motivate you to continue.

If you are less active, or not active at all, 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. Please note that chair based exercises, while beneficial for many other things, DO NOT prevent falls.

It may be beneficial to attend an exercise class specifically designed for older people, which can be provided locally ([click here](#) for details), or if you are not ready for a class, review the exercises on the Steady on your feet website for some ideas. Alternatively contact your social prescriber at the GP surgery, the community rehabilitation team or other qualified exercises instructors on ideas how to start some falls prevention exercises.

Before exercising:

- Ensure that you have something to hold onto that is sturdy and stable (a kitchen worktop is ideal).
- Wear supportive footwear
- Have a glass of water to hand
- Begin with activities that you can do comfortably. Start slowly and build up gradually
- Speak to your GP or appropriate health professional, if you have a heart condition, or other medical condition that makes exercising difficult

While exercising

- If you experience chest pain, dizziness or severe shortness of breath, stop immediately and contact your GP (or call an ambulance if you feel very unwell and your symptoms do not go away when you stop exercising)
- If you experience joint or muscle pain, stop, check your technique and position and start again. If you continue to experience pain, you may need some further guidance from a physiotherapist or

appropriately qualified exercise instructor

- Remember that feeling your muscles working or slight muscle soreness the next day after exercise is normal and shows that the exercises are working
- Check your posture regularly and ensure that you are standing upright throughout
- Do not hold your breath while you exercise

After exercising

- Have a glass of water and a rest, you've earned it!
- Fill in your exercise diary and make a note of any issues or achievements. This will help you to monitor your progress and make sure you are exercising frequently
- Plan your next exercise session – aim to complete these strength and balance 3 times a week. If you plan it, you are more likely to do it.

Useful links for keeping active:

Active Devon

Website: <https://www.activedevon.org/>

They work together with communities and partners, to connect, advocate and enable people to move more

Chartered Society of Physiotherapists

Six exercises for staying steady.

Website:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/publications/get-go-guide-supplement-six-exercises-staying-steady>

[View our Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes](#)

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 selection of 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.

Exercise classes with our Falls Prevention Team in Plymouth

Falls Management Exercise (FaME) classes are lead by our team of specialist exercise professionals in the Falls Prevention Team.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpUQJJA2TC0>

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.

Mid, West, East and Exeter Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes

Evidence-based strength and balance classes, which have been shown to reduce your risk of falling, are being rolled out into the community. These will be tailored to your needs and include assessments so you can see the improvements you've made.

If you have fallen over, have poor balance or are worried about falling these classes have been designed for you.

You need to be able to;

- Walk with no physical assistance, but can use a walking aid
- Get up from a low-ish chair/toilet without assistance, its okay if you find this difficult.
- Follow instructions

The instructor will check that the classes are suitable for you with an assessment. The instructors work closely with the community rehabilitation teams and will discuss the best option for you if their class isn't appropriate. The classes take people throughout the year.

To find out more about a local classes and whether you can self refer or require a healthcare referral, contact the centre below:

Budleigh Salterton

Date: Mondays

Location: Seachange Budleigh Hub, East Budleigh Road, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6HF

Contact Number: 01395 446896

Crediton

Day: Wednesdays

Location: Arts Centre, Crediton, 32C, East Street, Crediton EX17 3AX

Contact Number: 01647 440775

Cullompton

Date: Thursdays

Location of Class: Culm Valley Sports Centre, Meadow Lane, Cullompton, EX15 1LL

Contact Number: 01884 234320

Exeter

Date: Wednesdays

Isca Centre, Summer Lane, Exeter, EX4 8NT

Contact Number: 07849 308278

Exminster

Dates: Mondays

Location: Westbank Healthy Living Centre, Farmhouse Rise, Exeter EX6 8AT.

Contact Number: 01392 824752

Exmouth

Date: Mondays

Location: Exmouth Leisure Centre. The Royal Avenue, Exmouth EX8 1EN

Contact Number: 01395 266381 or complete the self referral form here <https://form.jotform.com/222633413297354>

Honiton

Date: Thursdays

Location: Honiton Leisure Centre, School Lane, Honiton EX14 1QW:

Contact Number: 01404 42325 or complete the self referral form here <https://form.jotform.com/222633413297354>

Moretonhampstead

Day: Wednesdays

Location: Moretonhampstead Parish Council, Green Hill, Fore St, Moretonhampstead, Newton Abbot TQ13 8LL

Contact Number: 01647 440775

Okehampton

Day: Tuesdays

Location: Parklands Leisure Centre, Simmons Park, Okehampton, EX20 1EP

Contact Number: 01837 849159

or

Day: Thursdays

Location: Belstone Village Hall, Belstone, Okehampton, EX20 1RB

Contact Number: 01837 849159

Seaton

Date: Mondays

Location: Seaton Community Hospital, Valley View Close, Seaton, EX12 2UU

Contact Number: 01297 35235 or complete the self referral form
here <https://form.jotform.com/222633413297354>

Tiverton

Date: Wednesdays

Location: Exe Valley Leisure Centre, Bolham Road, Tiverton

Contact Number: 01884 234900

North Devon Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes

The programme is aimed at those aged 55 and over who are deemed to be at heightened risk of falling and is delivered over 24 weeks. These will be tailored to your needs and include assessments so you can see the improvements you've made.

After each session, there will be light refreshments and time to chat with others in the group.

The programme also aims to connect people with local activities to maintain their newfound fitness/strength.

Sessions will be free of charge for participants, and assistance with transport is available for people who are unable to get themselves to the venues. Sessions will take place in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, and Westward Ho!

You must be:

- Over 55
- At risk of falls, have a fear of falling or have fallen in the previous year.
- Able to follow instructions
- Able to walk independently indoors and outdoors (with or without a walking aid and without help from another person)
- Able to get up from a dining room type chair (it is ok to find this difficult)
- Prepared to attend weekly for 24 weeks and complete prescribed home exercises between sessions. (we accept there may be the occasional holiday, illness and medical appointments).

There are certain medical and health conditions that may mean that the programme isn't suitable for you. However, we will talk to you to identify if any apply once we receive a completed referral form from you.

How to apply:

The application process is simple. Health professionals can apply on behalf of their clients. Individuals can also apply directly. If you have any questions, please call the Vista Wellbeing Team at **07900 041258** or click the link and complete the [online application form](#). It is also possible to download and print the form from the website.

[View the online application form](#)

To find your nearest class, please see the below:

Free 24 week programmes (assessments start 27/1/25)

- Ilfracombe – Salvation Army Hall, Tuesdays 2 – 3.30
- Barnstaple – Salvation Army Hall, Wednesdays 10:30 – 12
- Westward Ho! – Baptist Church Hall, Fridays 10:30 – 12

Self-referrals and healthcare professional referrals are accepted. Full criteria and referral form [here](#):

[View Referral Form](#)

Pay as you go sessions are also available as follows:

- Braunton – Christ Church Hall, Mondays 10:30 – 12 and 1:30 – 3
- South Molton – YMCA, 1:00 – 2:30
- Westward Ho! – Wednesdays 1:30 – 3
- Barnstaple – Roundswell Community Centre 1:30 – 3

All sessions are £6 each.

Contact us directly to enquire about the availability of space and to arrange an assessment on **07900 041258**.

Torbay and South Devon Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes

Evidence based strength and balance classes which have been shown to reduce your risk of falling over are available to you in the community. These will be tailored to your needs and include assessments so you can see the improvements you've made.

Monday: Paignton, Bovey Tracy and Totnes

Tuesday: Newton Abbot, Dawlish and Teignmouth

Wednesday: Paignton and Brixham

Thursday: Torquay

To self-refer or find out more about these classes please call the Healthy Lifestyles team on 0300 456 1006

Plymouth Evidence Based Strength and Balance Classes

FaME (falls management exercise) is led by our team of specialist exercise professionals. Informed by research evidence the team guide you through a personalised programme (held in small groups in your community). The programme is designed to improve your balance and reactions, your movement, stamina and strength. This all helps reduce the likelihood of a fall, whilst helping everyday activities become easier and less effortful so that you can continue doing the things you enjoy.

Find FaME Classes in the Plymouth Area

Although you can feel immediate benefits from adding extra movement to your days and weeks, for best outcomes and to do all you can to reduce the likelihood of a fall, we offer FaME for up to 24 weeks. We enjoy a chat and occasional humour but are dedicated to supporting everyone to succeed and progress in their own time. FaME may offer some seated options, but its focus is on helping you feel more confident on your feet, whilst also learning or maintaining the skill to get up from the floor. It's good to know you can if you need to.

Most importantly, FaME is designed to help you 'get up, stay up and live your best life'.

If FaME sounds like it could be for you and you would like to find out more then call The Wellbeing Hub on: 01752 437177.

Find FaME Classes in Plymouth

Find FaME Classes in the Plymouth Area

Find Out More About FaME classes

The Falls Prevention Team run a 24-week programme for people over the age of 55 in Plymouth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQszv7xhA44>

Guidelines and Advice

From recommendations for daily activity to strength, balance, and flexibility exercises, this page provides valuable insights to help you stay physically active and prevent falls.

Before diving into an exercise routine, we've 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 guidelines provide a framework for staying physically active:

- **Daily activity:** Strive to engage in 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:** Incorporate activities that specifically target the improvement of strength, balance, and flexibility into your routine on at least two days a week. These exercises are invaluable for maintaining stability and preventing falls.
- **Moderate or vigorous activity:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week. If you are already active, consider engaging in 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly. Alternatively, you can combine both moderate and vigorous activities to reach your target.
- **Break up sitting time:** Reduce prolonged 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 contribute to your overall well-being.

Before embarking on your exercise routine, it's essential to make some necessary preparations:

- **Sturdy support:** Ensure you have something sturdy and stable to hold onto during exercises. A kitchen worktop is an ideal choice.
- **Supportive footwear:** Wear supportive footwear that provides stability and comfort.
- **Stay hydrated:** Keep a glass of water within reach to stay hydrated during your workout.
- **Start slowly:** Begin with exercises that you can comfortably manage. Start at a slow pace and gradually build up your routine.
- **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 an exercise regimen.

These simple preparations will help ensure a safe and effective exercise session, tailored to your individual needs and capabilities.

Sitting Exercises

Whether you've been away from regular exercise or simply prefer seated routines, these exercises are gentle and easy to follow.

Getting Started

Before you begin, ensure you have a solid, stable chair without wheels. This chair should allow you to sit with your feet flat on the floor and 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 for easy movement. Keep a bottle of water within reach to stay hydrated during your exercise session.

Gradual Progression

Remember, building up your exercise routine gradually is 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

For optimal results, aim to incorporate these seated exercises into your routine at least twice a week. Combining them with other exercise routines can further enhance your overall well-being.

By engaging in these seated exercises, you are taking proactive steps to maintain your mobility, improve your strength, and reduce the risk of falls. Exercises can be adapted to your fitness level, ensuring that you can comfortably and safely enjoy the benefits of physical activity. Try to do these exercises at least twice a week. While beneficial for general health, on their own, chair-based exercises do not prevent falls – exercises must challenge your balance to do this. That's why it's important to combine these with other routines and activities.

<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=2w80Gul-Syl>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9jj_vD5GM

NHS Sitting Exercises

Strength Exercises

Whether you've taken a break from exercise or are just starting, these gentle exercises are straightforward to follow.

Prepare Your Space

To get started with chair-based strength exercises, you'll need a stable chair that doesn't have wheels and won't slip on the surface it's placed on. Ensure that you can comfortably sit with your feet flat on the floor and your knees bent at right angles. Chairs with armrests should be avoided as they may limit your range of motion.

Dress Comfortably and Stay Hydrated

Choose loose, comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement. Keep a bottle of water within reach to stay well-hydrated during your exercise session.

Gradual Progression

Remember that progress is achieved through gradual increments. Begin with a manageable number of repetitions for each exercise, and as you become more comfortable, aim to incrementally increase the repetitions over time.

Consistency Matters

For the most effective results, incorporate these strength exercises into your routine on a regular basis. Consistency is key to improving your overall health, mobility, and strength.

By incorporating these gentle strength exercises into your day, you're actively enhancing your health and mobility. These exercises can be tailored to suit your fitness level, ensuring that you can safely and comfortably enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv0lgUuQosE> <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>

NHS Strength Exercises

NHS Strength and Flexibility Exercises

Flexibility Exercises

Whether you're returning to exercise after a break or starting anew, these exercises are gentle and designed so you can simply follow along.

Prepare Your Space

Ensure you have a comfortable, uncluttered space for your exercises. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement. Keep a bottle of water handy to stay hydrated during your routine.

Gradual Progression

Don't worry if you haven't been active for a while. These exercises are beginner-friendly. Start with a comfortable number of repetitions for each exercise and gradually increase them over time. Consistency and patience are key to making progress.

By incorporating these flexibility exercises into your routine, you'll be actively enhancing your health and mobility. These exercises are adaptable to your fitness level, allowing you to enjoy the benefits of improved flexibility and overall well-being.

<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

[NHS Flexibility Exercises](#)

[NHS Strength and Flexibility Exercises](#)

Balance Exercises

Whether you're reinitiating exercise or starting fresh, these exercises are designed to improve balance and help you move around.

Create a Safe Environment

To ensure safety, consider performing these exercises near a wall or a stable chair just in case you need support. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement, and have a bottle of water within reach to stay hydrated during your workout.

Gradual Progression

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.

By incorporating these balance exercises into your routine, you'll actively improve your health and mobility. These exercises can be adapted to your fitness level, ensuring that you can comfortably and safely enjoy the benefits of enhanced balance and overall well-being.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujoD1l4fnP4> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0nVlrJ26dw>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A28iwwa1J_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>

NHS Balance Exercises

General Exercises

They are beneficial for general health, and are perfect to add to your routine alongside more strength and balance-based activities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3VICljvWsY> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6HGXUS7IYI>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpC1zw7VPGE> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqr5Wcru9N4>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2Bf_QnxLtw <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG2h46j-VAs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0TokrUpv8Q> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONvVm0FpsII>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bPfqpSMin8> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVyKoHIQAYa>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-w4XgMBpsqk> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXtBT-WAu4g>

Freedom To Move

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.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbfOPpHfLoc> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs_r9WEkg6w
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMAxBbFd1cg> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDz_MRkJFC4

We Are Undefeatable: Freedom To Move

5 Five In Five

Designed for people living with long term health conditions but also useful for older adults, these five minute mini-workouts are completely customisable to suit your needs and ability.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayRZ9dpb9G0>

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 Booklet](#)

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

NHS Resources

Older adults should do some type of physical activity every day. It can help to improve your health and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. We've gathered some simple and handy exercises from the NHS to support healthy and active ageing.

Discover a wealth of expert guidance on staying physically active, enhancing strength and balance, and the benefits of an active lifestyle during later years. Explore these NHS resources and start to reduce your risk of falls, and enjoy a healthier, more active life.

Speak to a GP first if you have not exercised for some time, or if you have medical conditions or concerns. Make sure your activity and its intensity are appropriate for your fitness.

[NHS UK: Sitting Exercises](#)

[NHS UK: Strength Exercises](#)

[NHS UK: Flexibility Exercises](#)

[NHS UK: Strength and Flexibility Exercises](#)

[NHS UK: Balance Exercises](#)

Find Local Exercise Classes

These classes, which often cover activities like aerobic exercises, tai chi, dancing, or bowls, are enjoyable and tailored to older adults.

Beyond the fitness benefits, joining an exercise class boosts your social interactions, providing opportunities for new friendships and shared motivation. 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:

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

[Age UK: Exercise and Physical Activity Classes](#)

Exercise at Home

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

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



Care Homes



There are many factors that contribute to this heightened risk including (but not limited to): Frailty; the presence of long-term conditions; physical inactivity; taking multiple medications; the unfamiliarity of new surroundings. However, in many cases taking the right steps at the right time can actively support an individual and reduce the risk of falls and harm from falls.

The factors that contribute to an individual's risk of falling is unique to them. For this reason, it is important that care homes have a person-centred approach to manage and prevent falls. This helps to improve the overall quality of care for an individual and has a huge impact on a person's level of independence, participation and enjoyment in life.

This page is for information and support for carers and care providers working in the community.

You can find information on local services available to you, as well as useful downloadable resources to help prevent falls and manage a fallen resident/patient.

World Falls Prevention Guidelines

- All residents should be considered at high risk of falls.
- A **multifactorial falls risk assessment should be completed on admission** to identify factors contributing to **fall risk** and **implementing appropriate interventions** to avoid falls and fall-related injuries in care home resident older adults.
- A **post-fall assessment following a fall** should be completed in order to **reassess fall risk factors, adjust the intervention strategy** for the resident and avoid unnecessary transfer to acute
- All staff should be offered fall prevention training
- **Nutritional optimisation** including food rich in calcium and proteins, as well as vitamin D supplementation as part of a multidomain intervention for falls prevention in care home residents.
- **Promotion of physical activity** (when feasible and safe) as part of a multidomain falls prevention intervention in care homes
- Physical restraints should not be used as a measure for falls prevention in care homes. For full guidance [click here](#)

① Falls Prevention & Post Fall Resources

-REACTTOFALLS:

An excellent resource specifically designed for care homes is the React To Falls website. It is very interactive and has videos, print outs and a phone app to help all staff understand about the falls risks and interventions to reduce falls, also what is expected of homes regarding falls [\[click here\]](#).

-South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWASFT) Post Fall Guidance Pack for Care Providers [\[click here\]](#)

-SWASFT Minor Head Injury document [\[click here\]](#)

-SWASFT Falls Prevention Videos [\[click here\]](#)

-Good Hydration! Projects

Initiatives in care homes to improve hydration and reduce urinary tract infections (UTI's) [\[click here\]](#)

Recording & Reporting Falls

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 policy for reporting and post fall checks for your resident.

Falls Prevention Training for Care Homes

Exeter, Mid and East Devon

Falls Prevention Team - rduh.fallspreventionteam@nhs.net – offering in-house training

Northern Devon

Northern Care Homes Team - rduh.northerncarehomesteam@nhs.net – offering in-house and virtual training

Torbay & South Devon

Jane Reddaway - [01803 656600](tel:01803656600): Horizon Centre at Torbay Hospital (Foundation Falls Training)

Useful Services

RDUH: Exeter, Mid, East and North Devon

[Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust \(RDUH\) Community Services Directory](#)

Eastern Care Services Team (ECST)

The ECST work in Care Settings. They have specialist roles in Safeguarding and Education to support the needs of these services. The whole team aim to provide positive outcomes for residents / care service users, their families and friends. They also support staff, providers and Health Professionals involved within these settings. [View more information on training offered.](#)

Northern Care Home Team

The Care Homes Team provides support and structured education/training to care homes (nursing and residential), domiciliary care providers and supported/assisted living providers within North Devon - [View more information](#)

Provider Engagement Network

The Provider Engagement Network (PEN) is the main way for Devon County Council and the NHS in Devon to engage with providers of adult health and social care services. It is open to all independent sector providers. [Visit Provider Engagement Network](#)

Torbay and South Devon

[Local advice for Care Homes](#)

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust:

[Prevention & Advice](#)

[Livewell Southwest – Falls Team](#)

Direct to SWASFT

[Visit SWASFT](#)

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