



Preventing falls

Falls can have a serious effect on anyone, here are some basic steps you can take and some exercises to help you prevent them.



As you get older many things that once came naturally can become more difficult:

Do you:

Yes

- feel nervous about the possibility of falling?
- hold on to furniture as you move around?
- have dizziness or feel light-headed as you get up out of a chair or bed?
- feel more drowsy than usual?
- have difficulty walking or feel unsteady on your feet?
- find it harder to see or things look blurry?
- find it harder to hear what people are saying to you?
- take regular medication for a long-term condition including heart disease, dementia, diabetes, blood pressure or asthma? ...
- exercise less than twice a week?
- rush or need to go to the toilet more often?
- feel confused even for a short while?

If you tick yes to one or more of these questions, then you might be at risk of falling and the information in this leaflet could help.

If you think you are at risk of having a fall, talk to your GP or pharmacist – many falls can be avoided with help

Top five ways to prevent falls



1. Look after your feet

- Make sure your shoes/slippers keep your foot firmly in place. Avoid narrow heels, open backs or worn soles.
- See a podiatrist if your feet are painful.



2. Stay well

- Eat healthily and regularly. Avoid going for long periods between meals.
- Drink enough water.
- Always take your medicines on time and as prescribed. Check if they have side effects like dizziness/light headedness or drowsiness. If you aren't sure, ask your pharmacist when you pick up your prescription.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions, especially if rain or freezing temperatures are forecast.



3. Look after your eyes

- Have your eyes tested regularly (every two years if under 70, annually thereafter) – it's free if you're over 65.
- Look after your glasses and clean them often.



4. Stay active, stay steady

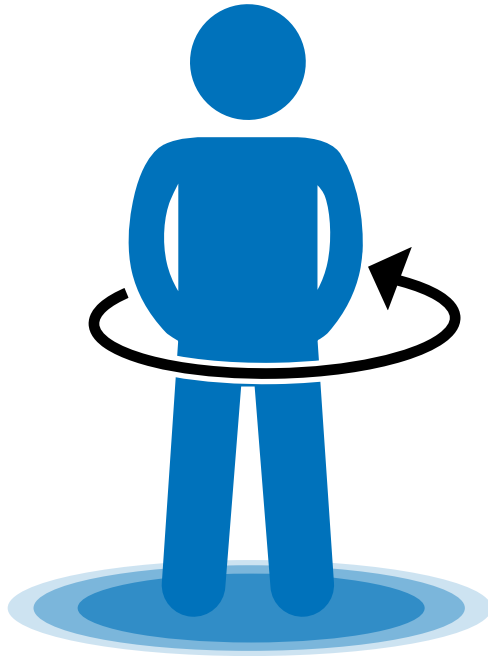
- Be active – try to do 30 minutes of moderate activity every day. Moderate activity means you will be slightly out of breath.
- Try to sit less, keep doing little things every day, like the exercises in this leaflet.
- On two days per week try to do exercises to increase your strength (e.g. carrying shopping) and balance (e.g. dancing).
- Continue with any exercises you have been advised to do.



5. Look after your home

- Replace worn floor coverings.
- Replace or remove rugs that have curled edges.
- Remove clutter and ensure your home is well lit.
- Replace low beds and chairs if you struggle to get up from them.
- Beware of slippery floors in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Keep your home warm.

Hip circles

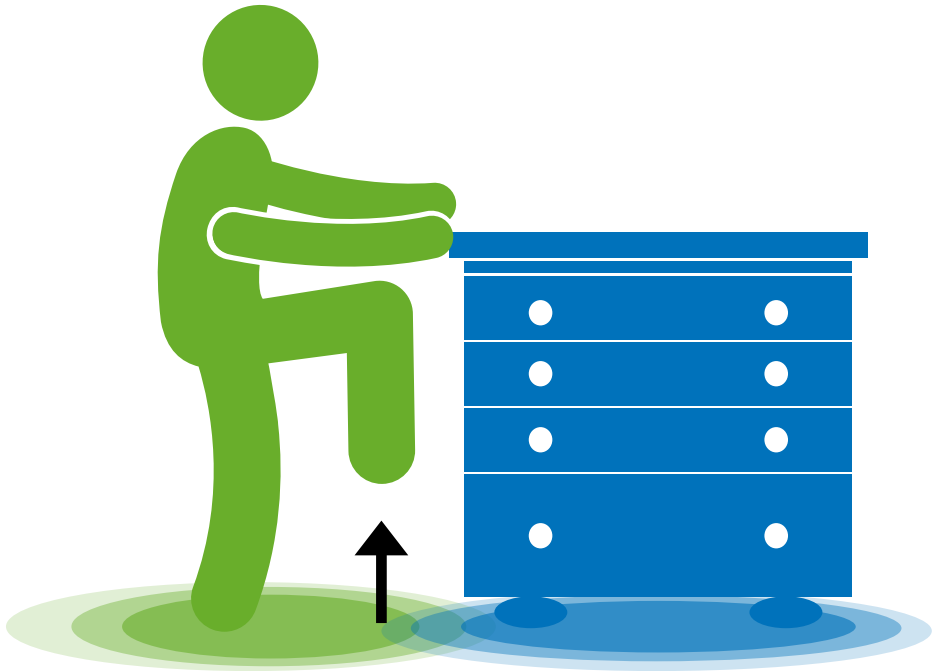


Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required.

Slowly circle your hips 5 times in one direction, then 5 times in the opposite direction.

Whilst doing this, concentrate on your feet - you should feel your body weight shifting over different portions of your feet as you circle.

High knees



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best, but if you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Start movement at your ankle and pull your toes upwards then lift your whole leg up in front of you.

Bending at your hip and knee. Hold the leg up for 3 seconds, then slowly lower.

Make sure your heel hits the ground first and you maintain the hip width stance throughout.

Repeat 10 times each leg

Hip extension



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best, but if you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Keeping your knees straight, move your straight leg backwards extending your hip (without pointing your toes).

Make sure you keep your back straight - do not lean forwards.

Repeat 10 times each leg.

Heel raises



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best, but if you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Slowly raise up onto your tip toes, pushing through feet not hands.

Hold for 3 seconds and gradually lower your heels back down.

Do not let your body rock backwards when you lower back to the floor.

Repeat 10 times.

Hip abduction



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best, but if you use a chair, make sure it is steady. **Important: your toes must face forwards at all times during this exercise.**

If you imagine you are standing in the middle of a clock your toes need to be pointing towards 12 o'clock. Do not let them turn to face 2 o'clock or 10 o'clock.

If they do not face forwards you are not working the correct muscles. Keeping your knee straight and toes forwards, slowly lift one leg out to the side and hold for 2 - 3 seconds then return to the original position.

Make sure your body remains upright. Do not lean over to lift your leg higher.

Repeat 10 times each leg.

Sit-to-stand



Sitting in a stable chair of adequate height (your hips and knees should be in line).

Come forwards in the seat, feet flat on the floor and lean forwards with your body.

Push down through your legs and stand up straight without using your arms to assist. Stand for a few seconds before slowly sitting back down.

To sit; stick your bottom out and sit down slowly again without using your arms for support. Do not drop down in to the chair.

Repeat 10 times.

What to do if you have a fall

FALL

Stay calm - take some deep breaths

Check for injuries - move your arms and legs

Can you try and get up?

Yes

Plan how you will get up

Take your time

Roll onto your side

Move on to your hands and knees

Use a firm chair or surface to help you stand up

Once standing, turn and sit down

No

Summon help

Personal alarm, phone, shout or bang something

Stay warm

If you can reach safely, pull a blanket, towel or the bed clothes over you to keep warm. Support your head with a cushion or rolled up item of clothing

Keep moving

Move limbs if possible to avoid stiffness and help with circulation

Stay dry

If you are able to, move away from any wet areas

Inform your GP

Do you feel safe and secure?

- Would a lifeline or community alarm system help?
- Where do you feel off balance? – would a rail there help?
- Are your alarms/pull cords easy to reach when necessary?

For further information visit **NHS choices:**

www.nhs.uk/conditions/Falls/Pages/Introduction.aspx



**The NHS
non-emergency**

NHS 111 is the number to call if you have an urgent health need and are not sure what to do about it.

This information has been produced as part of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.

You can find out more about the partnership by visiting www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk

Do you need more advice?

If you are worried about falling or are concerned about a relative falling, talk to your GP or pharmacist or call the number listed below that covers the area where you or your relative live.

Leicester (city residents only)

0116 454 1004

Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm

Leicestershire

0116 305 0004

Monday - Thursday, 8.30am - 5pm

Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm

Rutland

01572 722 577

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8.30am - 5.00pm

Tuesday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Friday 8:30am - 4.30pm

