

## Keep moving and reduce your risk of falls



### **Am I at risk of falling?**

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

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

### **Factors contributing to the risk of falls.**

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

## In hospital

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

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

## Be Active!!

When you are well and at home, keeping active will help reduce your risk of falls.

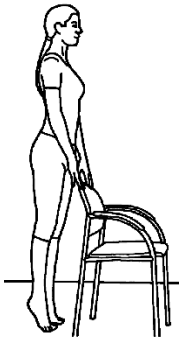
Physical activity - walking, gardening, dancing, swimming. Tai Chi etc. - can help improve mobility, strength, balance and flexibility.

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

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

**#KEEPMOVING****Trunk rotation**

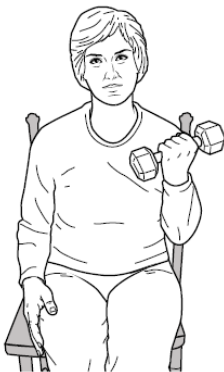
Standing or sitting if your balance is unsteady, cross your arms across your chest. Rotate to your left, come back to the centre and rotate to your right. Repeat 10 times

**Heel raises**

Stand tall, holding the back of a sturdy kitchen type chair or kitchen worktop, then lift your heels off the floor, taking your weight onto your big toes. Hold for 3 seconds, then lower with control. Repeat 10 times.

**Toe raises**

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

**Arm strengthener**

Sitting with your back straight. Hold a tin/ water bottle in both hands. Keeping your elbow by your side, slowly bend your elbow towards your shoulder then in a slow and controlled manner straighten your elbow again. Repeat 10 times on both arms.