



What to do if you fall

If you fall, try to stay calm. Take a couple of minutes to check for any pain or injuries and see if you think you can get up.

If you feel able to get up

- Take your time – do not get up too quickly.
- Roll onto your side, then use your arms to push yourself onto your hands and knees.
- Look for something stable to hold, such as a heavy piece of furniture or a bath or sink. Crawl to it if it's out of reach.
- Put one foot flat on the floor. Stand up slowly, holding onto something stable to help you.
- Sit down and rest while you recover.

If you do not feel able to get up

- If you have a phone or personal alarm that you can reach, use it to get help.
- If you cannot reach an alarm or phone, try to get someone's attention by shouting for help or banging on a wall or the floor.
- Try to keep warm while you wait for help. Cover yourself with anything you can reach, such as a towel, coat, rug or blanket.
- Keep moving your body. Roll from side to side or gently move your arms and legs.
- Try to change position about every 30 minutes, to help prevent pressure sores.

Call 999 if:

You or someone else has fallen and:

- they may have injured the head, back, neck or hip
- cannot get up
- If someone else has fallen, keep them comfortable and warm.
- carefully help them get up if they can, but do not try to lift them yourself.

Get help from NHS 111 if:

- you or someone else has fallen and may be in pain, injured or unwell
- you can call 111 or get help from 111 online.

<https://111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-symptoms>

Help from a GP for falls

If you've had falls or a GP thinks you're at risk of falls, they'll check your balance by asking you to get up and move around.

They may refer you to a specialist falls service. Help from a falls service may include:

- checking for problems such as muscle weakness, weak bones (osteoporosis) or problems with your eyesight
- strength and balance training
- checking that your home is safe and making home adaptations
- reviewing any medicines you're taking

You may also need treatment for any conditions that are affecting your balance or strength.

How to prevent falls

If you're at risk of falls, it's important to do things to prevent them, and make a plan in case you do fall.

Do

- stay active – physical activity guidelines for older adults recommend being active every day, and doing activities that improve strength and balance at least twice a week
- wear shoes or slippers that fit well, do not slip off and have a good grip
- wear a personal alarm, or carry a mobile phone with you
- use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower
- consider fitting safety rails on steps, and grab rails in the bathroom
- consider using a walking aid
- eat well and stay hydrated – not eating and drinking enough can make you feel lightheaded or faint

- look after your bone health – eat foods containing calcium, and make sure you get enough vitamin D
- have regular eye tests, and get your ears and hearing checked, as ear problems can affect your balance
- speak to a GP or pharmacist if you think your medicines could be affecting your balance

Don't

- do not try to do tasks that you find difficult such as lifting or reaching – ask someone to help you
- do not have too much clutter at home, or things you could trip on such as loose wires or rugs
- do not drink too much alcohol

Information:

Getting a care needs assessment

If you're worried about falls you can ask your local council to do a care needs assessment to look at what help you might need, including changes to make your home safer. It's free and anyone can ask for one.

Apply for a needs assessment on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services>

Causes of falls

Falls are common, particularly in older people. Causes of falls include:

- muscles getting weaker as you get older
- conditions that affect your mobility or balance, such as arthritis, stroke, acquired brain injury or Parkinson's disease
- low blood pressure (hypotension)
- side effects of some medicines
- problems with your eyesight or hearing
- dementia

This factsheet is available on the NHS website
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/>