



# REDUCE YOUR RISK OF FALLS AND FRACTURES

**In anyone with weak and fragile bones due to osteoporosis, even a minor fall from standing height can result in a broken bone.**

**Read on and learn how you can decrease your risk of falls by safe-proofing your home and becoming stronger and steadier on your feet.**



Accidental falls are common. Thirty per cent of adults aged 65 and over fall annually and 10-15% will suffer injuries as a result<sup>1</sup>. If you have osteoporosis falls prevention is especially important because your bones are fragile and could break easily, even as a result of a minor slip.

**Don't let broken bones threaten your independence – take steps now to reduce your risk of falls.**

## FACTORS WHICH INCREASE YOUR RISK OF FALLS



### Medical conditions and symptoms

- Dementia (Alzheimer)
- Fracture
- Delirium
- Stroke
- Neurological Conditions
- Diabetes
- Low Blood Pressure when standing after sitting or lying down
- Dizziness
- Foot problems
- Vision Impairment
- Muscle Weakness



### Medications

- Certain medicines, including some used to treat anxiety, depression, other forms of mental illness, high blood pressure or to help sleep, or taking multiple medications



### Other Factors

- Age
- History of falling
- Fear of falling
- Assistive devices
- Inadequate footwear
- Unsafe environment e.g. loose rugs in the home

## DON'T LET THE FEAR OF FALLING STOP YOU IN YOUR TRACKS

Although it is good to be careful, excessive fear of falling can lead to inactivity and prolonged sitting, a cycle which eventually leads to increased falls risk.



**A targeted exercise programme that improves your muscle strength and balance will help you reduce your risk of falling and give you confidence to stay active.**

# 6 STEPS TO PREVENT FALLS

PREVENTING FALLS IS AN IMPORTANT WAY TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO YOUR BONE HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND QUALITY OF LIFE



## Talk to Your Doctor About Falls Prevention

Mention any **previous falls**, whether you tend to **feel dizzy**, and review your prescription **medications** as they can contribute to falling, particularly if you take multiple medications.



## Find a Good Exercise Programme

Exercise **regularly**, with attention to muscle-strengthening exercise and balance training.



## Maintain Good Vision

Have your **eyes checked** at least **once a year**, and be sure to update your **eyeglasses** if needed. Be careful on stairs if wearing bifocals, and wear **sunglasses** if needed to reduce glare.



## Maintain a Healthy Diet and Don't Skip Meals

Maintain a nutritious and **protein-rich diet**, and **don't skip meals** if you feel dizzy as a result.



## Stay Steady On Your Feet

Wear **comfortable shoes** with **good support**, a broad heel and non-slip soles.



## Fall-Proof Your Home

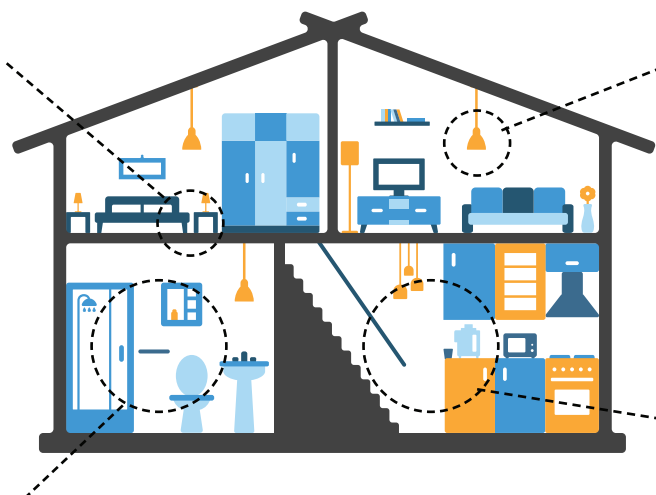
Remove obstacles and **use supports** (e.g. handrails) to prevent slips.

## HOW TO FALL-PROOF YOUR HOME

PLEASE ASK FOR HELP FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS OR CARERS SO THAT CHANGES CAN BE MADE SAFELY!

- Remove **objects** you could trip over
- Ensure mats are firmly affixed, **repair loose carpet** or raised areas on the floor
- Move furniture out of walking paths
- **Be aware** of raised doorways and steps
- Use **non-skid floor wax**

- Install **handrails** by the bathtub or shower
- Have **non-skid mats** (and watch out for slippery, wet surfaces)



- Keep your home **well lit**, especially hallways, stairways, and outside walkways
- Add extra light switches or use lights triggered by **motion sensors**

- Always **hold on to handrails** and ensure they are stable and secure

- **Wipe up** any spills immediately
- Keep regularly used kitchen items at an **easy-to-reach level**



# EXERCISE PROGRAMMES TO HELP YOU PREVENT FALLS

THE KEY TO **REDUCING YOUR RISK OF FALLS** IS TO MAINTAIN STRONG MUSCLES AND GOOD BALANCE. **EXERCISE** SHOULD BE TAKEN AT LEAST **2-3 DAYS PER WEEK**, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON BUILDING MUSCLE STRENGTH AND IMPROVING YOUR BALANCE



## Balance Exercise

Activities such as **Tai Chi, yoga or Pilates** are excellent for balance. Simple exercises like heel-to-toe walking or standing on one leg also help you **improve your balance**.



## Muscle Strengthening/Resistance Exercise

These include activities where you move your body, a weight or some other **resistance against gravity**. Examples include using elastic resistance bands, **weights machines** or simply **standing and rising** onto your toes or standing from a sitting position.



## Music-Based Multitask Exercise Programme

Senior eurythmic courses have been shown to **prevent age-related** physical decline in older adults.<sup>2</sup>

- **Participate in an Exercise Programme!**

Depending on where you live, you may be able to participate in exercise programmes offered by your **local osteoporosis society** or you can sign up for **training workshops** which are specifically designed for people with osteoporosis

## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND ASK FOR ADVICE

**If you have osteoporosis or you fall frequently (more than once in the past year) be sure to discuss falls prevention with your doctor.**



- **ASK** for advice about which specific things you can do to help prevent falls
- **ASK** for a review of your medications to see if any might increase your risk of falling
- **ASK** for an evaluation of your risk of falling

1. Stel V et al. (2004) Consequences of falling in older men and women and risk factors for health service use and functional decline. Age Ageing 33(1):58–65T

2. Hars M et al. Long-Term Exercise in Older Adults: 4-Year Outcomes of Music-Based Multitask Training. Calcif Tissue Int, 2014; 95:393-404

3. Strong, Steady, Straight: [https://www.bgs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2019-02-20/FINAL%20Quick%20Guide\\_Strong%20Steady%20Straight\\_DEC18.pdf](https://www.bgs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2019-02-20/FINAL%20Quick%20Guide_Strong%20Steady%20Straight_DEC18.pdf)

4. Too Fit to Fracture: <https://osteoporosis.ca/health-care-professionals/clinical-practice-guidelines/exercise-recommendations/>