

# STEADY ON YOUR FEET

Swindon



Falls Prevention Information Pack

# Information & Advice



## Information and Advice

### Falls

A fall may be the first sign of a new or worsening health condition (e.g. infection, dehydration, etc) so it is important to tell your doctor if you do have a fall.

The more details you can remember about your fall(s), the easier it is to pinpoint a cause. So think carefully about:

**When** it happened – Was it related to a particular 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?

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:

- Muscle weakness
- Poor balance
- Difficulties walking or inappropriate walking aids
- Dizziness
- Environmental hazards
- Pain
- Vision and hearing problems
- Foot pain, deformity or numbness
- Badly fitting or unsupportive footwear
- Memory loss or confusion
- Poor nutrition or hydration
- Medications
- Pre-existing health conditions
- Bladder and bowel conditions
- Mood, anxiety or being worried about having a fall
- Alcohol consumption

Falling can have an impact on your confidence which may then lead to a vicious cycle of you doing less and further possibility of you falling.

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 improved quality of life in the long

term.

## Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council's care and support information and advice [website](#)

## Live Well Swindon

Live Well Swindon provides advice and support about being active, falls prevention, stopping smoking, weight management, connecting to communities and volunteering, managing long-term health conditions and staying independent. It also delivers a range of activities and programmes designed to inspire, motivate and assist people to live well and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about Live Well Swindon:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793 465513)

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: [The Live Well Swindon Hub](#)

## Otago

Otago is an evidence-based falls prevention programme for adults aged 65 and over. Sessions are delivered by Live Well Swindon as a 16 week course across Swindon for a small fee. Sessions involve strength exercises to help strengthen the muscles around the hips, legs and ankles, and balance exercises to help increase stability and improve confidence when walking and performing everyday activities.

For more information, please contact the Live Well Hub:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793 465513)

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: [OTAGO](#)

## NHS Choices

NHS Choices is really helpful for all aspects of health and wellbeing on their website. You can find useful resources on falls prevention here at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls)

## What's on When Guide

A WOW Guide is produced by Home Instead and lists some local activity and exercise groups. This is available through website: [The Swindon WOW Guide](#) or by phoning Home Instead on [01793 988537](tel:01793 988537)

## Age UK Wiltshire

Age UK Wiltshire provides a range of services to help older people stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected. For more information about our services please contact [0808 196](tel:0808 196)

2424 or see [www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk).

As part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative, through our Supportive Independence project, we support people 65+ to become more active and better connected to their community. [Web link will be available in the next couple of weeks.]

We run three Fitness and Friendship Clubs in Swindon - Social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active which are open to all older people who would like the opportunity to take part in activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

## The Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.

Telephone [01793 463333](tel:01793463333)

## Support for Carers

If you look after an ill, frail or disabled family member, partner or friend then you are a carer. Swindon Carers Centre can help carers by making their caring role more manageable.

If you are an adult carer please call [01793 401090](tel:01793401090).

For young carers please call [01793 401091](tel:01793401091).

More information is available at [The Swindon Carers website](#)

## NHS 111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. Call [111](tel:111) to speak to a trained advisor supported by healthcare professionals. Alternatively you can visit <https://111.nhs.uk>

## Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on [01793 607710](tel:01793607710)

## Swindon Community Hub

Sanford House brings together under one roof, a wealth of help, advice and information for the residents of Swindon. Located in Sanford Street in Swindon, it is a hub for a range of organisations including Citizen's Advice, the Carers Centre, Healthwatch Swindon and Swindon Mind. They provide information and advice face to face or by telephone on [01793 466633](tel:01793466633).

## Healthwatch Swindon

Healthwatch Swindon is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services, there to make sure that people are put at the heart of care. Share your views, feedback, experiences and questions regarding health and social care with them. Visit [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk) for more information.

## 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 and problems with your heart rate for example bradycardia (slow heart rate), tachycardia (rapid heart rate) and atrial fibrillation (irregular heart rate)
- Anxiety / panic attacks / stress

If you think you may have had a blackout, it is important that you speak to your doctor so the cause can be investigated. Many of these conditions can be treated successfully.

### More Information

## Dizziness

Dizziness 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:

- Change position slowly and exercise your arms & 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). Drink regularly throughout the day, try to 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 doctor 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, if you have a medical condition (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. Discuss with your doctor or health care professional if your worries/anxiety significantly impact your day to day living.

### More information



## Medication

If you are on 4 or more medications, the risk of falls increases even further.

It is important to have your medications reviewed regularly by your doctor or pharmacist so they can keep an eye on any falls risk increasing drugs, side effects and alter dosage if necessary. This is particularly important as we age as our sensitivity can increase and dosages need to be adjusted accordingly.

Make sure you are taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor. There may be specific instructions such as taking them at a certain time of day or on an empty stomach, that are important to the effectiveness of the medication. Check with your pharmacist if you plan on drinking alcohol or taking over the counter medication as these can have an effect on other medications you are taking.

[Help from a pharmacist](#)

## Environment

Our surroundings can often casue us a risk. Often this is because of hazards within the home or difficulty with daily activities such as getting in or out of bed, on and off a chair or toilet, or in and out of the bath which can 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

## Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council's care and support information and advice [website](#).

## Warm & Safe Wiltshire

Ensure you keep your gas and electricity bills affordable and your home warm and safe with this free and impartial Council backed energy saving advice service. Call [0800 038 5722](tel:0800 038 5722) or see [The Warm and Safe Wiltshire Website](#) for more information

## The Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support for your caring role.

Telephone [01793 463333](tel:01793 463333)

## Fire Service Safe & Well Assessment

Consider a free home fire safety check from the local fire service. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will visit your home, provide safety advice, install smoke, carbon monoxide and heat detectors where necessary and help you create an escape plan.

For more information and to request your free visit go to [www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits](http://www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits) or telephone [0800 038 2323](tel:0800 038 2323)

## Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on [01793 607710](tel:01793 607710)

## Movement and Exercise

Muscle weakness and poor balance are key risk factors for falls.

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 150 minutes of 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, on your feet, 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.

For further information regarding community exercise opportunities for older people:

## Otago

Otago is an evidence-based falls prevention programme for adults aged 65 and over. Sessions are delivered by Live Well Swindon as a 16 week course across Swindon for a small fee. Sessions involve strength exercises to help strengthen the muscles around the hips, legs and ankles, and balance exercises to help increase stability and improve confidence when walking and performing everyday activities.

For more information, please contact the Live Well Hub:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793465513)

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: [OTAGO](#)

## Live Well Swindon

Live Well Swindon provides advice and support in areas such as being active, falls prevention, stopping smoking, weight management, connecting to communities and volunteering, and managing long-term health conditions and staying independent. It also delivers a range of activities and programmes designed to inspire, motivate and assist people to live well and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about Live Well Swindon:

Phone: [01793 465513](tel:01793465513)

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: [The Live Well Swindon Hub](#)

## What's on When Guide

A WOW Guide is produced by Home Instead and lists some local activity and exercise groups. This is available through website: [The Swindon WOW Guide](#) or by phoning Home Instead on [01793 988537](tel:01793988537)

## Age UK Wiltshire

Age UK Wiltshire provides a range of services to help older people stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected. For more information about our services please contact [0808 196 2424](tel:08081962424) or see [www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk).

As part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative, through our Supportive Independence project, we support people 65+ to become more active and better connected to their community. [Web link will be available in the next couple of weeks.]

We run three Fitness and Friendship Clubs in Swindon - Social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active which are open to all older people who would like the opportunity to take part in activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

## Local Leisure

You can find information about local leisure centres and the accessible services they run in Swindon at [www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/swindon](http://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/swindon)

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the Community Rehabilitation Team, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on [01793 607710](tel:01793607710)

## Physiotherapy

You can be referred to a physiotherapist by your GP, self-refer in some areas or find a local private physio at [www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/find-physiotherapist](http://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/find-physiotherapist)

## Walking football

Walking football Designed for the over 50's, the game is a wonderful way to get back into the sport or even try it for the first time. It is perfect for those who had previously given up playing football due to illness or injuries. Email [lyndon.taylor@wiltshirefa.com](mailto:lyndon.taylor@wiltshirefa.com) or see [www.wiltshirefa.com/players/ways-to-play/walking-football](http://www.wiltshirefa.com/players/ways-to-play/walking-football). Swindon Town FC Community Foundation also offer a range of activity programmes for older people – more information at [www.stfcfoundation.com](http://www.stfcfoundation.com).

## Step Out Swindon - Well Being Walks

This group of friendly volunteers provides a programme of free short walks from several locations across Swindon. All walks are weekly and last for about an hour, and they also offer a shorter mobility walk. Walks are varied and visit many of Swindon's beautiful green spaces. For more information, please telephone [07932 109209](tel:07932109209) or go to: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/wellbeing-walks>

## 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 particularly 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.

Further information can be found here:

[Age UK eye health](#)

[Find an optician](#)

[Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)

## Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.

Telephone [01793 463333](tel:01793463333)

## 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 & games or using visual prompts and lists as reminders can help. If memory problems are more significant they can impair judgement, reasoning and insight which can then result in taking risks which may 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 & family have noticed a change in your memory or behaviour, it is important that you discuss this with your doctor or other health care professional.

For further information follow the links below:

[NHS memory loss](#)

[Age UK Dementia](#)

[Swindon Borough Council](#)

[Swindon Dementia Care](#)

[Forget Me Not Centre](#)

## Nutrition and Hydration

It is important to speak to your doctor or health care professional 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, difficulty 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 Adult Social Care 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)
- At least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each 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 doctor, health care professional or dietician before making any changes

Further information:

[NHS Eat well](#)

[Age UK Eating Healthy](#)

## Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and



carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.  
Telephone 01793 463333

## Bone Health

Osteoporosis is a condition which makes your bones thinner, more brittle and increases the possibility of fracturing (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 doctor so that 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 participate in some sort of weight bearing exercise

If you have not broken a bone before, exercise which encourages moderate impact such as jogging, jumping or 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)

[The Royal Osteoporosis Society](#)

## Otago

Otago is an evidence-based falls prevention programme for adults aged 65 and over. Sessions are delivered by Live Well Swindon as a 16 week course across Swindon for a small fee. Sessions involve strength exercises to help strengthen the muscles around the hips, legs and ankles, and balance

exercises to help increase stability and improve confidence when walking and performing everyday activities.

For more information, please contact the Live Well Hub:

Phone: 01793 465513

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: OTAGO



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 have foot problems that you cannot manage yourself, a podiatrist or chiropodist can help. This is especially important if you have diabetes.

Know your 6 S's for safe footwear.....to know what to wear, and not wear, on your feet.

1. Supported heel: squeeze the heel cup and it should be firm and supportive, replace when worn.
2. Stable base: firm outer sole, wider than your heel, maximum heel height of 1.5 inches, grippy surface and with rounded edges.
3. Secure fixing: Velcro fixing to keep the shoe secure, and to provide adjustment if needed.
4. Sloppy slippers: backless and squishy slippers are the most common footwear worn by fallers in the home.
5. Socks: slippy and loose-fitting socks can also increase your risk of falls, compared to good.
6. Soles of your feet: walking barefoot is another risk for falls, wearing indoor shoes is more likely to keep you safe and on your feet.

Be aware: If you shuffle your feet when walking, shoes with a grippy outer sole may stick to the floor too much and actually increase your risk of falls.

If you have any doubts about what shoes to wear, seek advice from a Podiatrist.

For further information:

For more information contact the Swindon MSK Podiatry Team on 01793 607860 or email [gwh.podiatryadmin@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.podiatryadmin@nhs.net)

[NHS Find a podiatrist](#)

## Bladder / Bowel

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

- Rushing because of a 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 the toilet or adjusting your clothes

These issues can be made worse by not drinking enough and a 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 and minimising any drinks containing caffeine or alcohol. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fibre e.g. wholegrain breads, cereals, and pasta, pulses 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 doctor or a health care professional about a continence assessment if you are having on-going issues and require further support.

[NHS Pelvic floor exercises](#)

[Swindon Continence Service](#)

## Adult Social Care Team

The Adult Social Care Team provides information to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers, to help make informed decisions and access appropriate services. They can provide help with equipment and adaptations for daily activities, help at home and support within your caring role.

Telephone [01793 463333](tel:01793463333)

## Fear of Falling

The more worried you become, 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 responses 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. 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.

If you are hurt or unable to get up:

- Summon help by using your pendant alarm (if you have one), calling out, crawling to a telephone or by banging on a wall
- Make sure there are blankets in each room so that you can 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 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 plan](#)

## Rehabilitation

For further information on rehabilitation for Falls and Bone Health in Swindon, please contact the

Community Rehabilitation Team, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on 01793 607710

## Live Well Swindon

Live Well Swindon provides advice and support in areas such as being active, falls prevention, stopping smoking, weight management, connecting to communities and volunteering, and managing long-term health conditions and staying independent. It also delivers a range of activities and programmes designed to inspire, motivate and assist people to live well and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

For more information about Live Well Swindon:

Phone: 01793 465513

Email: [livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)

Visit Website: [The Live Well Swindon Hub](#)

## Age UK Wiltshire

Age UK Wiltshire provides a range of services to help older people stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected. For more information about our services please contact 0808 196 2424 or see [www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk).

As part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative, through our Supportive Independence project, we support people 65+ to become more active and better connected to their community. [Web link will be available in the next couple of weeks.]

We run three Fitness and Friendship Clubs in Swindon - Social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active which are open to all older people who would like the opportunity to take part in activities and gentle exercise -

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/>.

# Home Safety





## Home safety

### Living Room / Lounge

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?

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

## 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.

## Bedroom

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. It is not advisable to leave mobile phones charging overnight as this is a Fire Risk.

## Bathroom

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.

Can you get on and off the toilet safely?

A toilet frame or 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.

## Stairs and getting about the house

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 & bottom of stairs)?

Have an electrician fit a two-way light switch.

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 a local handy person / builder. 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 instructed.

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 a handy person can fit)

Do you have loose rugs or runners on the floor?

Remove the rugs & 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.

## Garden and getting in and out of the house

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 between seated and standing activities.

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. (Please note "zimmer" style walking frames are not designed for outdoor use.)

Do you need more support on steps?

Permanent, outdoor rails and fixings give secure grab points and additional support on slopes and steps.

## Sensory Support

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 fluorescent 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

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 Safety

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 free home fire safety check from the local fire service. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will visit your home, provide safety advice, install smoke, carbon monoxide and heat detectors where necessary and help you create an escape plan.

For more information and to request your free visit go to [www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits](http://www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safe-and-well-visits) or telephone [0800 038 2323](tel:08000382323)

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

# Staying Active



## Staying Active

### 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=LlscrrslMxc> <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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9jj_vD5GM)

### We Are Undefeatable Chair Exercises

### 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=0I9jj_vD5GM)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Khz0gNmug>

### We Are Undeatable Strength Exercises

### 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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7BcXbsy1_Q)

### We Are Undefeatable Flexibility Exercises

### 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=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=KtE2_SmXmT8)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jrC9NdH3EE> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiDpYePaUHg>

### We Are Undefeatable Balance Exercises

### 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=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=Hs_r9WEkg6w)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMAxBbFd1cg> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDz\\_MRkJFC4](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](#)

## Swindon WOW Guide

Swindon WOW Guide is a listing of groups and activities suited to older people. It includes details of local social and support groups, lunch clubs, activity and exercise sessions, memory cafes and much more.

[View the WOW Guide](#)

**STEADY ON  
YOUR FEET**

[www.steadyonyourfeet.org](http://www.steadyonyourfeet.org)