



a guide to falls prevention



Salford **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Sure footed IN Salford



If you fall and can't get up, press your warden alarm (if you have one) or dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.



Falls are the most frequent and serious type of accident in the over

65s. They can destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence. The after-effects of even the most minor fall can be catastrophic for an older person's physical and mental health.





In Salford

- 10,000 older people will fall this year
- 4000 of these will never be as active again

Across the UK

- Five older people a day die after falling in the home
- 40% of care home admissions are as a result of falls

**Taking action now can halve
the risk of falling. Follow the
feet to find out more...**



Research shows that you can help yourself with five simple steps:

Check your medication

Take regular exercise

Wear the right shoes

Have an eye test

Check for hazards



**Follow these
five simple steps
to help keep
yourself safe.**

step one

Check your medication

If you are taking four or more medicines a day (including non-prescription medicine like vitamin pills or hay fever tablets), ask your doctor to check them regularly. Sometimes they can have side-effects that you may not know about.

If you ever feel dizzy, let your doctor know – it could be your medication.



step two

Exercise

Exercise keeps you strong and helps your balance. There's lots of different types of exercise you can do, including walking, light gardening and housework, keep-fit classes, T'ai chi classes, dancing and shopping.

Remember, if you don't use it, you'll lose it - muscle strength and joint movement can be lost quickly. For example, if you do not raise your arm as high as it can go on a daily basis you may very quickly lose range of movement and be unable to do activities with ease such as hanging washing out, reaching into high cupboards, and washing and dressing.

Exercise by yourself or with friends at one of the many classes across the city. Did you know there are over 40 Healthy Hips and Hearts groups in Salford? Telephone 778 0373 to find out more about exercise classes in your area.

step three

Wear the right shoes – footwear and foot care

Too many people fall because they are wearing the wrong shoes or clothes. You are more likely to slip or trip if you are wearing:

- Slippers that are loose or have no back
- Sandals
- Shoes with heels
- Footwear that doesn't fit properly
- Flared trousers
- Clothing that trails to the ground
- Stockings, tights or socks without any shoes

It is better not to wear trainers - they have very thick, stiff soles which make it difficult to feel the ground.

Look after your feet and they'll look after you – don't squeeze into shoes, slippers or socks which are too small.

Throw out your worn slippers and treat your feet to a new pair.

Cut your toenails regularly – if you struggle with this, contact a podiatrist who will cut your nails for you and give your feet a bit of well-earned attention.



step four

Have an eye test

When was the last time you had your eyes tested?

Eye tests are free if you are over 60 and some opticians will come to you if you cannot get to them.

Have a pair for reading and a pair for distance – it's safer than bi-focals or vari-focals.



step five

Check for hazards - At home:

Make sure your home is well-lit, especially in the kitchen and on the stairs. Low-energy light bulbs last longer and are cheaper to run. You can use them with lampshades.

Edge your stairs with tape of a different colour, so that you can clearly see each step.

Secure wires against the walls.

Use non-slip mats under rugs.

Move clutter away from the stairs. Do not pile things on the stairs to take up.

Mop up any spills at once.

Don't rush to answer the phone or door. You can carry cordless phones around the house

or have more than one phone.

If you have handrails on the stairs, use them and if you haven't, then get them fitted.

Keep your home warm. Your muscles and joints work better when they are warm.

When you are outside:

Around the home and street, look out for broken or uneven paving, wet leaves and other slipping hazards.

Ask bus drivers to wait for you to sit down before setting off.

Let the council know if there are street lights out, or other hazards.

Some useful contacts to help you stay safe:

Care on Call offers an emergency call system with a special telephone and a portable pendant which can be worn or kept close at hand. If you fall and need help, you press on the pendant button and someone will come to help you. For more information telephone 0161 737 3822 or email careoncall@new-prospect.org

If you own your home, Salford Home Improvement Agency can fix handrails, repair paving and do other jobs to make your home safe. For more information telephone 0161 603 4223 or email home.improvement.agency@salford.gov.uk

Other contacts:

Healthy Hips and Hearts

☎ 778 0373

email denise.fegan@salford.gov.uk

Age Concern Salford

☎ 788 7300

Disabled Living Centre

☎ 839 8383

Podiatry Service, Eccles Health Centre

☎ 212 5509

Equipment Service

☎ 607 1499

Hope Hospital Physiotherapy Service

☎ 206 5328

Salford Information Directory (lists services available within Salford)

www.asksid.info



Fear of falling

Many people get scared about falling. If you slip on ice, for example, it can leave you feeling shaky, and you might be extra careful and walk around gingerly.

This is quite normal – it makes sense to be careful.

But if you are so scared that it stops you enjoying life to the full and means that you stop going out and doing things, then this is a bigger problem.

If this describes how you feel, then you may also feel that you are alone and that no-one else understands.

It is very important that you speak to your doctor about your feelings – there are people who can help you with this fear.

For a very useful booklet on fear of falling contact 0161 772 3481

We can't promise that you will never fall again but getting the right help from professionals and taking the advice offered in this booklet will make it much less likely to happen.

Falls and broken bones

As we get older broken bones caused by a fall are likely to be due to osteoporosis. This is a condition that will affect many people during their life.

As many as 1 in every 3 women over the age of 50 will suffer from osteoporosis. Fewer men will have osteoporosis but it will still affect 1 in 12 over the age of 50.

An Osteoporosis Team has been set up in Salford. They plan to help people to identify whether they need treatment for weak bones and will work with GPs to plan this treatment.

Some factors make it more likely that you will get osteoporosis:

- Long term use of corticosteroid tablets

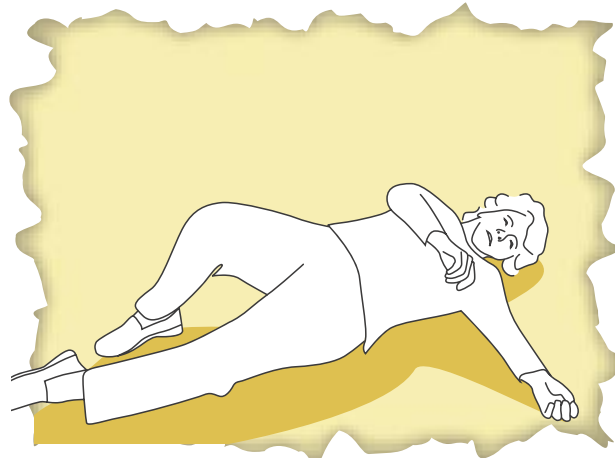
- Early menopause (before the age of 45)
- Testosterone deficiency in men
- Low body weight or having a very slight build
- Smoking
- Previous broken bone (over age 50)

If you have any of these risk factors it would be worth speaking to your doctor about treatments to strengthen your bones.

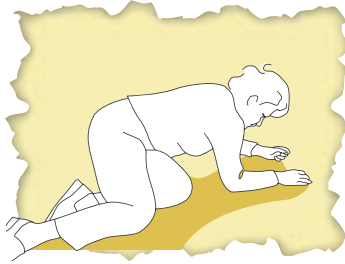


If you have a fall, what should you do?

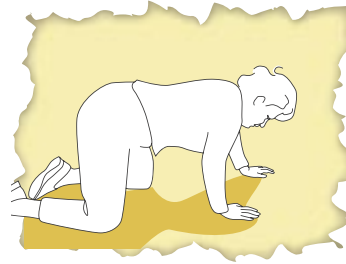
First of all, calm down. Catch your breath and compose yourself after the shock. Then check your body. If you are not badly injured, think about getting up. Look around for a sturdy surface (a chair is ideal).



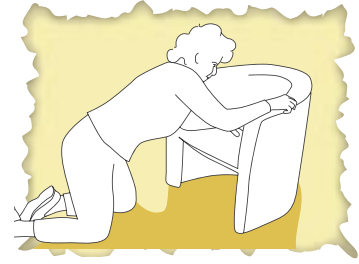
1. Roll onto your side



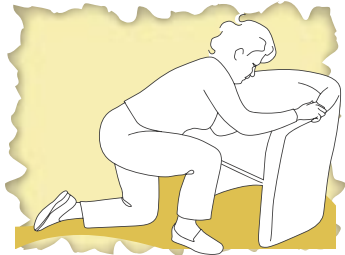
2. Ease yourself up onto your elbows and knees



3. Crawl or drag yourself over to the chair



4. From a kneeling position, put your arms up on to the seat of the chair



5. Bring one knee forward and put that on the floor



6. Push up with your arms and ease yourself to a standing position



7. Turn yourself gently and sit down and rest before trying to move

If you fall and can't get up, don't panic.

Press your warden alarm (if you have one) or dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Shout and bang on the walls and floor to attract attention.

Get comfortable - put something under your head, as a pillow.

Cover yourself with something to keep warm (clothing or a rug).

Gently move around to avoid pressure in one place.

Always tell your doctor and other professionals who are working with you, about any fall. There may be a serious reason for the fall and long term effects.





For more information contact
Jane Whitby on 0161 212 5631 or
email jane.whitby@salford-pct.nhs.uk



Be sure to stay

Sure footed

IN Salford