

# A Top Tips Falls Guide

for Carers

Steady on...  
Stay **SAFE**



Strength



And Balance



Falls History



Environment

# A Top Tips Falls Guide for Carers

It is often family or informal carers that will come across older or vulnerable people at risk of a fall or having already fallen. Their assistance in managing situations or preventing a fall will be critical.

## Did you know?

- Older fallers are amongst the top three reasons why an ambulance is called.
- If you've fallen once, you are 50% more likely to fall again, with an escalating risk of injury.
- A 'long lie' of 12 hours or more can seriously affect a person's recovery from a fall.

## Public Health Wales indicate that, annually up to 2026:

- 132,000 older people will fall more than once in their own home
- 8,100 will suffer a serious injury and end up in hospital
- 3,000 will need a hip replacement
- 1,500 will lose their independence in the 12 months following a fall
- 700 will sadly die within 12 months of having a fall

# Assessing Simple Falls Risks and Helping Prevent a Fall

## Inactivity



Be active and do simple exercise daily, change your environment and don't sit in the same chair for too long. If you need structured exercise talk to your GP and get referred to the National Exercise Referral Scheme.

## Unsafe Home Environment



Keep your home free from trip hazards and ensure it is adapted and repaired to address any risks of falling. Consider steps, stairs, leaks, flooring, bathrooms and toilets, standing safely at doors, adequate lighting, removal of obstacles, and colour contrasts.

## Medicine Management



Review your medication if it's causing problems (confusion, dizziness, diuretic), with your local pharmacy able to undertake a Medicine Use Review (MUR)

## Eyesight and Hearing



Check your eyesight and eye health every 2 years (more regularly if over 85) and make sure your ears are not causing you balance issues, are blocked or have an infection.

## Foot-health and Footwear



Cut toenails, addressing infections, callouses, cracked skin, etc. Wear good, strong, sturdy, supportive shoes and slippers, making sure footwear is appropriate for you and comfortable to walk in.

## Nutrition and Diet



Eat well and sensibly with a balanced diet, as protein energy deficiency (PEM) increases the risk of a fall. A focus on Vitamin D and other vitamin intake, as well as calcium for bone strength is important. Staying hydrated, and drinking water is important to combat, confusion, loss of balance, and delirium, that are symptoms of dehydration

## Health Promotion



Drink alcohol only to recommended levels and never with medication if guidance informs otherwise. Stop smoking to maintain strong bones and improves breathing efficiency. Monitor your blood pressure.

## Unsafe Behaviour



Make sure you have assessed the risks properly of any activity, not to reduce the quality of life, but to clearly consider the balance of risks.



# What we know

If you have an underlying condition that predisposes you to disorientation, confusion, or imbalance, then visit your GP, but there are many things you can do yourself to reduce a risk of falling.

Falls are not the inevitable consequence of growing older.

Address the key risks and you can avoid falling and enjoy life.

Using 4 or more prescribed medications a day increases the likelihood of a fall by 18%, for 10 medications by 50%.

Nutrition and Hydration... lower levels of Vitamin D and calcium can lead to weaker bones and reduced muscle strength. Low fluid intake can lead to weakness and dizziness.

Visual impairment reduces falls risks by 170% and hip fracture by 130%, with cataract removal reducing falls by 34%. Checking your eyesight and eye health every 2 years reduced sight loss by 50%.

132,000 older people will fall more than once in their home this year, and 8,100 will receive an injury. Home adaptations reduce falls-related hospitalisation by 13%.

After the age of 50 and up to the age of 70, the human body loses 30% of its muscle strength, and this is made worse by inactivity.

There is much evidence that poor foot health increases the risk of falling; and having strong, sturdy shoes and slippers reduces falls by 37%

# Getting Up from a Fall

## Preparing the Environment

If you are a frequent faller, planning ahead can make a huge difference. Prepare your home by leaving cushions and blankets around, so that if you fall you can rest your head and keep warm (but don't let them be trip hazards) and make sure if possible that you keep water around, so that you can maintain your fluids.

## Having Fallen

If you have fallen, stay still and calm for a minute, and check for injuries. If you are unhurt you can get up using a sensible and supportive strategy. A carer can help you with this, but you need to be in control.

- Allow time to regain bearings, staying calm, getting over the shock, and working out what's possible
- Assess the situation, only getting up if you are satisfied there are no injuries

## Follow the 6-stage approach

### Step 1

Roll onto your side and push up on to your elbows

### Step 2

Use your arms to push up to your hands and knees

### Step 3

Crawl to a sturdy piece of furniture e.g., a chair, and use it for support (\* you can shuffle on your bottom if that is easier)

### Step 4

Slide or raise the foot of your stronger leg forward so that it is flat on the floor (affording leverage)

### Step 5

Lean forwards and push up, using your arms to steady yourself and your front leg to push you up, rising slowly to a standing position (\*if at any time you feel too weak to complete the manoeuvre or you feel dizzy, then ease yourself back down)

### Step 6

Turn around and sit and take a rest. It is important that you monitor yourself for any nasty side-effects from a fall and get yourself checked out if you have any concerns.

**N.B.** If you are being supported, work together and work as a team. Try to support your own weight rather than transfer it onto the helper. It is important you stay calm and don't panic, taking nice deep breaths as you complete the manoeuvre. If it is an unexplained fall you might want to consult with their GP.



# Lifting

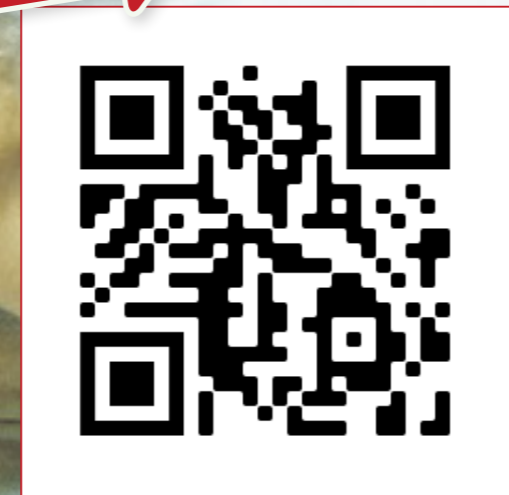
Getting someone up if they can't do it themselves can be done through lifting, but it is a last resort. Getting someone to do it themselves, supported or unsupported is always preferable. What can be achieved will depend on physique, weight relationship, fitness, and strength. The last thing you'd want to do is cause an injury to both cared for and carer.

**Method:** Stand behind the individual, bending your knees and keeping a straight back, with your arms around their middle (not under their arms as this can cause damage). Prepare your push-up leg on a flat surface not too far apart from your other leg (for maximum leverage). Count to three and get up together, hopefully avoiding the transfer of too much weight to the lifter. Then steady someone in a chair (placed close by) and monitor as before.

**N.B.** This advice is solely for informal or family carers, as employed carers would be required to follow manual handling procedures.



Watch the youtube video: Getting Up From a Fall



# Have a word

Talking about it and doing something to avoid it happening can make a difference.

**Keeping Safe and Active** Are we staying active? Are we doing something simple every day, like walking or exercising, to keep up our strength.



**Keeping Your Home Safe** Are we keeping our home safe from things that trip us up? Does the house feel safe to get around?



**Looking After Your Health** Are we eating properly and drinking enough water? Are we taking our time and checking for trip hazards?



**Checking Your Eyesight** Are we making sure our spectacles have been checked out every two years, and do they help us see clearly?



**Taking Care of Your Feet** Are we looking after our feet? Do our shoes and slippers have good solid support and soles that stop us slipping?



Keeping us Active, Healthy and Safe is surely worth a chat.

“ Have you fallen or nearly in the last 12 months?  
 Do you know why you fell, and do you remember where?  
 Do you want help to try and stop falling again?  
 ”

I fear falling or have fallen more than once.	The risks have made me stop and think.	All this makes sense.
It's time to do something or get help	It's time to get some advice	Let's have this chat again.

Falls are not an inevitable consequence of growing older...  
**There are lots of things you can do to reduce the risks.**

Ultimately, the best approach is address risks and prevent someone falling in the first place.



Care & Repair Cymru

[www.careandrepair.org.uk/falls](http://www.careandrepair.org.uk/falls)

Telephone: 0300 111 3333



[www.ageconnectswales.org.uk/falls](http://www.ageconnectswales.org.uk/falls)

Telephone: 01639 617 333



Creu Cymru oed gyfeillgar  
Creating an age friendly Wales

[www.agecymru.org.uk/falls](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/falls)

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