

# STEADY ON YOUR FEET



Information and Advice



# Falls

If you experience a fall, it's important to consult your GP or a health professional. This will help to identify potential causes and receive appropriate care.

## Gathering Information About Falls

The more details you can recall about a fall, the easier it is to pinpoint a cause. Take some time to reflect on the following things:

- **When it happened:** Note the time of day and your activities leading up to the fall. Was there anything specific you were doing at that moment?
- **How it happened:** Try to remember whether it was a loss of balance, tripping on an object, feeling dizzy, or having a blackout. These details can be useful in working out why it happened.
- **Where it happened:** Consider the location of the fall. Are there any potential trip hazards that can be removed? Be particularly aware of this if you have fallen in the same place more than once.

## Multiple Risk Factors

Falls often result from a combination of risk factors. Common contributors and tips to reduce them include:

- **Muscle weakness:** Strengthening exercises can help make your muscles stronger
- **Poor balance:** Balance exercises can help you feel more stable when moving around
- **Dizziness:** Consult a health professional to identify the cause of dizziness and receive appropriate treatment.
- **Environmental hazards:** Remove or address potential trip hazards in your home to create a safer environment.
- **Vision and hearing problems:** Regular eye and ear check-ups can find issues early and allow for appropriate treatments.
- **Foot issues:** Foot pain, deformities, or numbness can be addressed with proper footwear and foot care.
- **Footwear:** Make sure that your shoes are supportive, comfortable, and fit well
- **Memory loss or confusion:** Keeping your brain healthy is essential. Stay mentally active with puzzles and brain exercises and consult a health professional if you're noticing memory changes
- **Poor nutrition:** A balanced diet can support overall health and reduce the risk of falls.
- **Dehydration:** Dehydration can lead to dizziness and falls. Make sure you are drinking enough water throughout the day, especially in hot weather.
- **Medications:** Review your medications with a health professional to minimise side effects that may contribute to falls.
- **Bladder and bowel difficulties:** Problems such as urgency can increase the risk of falls. Speak to a health professional for advice or support.
- **Alcohol consumption:** Limit alcohol intake, as drinking can affect balance and coordination.

## The Confidence Factor

Experiencing a fall can affect your confidence, potentially leading to a cycle of reduced activity and an increased risk of falls. Being proactive is essential, even if you haven't yet had a fall. This approach helps you to take control of your situation, enabling you to remain active and independent for longer, with an improved quality of life in the long run.

## Links and Resources

To learn more about falls, explore the following resources or develop your personal action plan:

[NHS UK: Falls Overview and Prevention](#)

[Steady On Your Feet: Self Assessment Tool](#)



# Blackouts

Identifying the causes of blackouts is important for keeping you safe and well.

## Recognising Blackouts

Blackouts can sometimes be challenging to identify, particularly when they are brief. However, it's essential to suspect a blackout if:

- You fell and cannot remember what happened
- You have injuries to your face, indicating that you may not have had a chance to put your hands out to save yourself

## Common Causes of Blackouts

Blackouts become more common as we age, and they can result from a number of things, including:

- **Drop in blood pressure:** A sudden drop in blood pressure, often experienced when changing position (e.g., standing up from a chair)
- **Heart disorders:** Certain heart conditions or irregularities in heart rhythm
- **Anxiety, panic attacks, or stress:** Emotional factors such as anxiety, panic attacks, or stress can trigger blackouts in some individuals

## Taking Action

If you suspect that you may have had a blackout, it's essential to tell your GP as soon as possible. This will help with finding the cause and choosing the right treatment to prevent future episodes.

## Preventing Blackouts and Staying Safe

There are some practical steps you can take to reduce the risk of having a blackout, including:

- **Stay well-hydrated:** Dehydration can affect your blood pressure, so make sure you drink enough water
- **Sit or stand up slowly:** When changing positions, do so slowly to minimise sudden changes in blood pressure
- **Manage stress and anxiety:** Consider techniques such as relaxation exercises, mindfulness, or counselling to address emotional triggers
- **Follow your GP's recommendations:** If you have a medical condition contributing to blackouts, follow your doctor's advice and treatment plan

Remember, addressing the potential causes of blackouts can help you stay safe and maintain your overall well-being. By seeking medical guidance and taking preventive measures, you can reduce the risk of blackouts and enjoy a healthier and more active life.

## Links and Resources

To find out more about blackouts and fainting, explore the following resources or develop your

personal action plan use our Self-Assessment Tool:

[Steady On Your Feet: Self Assessment Tool](#)

[NHS UK: Fainting](#)



# Dizziness

## Common Causes of Dizziness

Identifying the possible causes of dizziness is an important part of finding the right treatment. Dizziness can be related to several things, including:

### Drop in Blood Pressure

A sudden drop in blood pressure is often experienced when changing position (e.g., standing up from a chair). To minimise the risk:

- Change position slowly
- Move your arms and legs around before getting up
- Sit back down if you feel dizzy and wait until it passes
- Stand still or walk on the spot when you first get up, avoiding sudden movements

### Dehydration

Not drinking enough fluid can contribute to dizziness. To stay well hydrated:

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day (aim for 6-8 cups)
- Sip water regularly
- Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption, as they can lead to dehydration

### Inner Ear Disorders and Vertigo

If you experience a sensation that the world is moving or spinning, or if dizziness is accompanied by nausea, vomiting, visual changes, or hearing disturbances, it may be a sign of inner ear issues. Consider the following steps:

- Contact your GP surgery for further advice and assessment
- Make sure you have had a recent hearing test.

### Medications

Dizziness can be a side effect of some medications, especially those you take for high blood pressure. If you experience dizziness while taking medication:

- Consult your GP or a community pharmacist for potential adjustments to your medication prescription

### Underlying Medical Conditions (e.g., Diabetes, COPD)

Certain medical conditions may increase the likelihood of dizziness.

- Make sure that any medical conditions are it is well-managed through regular check-ups
- If you think your medical condition may be causing dizziness, consult your GP or a health

professional

- Mention to your health professional if you have had one or more falls.

## **Anxiety**

Stress and anxiety can contribute to dizziness. To ease symptoms:

- Try relaxation techniques like mindfulness or deep breathing exercises.
- If symptoms persist or are severe, discuss them with your GP for further guidance.

## Links and Resources

To find out more about dizziness, explore the following resources or develop your personal action plan:

[Steady On Your Feet: Self Assessment Tool](#)

[NHS UK: Dizziness Information](#)



# Medication

If you are taking four or more medications, the risk of falls can further increase.

## Regular Medication Reviews

It's very important to have your medications reviewed regularly by your GP or pharmacist. Make sure you let them know if you have fallen over recently. These professionals can monitor your medications for any potential side effects that might increase your falls risk and change the prescription if necessary. This becomes especially important as we age since our response to medicines can change, and dosages may need to be modified.

## Following Medication Instructions

Taking your medications as prescribed by your GP is vital to their effectiveness. Be mindful of specific instructions, such as taking them at a certain time of day, on an empty stomach, or with food. If you have any questions or concerns about your medications, don't hesitate to consult your pharmacist or a health professional.

## Interactions and Considerations

It's important to be aware of potential interactions between your medications and other substances, such as alcohol or over-the-counter drugs. These interactions can make your medications less effective or lead to side effects. Here are some tips to consider:

- **Alcohol:** Be cautious when consuming alcohol while taking medications, as it can interact with certain drugs. It's advisable to discuss alcohol consumption with a health professional
- **Over-the-counter medications:** Inform your pharmacist about any over-the-counter medications or supplements you plan to take, as they can interact with prescription drugs

## Pharmacist Support

Remember that your pharmacist can be a valuable resource to talk about medications and possible side effects, and any concerns you might have. They can also provide guidance on your medication dosages, potential interactions, and proper usage.

## Links and Resources

To read more about the services a pharmacist can provide, follow the link below:

[NHS UK: How Your Pharmacy Can Help](#)

[Steady On Your Feet: Self-Assessment Tool](#)





## Environment

Slips, trips, and falls in the home are common, and may be related to:

- **Daily activities:** Everyday tasks like getting in and out of bed or the bath, and getting on or off a chair or the toilet, can become challenging as we age, increasing the risk of falls
- **Home hazards:** Hazards such as loose rugs, cluttered walkways, inadequate lighting, and slippery floors, can all lead to falls

### Preventing Falls in and Around the Home

Falls prevention in and around the home often relies on "common sense," but it's not always easy to identify potential dangers. Our home safety section is designed to help you:

- **Identify hazards:** Discover potential slip, trip and fall hazards within your home. Learn how to spot risks like loose rugs, slippery surfaces, and poor lighting.
- **Take action:** Find practical tips and step-by-step instructions on how to remove or reduce these hazards to create a safer living environment.

### Links and Resources

For detailed guidance on identifying and minimising home hazards, visit our home safety section or explore the other resources:

[Steady On Your Feet: Home Safety Resources](#)

[NHS Inform: Preventing Falls by Identifying Hazards at Home](#)



# Movement and Exercise

## The Impact of Ageing

Between the ages of 50 and 70, it's natural to experience a decline of about 30% in muscle strength. As we age, our balance reaction times also slow down, making it harder to maintain stability, especially during faster movements. Physical inactivity can also lead to weaker bones and a higher risk of fractures.

## The Power of Exercise

Strength and balance exercise programmes are highly effective in preventing falls, regardless of age. These classes can help make everyday tasks like getting up and down stairs, boarding buses, or walking on uneven surfaces easier and safer.

[Find strength and balance exercise classes local to you](#)

## Getting Started

Remember that “physical activity” includes any movement that increases your heart rate and breathing.

While exercising is safe and beneficial for most people, it's essential to listen to your body. If you experience chest pain or feel faint during exercise, stop immediately and consult your doctor.

If you're new to exercise, start slowly and progressively increase your activity level. Aim for:

- 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 workouts, carrying heavy bags, yoga).
- Activities that challenge your balance 2-3 times per week (e.g., tai chi, bowls, dancing).

Even small steps count, such as breaking up long periods of sitting with short walks around the house or doing exercises while seated. However, please note that chair-based exercises, while beneficial for many aspects of health, do not effectively prevent falls. Exercises must challenge your balance to be effective.

If you're unsure about which activities are best for you or you need personalised guidance, consider consulting a physiotherapist or a qualified exercise professional. They can provide tailored advice to help you make the most of your physical activity routine.

## Links and Resources

To learn more about physical activity and discover exercise ideas and local services, visit our “Staying Active” section or explore the other resources:

[Steady On Your Feet: Staying Active](#)

### **Cheshire East Exercise Classes**

[FREE Strength & Balance Falls Prevention Exercise Classes: Stand Strong](#)

[Everybody Health Strength & Balance Classes: Be Steady Be Safe](#)

[Healthy living services: One You](#)

[Live Well: Keeping active - local services](#)

### **Cheshire West & Chester Exercise Classes**

[FREE Strength & Balance Exercise Falls Prevention Classes: Brio](#)

[Healthy living services: Cheshire Change Hub](#)

[Live Well: Be active - local services](#)

### **NHS UK Guidelines**

[NHS UK: Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults](#)



## Vision

It's important to be aware of potential changes in our vision and take proactive steps to address them.

### Understanding Age-Related Changes in Vision

As we grow older, we may not always notice gradual changes in our vision. However, ageing can affect our ability to adapt to different lighting conditions, distinguish colours, and accurately perceive depth and distance. These changes can pose challenges, especially for individuals who wear bifocals or varifocals. If you wear these types of lenses, take extra care when navigating steps, stairs, or uneven surfaces. See your Optician for advice on the most appropriate glasses for you.

### The Importance of Regular Eye Tests

With advancing age, certain eye conditions become more prevalent, including cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. It's essential to recognise that many of these visual problems are correctable.

Regular eye examinations are essential for maintaining good vision and preventing falls. These tests not only assess your vision but also help detect and manage eye conditions early. Be aware of the following:

- Eye tests are free for individuals aged 60 or over
- If you have difficulty going out, many opticians offer home visits where needed

### Additional Resources for Eye Health

To learn more about eye health, explore the following resources:

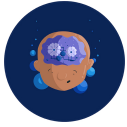
[Cheshire East Live Well: Sight loss local support services](#)

[Cheshire West and Chester: Sensory impairment information](#)

[Age UK: Eye Health information and Advice](#)

[NHS UK: Find an Optician Near You](#)

[Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\): Eye Health](#)



# Memory

## Understanding Memory Changes with Age

Memory issues, including memory loss, confusion, and difficulties in problem-solving, can develop gradually as we grow older. These changes may be associated with ageing itself or influenced by various things such as:

- **Stress:** High levels of stress can impact memory and cognitive function
- **Sleep:** Poor sleep quality or not enough sleep can affect memory
- **Infections:** Certain infections may temporarily affect cognitive abilities
- **Medications:** Some medications can have cognitive side effects
- **Dementia:** Dementia is associated with significant cognitive decline
- **Substance Use:** Excessive consumption or withdrawal from drugs or alcohol can impair memory and cognitive function

*'Cognitive' is a term used to describe anything related to thinking, learning, and understanding.*

## Managing Memory Challenges

For individuals experiencing minor memory issues, there are strategies that can help maintain cognitive function:

- **Brain Stimulation:** Engaging in puzzles, games, and mental exercises can help keep your brain active.
- **Visual Prompts:** Using visual reminders, lists, and calendars can aid memory and organisation.

However, more severe memory problems may affect judgement, reasoning, and insight, which can lead to risky behaviour and falls. These challenges can also affect our senses such as sight, sound, and touch, which may result in communication and mobility difficulties.

## Seeking Professional Guidance

If you or your loved ones have noticed a significant change in your memory or behaviour, it is essential to discuss these concerns with your GP or another health professional. Early recognition and assessment of potential cognitive changes can help to prevent adverse outcomes.

## Links and Resources

To learn more about memory and cognitive health, explore the following resources:

[Cheshire East Live Well: Living with Dementia](#)

[Cheshire West and Chester: Services and factsheets for Dementia](#)

[NHS UK: Memory Loss Information](#)

[Age UK: Dementia Resources](#)



# Nutrition and Hydration

Unintentional weight loss is not a normal part of ageing. If you find yourself losing weight without a clear reason, it's essential to consult your GP, as it could be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

## The Impact of Nutrition and Hydration

Poor nutrition can lead to a weakened immune system, difficulty in absorbing medications, impaired wound healing, and weaker muscles and bones. These factors can contribute to an increased risk of falls. Even if your weight falls within a normal range, consuming a limited variety of foods may result in malnourishment.

Hydration is just as important, as water makes up two-thirds of our body and is essential for digestion and flushing out toxins. Dehydration can lead to a number of issues, including headaches, confusion, dizziness, constipation, and urinary tract / water infections. All of these can increase the risk of falls. Signs of dehydration may include:

- Feeling thirsty
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth or lips
- Confusion
- Dark or foul-smelling urine
- Constipation

## Assessing Your Diet and Fluid Intake

If you are uncertain about the quality of your diet or whether you are drinking enough fluids, consider keeping a food and drink diary and compare it to the following guidelines:

- Aim for 2-3 portions of high-protein foods every day, such as meat, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses, soya, tofu, and other meat-free protein sources
- Include 2-3 portions of dairy foods daily, such as cheese, milk, yoghurt, or non-dairy alternatives like soya, almond, or coconut milk
- Include a serving of starchy food at each meal, such as bread, cereals, potatoes, pasta, or rice
- Consume a variety of fruits and vegetables daily, whether fresh, frozen, tinned, dried, or juiced
- If you enjoy fish, prioritise oily options like mackerel, salmon, herring, trout, pilchards, or sardines, as they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Aim for 2 portions a week.
- Maintain proper hydration by drinking at least 6-8 glasses or mugs of fluids every day. Keep caffeine intake low, as it can worsen dehydration

## Overcoming Dietary Challenges

There are various reasons why your diet may not be as nutritious as it should be, including a reduced appetite, swallowing difficulties, trouble sourcing or preparing food, illness, or dental health issues. If you struggle with shopping or meal preparation, reach out to family and friends who may be able to assist or consider using meal or grocery delivery services. If daily activities – including meal

preparation – become challenging, you can contact social services for potential assistance.

#### Diabetes Considerations

If you have diabetes, it's important to consult your GP, nurse, or dietitian before making any significant dietary changes.

#### Links and Resources

To find out more about nutrition and healthy eating, explore these resources:

#### **Cheshire East**

[Live Well: Healthy eating information](#)

[One You: Weight management support](#)

#### **Cheshire West and Chester**

[Healthy eating information \(Eat Well Be Active\)](#)

[Cheshire Change Hub: Be healthy information](#)

[Cheshire Change Hub: Weight management support](#)

#### **NHS Resources**

[NHS UK: Eat Well](#)

[Age UK: Healthy Eating](#)





## Bone Health

Some people also develop a condition called osteoporosis, which leads to reduced bone density and an increased risk of fractures.

### Understanding Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition characterised by decreased bone density, making bones more likely to fracture, even from minor bumps or falls. It is more common in women, particularly after menopause when bone loss tends to accelerate. It is also more common amongst people from certain ethnic backgrounds, such as Caucasian and Asian. Several factors can increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis:

- **Previous bone fractures:** If you've experienced a bone fracture following a minor incident or fall and you're over 50
- **Low BMI:** Having a low body weight / body mass index (BMI) can contribute to the development of osteoporosis
- **Family history:** A family history of osteoporosis or hip fractures
- **Smoking and alcohol:** Current smoking and heavy alcohol consumption (more than 3 units per day)
- **Oral corticosteroids:** Taking oral corticosteroids, such as prednisolone, for more than 3 months
- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** Having a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis
- **Certain medical conditions:** Conditions like Type I diabetes, untreated hyperthyroidism, chronic malnutrition/malabsorption, and chronic liver disease
- **Premature menopause:** Experiencing menopause before the age of 45 without hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

### Taking Steps for Strong Bones

Regardless of whether you have osteoporosis or not, you can take steps to promote and maintain strong bones:

- **Quit smoking:** Smoking can harm the bone-building cells in your body, making it important to kick the habit
- **Limit alcohol intake:** Excessive alcohol consumption can damage bones and affect balance
- **Engage in weight-bearing exercise:** Participate in exercises that involve moderate impact to support bone health, such as jogging, jumping, or stamping, to support bone health
- **Consult a professional:** If you've had a prior fracture or are diagnosed with osteoporosis, consult with your physiotherapist or the Royal Osteoporosis Society for guidance on suitable exercises
- **Ensure adequate vitamin D:** Vitamin D is essential for bone health, and sunlight is a primary source. However, in the UK, it's advisable to take vitamin D supplements, particularly during the winter months or if you have limited outdoor exposure. These supplements are readily available in supermarkets and pharmacies.
- **Include calcium in your diet:** Aim for a daily calcium intake of 1000mg by including calcium-

rich foods into your diet (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt)

#### Links and Resources

To explore further information about bone health and osteoporosis, visit:

[The Royal Osteoporosis Society: Information and Support](#)



## Feet

### Foot Care for Independence

Being aware of and keeping an eye out for possible foot health concerns can help you to identify problems earlier on, allowing you to seek support before they become a bigger issue. It's important to wash and dry your feet well, and regularly check for any new concerns, such as corns & calluses, over-grown or in-grown toenails, bunions, or sore areas.

One simple step you can take to maintain your foot health is trimming your toenails. Doing so after bathing, when they are softer, can make the process more manageable.

### Professional Foot Care

If you are unsure about the best way to care for your feet or have specific foot concerns, consider consulting a podiatrist or chiropodist. They are trained professionals who can provide expert guidance on foot care and address any issues you may be experiencing. This is particularly important for individuals with diabetes, as foot complications can be more severe in this group.

### Choosing the Right Footwear

The type of footwear you choose can significantly impact your comfort and stability. Here are some recommendations:

- Choose shoes that provide protection and support for your feet. Look for non-slip soles that are not overly thick.
- Avoid high-heeled, backless, or loose-fitting footwear as they can increase the risk of tripping and cause instability.

### Links and Resources

To find a podiatrist in your area, explore the following resources:

[NHS UK: Find a Podiatrist](#)

[Royal College of Podiatry: Ageing Feet](#)



# Bladder and Bowel

Being proactive by staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet, and seeking professional guidance if needed, can help to reduce the risk of falls associated with bladder and bowel problems.

## Bladder and Bowel Challenges That Increase the Risk of Falls

Certain bladder and bowel problems may elevate the risk of falls:

- **Strong urge to urinate:** Rushing to the toilet due to a sudden and strong urge to urinate can make you more likely to stumble or fall
- **Urine / water infections:** Infections in the urinary tract can cause discomfort and confusion and affect mobility
- **Frequent urination:** Passing urine more than 10 times in 24 hours or having to visit the toilet more than twice during the night can disrupt your sleep and increase falls risk
- **Constipation:** Experiencing hard bowel movements and opening your bowels less than three times a week can lead to discomfort and contribute to falls
- **Diarrhoea:** Urgent and loose bowel movements can lead to quick and sometimes unsteady movements and also cause dehydration

These issues may be aggravated by factors such as dehydration and excessive consumption of caffeine or alcohol. You can take proactive measures to support your bladder and bowel health:

- Aim to drink 6 to 8 cups of fluids daily, but minimise drinks containing caffeine or alcohol.
- Maintain a balanced diet rich in fibre, including wholegrain bread, cereals, peas, beans, fruits, and vegetables, to alleviate constipation.
- If you experience nighttime difficulties accessing the toilet, consider using a commode or urinal by the bed for convenience.

## Seeking Professional Guidance

If you encounter ongoing issues related to your bladder or bowel health, it's essential to speak with your GP. They can refer for a continence assessment and offer further support or guidance tailored to your needs.

## Pelvic Floor Exercises for Additional Support

To strengthen your pelvic floor muscles and enhance bladder and bowel control, consider incorporating pelvic floor exercises into your routine. These exercises can be particularly beneficial for women.

## Links and Resources

For more information on pelvic floor exercises, explore the following resource:

[East Cheshire Bladder and Bowel Service information](#)

[Mid Cheshire Bladder and Bowel Service information](#)

[West Cheshire Continence and Urology Service information](#)

[NHS UK: Pelvic Floor Exercises](#)



# Fear of Falling

## Breaking the Cycle of Fear

Falls can happen to anyone, and you are certainly not alone – they are more common than you'd think. It's essential to recognise that the more fear and anxiety you feel, the less likely you are to remain physically active. Being less active can lead to weaker muscles, reduced balance, and a higher risk of having future falls.

You may find yourself walking more cautiously, slowing down your pace, or even feeling nervous to leave your home. These are common reactions and often signal a decrease in your confidence in moving around and getting out and about.

## Creating a Falls Plan

It's advisable to have a plan in place for if you fall. This can significantly reduce anxiety and minimise the likelihood of prolonged periods on the floor.

If you are on the floor hurt or unable to get up, consider these steps:

- **Summon help:** If you are hurt or unable to get up, use your pendant alarm, mobile phone, call out for assistance, crawl to a telephone, or make noise by banging on a wall or radiator
- **Stay warm:** Make sure you have blankets and a cushion that are accessible from floor level, to help you stay warm and comfortable while waiting for help
- **Move safely:** If you are able, move to a softer surface and change your position regularly

If you find yourself unhurt and capable of getting up after a fall:

- **Roll over:** Roll over onto your hands and knees
- **Crawl to support:** Crawl to a stable piece of furniture, such as an armchair, to assist you in getting up
- **Take your time:** Turn and sit on a chair or bed to rest for a while



## Assistive Devices for Added Security

If you worry about falling when you are alone at home, consider using a pendant alarm that enables you to call for help, even if you can't reach the telephone. There are also telecare sensors available, such as falls detectors, designed for individuals who may not be able to press a pendant alarm. There are lots of different pendant alarm and telecare providers, which can be found by searching online.

## Rebuilding Your Confidence and Reducing Your Risk

Keep in mind these essential points:

- Try not to let having a fall worry you too much. Many steps can be taken to minimise the risk of it happening again
- If your worries continue, consider talking to someone you trust about your feelings
- Set achievable goals to gradually regain your confidence and return to your usual activities. For example, start by walking short distances before progressing to longer ones
- If you are worried to complete a particular activity, think about all of the times you have done that activity successfully, instead of focusing on a previous fall

There are a number of steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling and rebuild your confidence. A great starting point is using the [Self-Assessment tool](#) available on our website. This tool can help you identify areas where you can make changes and improvements to feel safer.

## Links and Resources

Complete your [Self-Assessment](#) today and explore the following resources for more information:

[Steady On Your Feet: Self Assessment Plan](#)

[NHS Inform: Fear of Falling](#)

If you would like some support to increase your activity levels, consider contacting your local Social Prescribing service through your GP.

[NHS: What is Social Prescribing?](#)

[Cheshire East: Social Prescribing information](#)

[Cheshire West and Chester: Social Prescribing and Wellbeing information](#)

# Sleep and Falls

## What I can do

- Limit your daytime sleep
- Be as active as you can during the day
- Have a set bedtime routine
- Milky drinks before bedtime may help
- Tea and coffee later in the day are likely to keep you awake. Try switching to decaffeinated versions of your favourite drinks
- Play relaxing music you enjoy or that is especially good for relaxation before going to bed
- Try not to worry about the things you cannot change

It is important to sleep in bed whenever possible. This helps to improve circulation, prevent sore skin, reduce swelling in limbs, and ensure all muscles in the body are relaxed.

Sleeping pills are a common risk factor for falls, especially if you find yourself falling in the night or in the morning. If you are on regular sleeping pills, you may wish to speak to your GP about this.

Fatigue and boredom can also affect how alert we feel, which can increase falls risk. Keep to a good routine and try to keep your mind active by doing crosswords, reading the paper etc. Avoid sleeping for too long during the day, and pace yourself to manage fatigue.

## Rolling out of bed

If you are rolling out of bed, consider;

- Changing the side of bed you sleep on, or sleep more centrally in the bed.
- Speak to your GP if you're taking sleeping tablets or sedatives
- Place a small towel under the edge of the fitted sheet to create a small barrier to alert you to being near the edge of the bed.
- Elevate the edge of the mattress

If you are falling from the bed when you are trying to get in or out, consider:

- Adapting the height of the bed- if it is too low it might be easy to get in, but harder to get out
- If the bed is too high- it will be hard to get in, and you may 'slide' off. Remove casters, or invest in a shallower mattress
- The sheets are too slippery
- The edge of the mattress is too soft
- Bed handles to assist with your bed transfer. Speak to occupational therapy or other health professionals for advice



**STEADY ON  
YOUR FEET**

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