



Better care **together**

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland health & social care



# Preventing falls

**Falls can have a serious effect on anyone. Here are some basic steps you can take and some exercises to help you prevent them.**



As you get older many things that once came naturally can become more difficult.

## Do you:

Yes

- feel nervous about the possibility of falling?.....
- hold on to furniture as you move around? .....
- have dizziness or feel light-headed as you get up from a chair or out of bed?.....
- feel more drowsy than you used to? .....
- have difficulty walking or feel unsteady on your feet? .....
- find it harder to see or things look blurry? .....
- find it harder to hear what people are saying to you? .....
- take regular medication for a long-term condition including heart disease, dementia, diabetes, blood pressure or asthma? ...
- exercise less than twice a week?.....
- have to rush or need to go to the toilet more often? .....
- feel confused even for a short while? .....

If you tick yes to one or more of these questions, then you might be at risk of falling and the information in this leaflet could help.

If you think you are at risk of having a fall,  
talk to your GP or health professional.  
With their help, many falls can be avoided.

# Top five ways to prevent falls



## 1. Look after your feet

- Make sure your shoes/slippers are a good fit and the correct size. Avoid narrow heels, open backs or worn soles.
- See a podiatrist (chiropodist) if your feet are painful.



## 2. Stay well

- Eat healthily and regularly. Avoid going for long periods between meals.
- Drink plenty of fluid. About six to eight glasses each day. Water, tea, coffee, fruit juice and squash all count.
- Always take your medicines on time and as prescribed. Check if they have side effects like dizziness/light headedness or drowsiness. If you aren't sure ask your pharmacist when you pick up your prescription.
- Be aware of changing weather conditions especially if rain or freezing temperatures are forecast.



## 3. Look after your eyes

- Have your eyes tested regularly (every two years if under 70, annually thereafter) – it's free if you're over 65.
- Look after your glasses and clean them often.



## 4. Stay active, stay steady

- Complete balance and coordination exercises at least twice a week, such as dance, Tai Chi and the exercises in this leaflet.
- Be active – try to do 30 minutes of moderate activity every day. Moderate activity means you will be slightly out of breath.
- Try to sit less, keep doing little things every day.
- On two days per week try to do exercises to increase your strength e.g. carrying shopping.
- Continue with any exercises you have been advised to do.



## 5. Look after your home

- Replace worn floor coverings.
- Replace or remove rugs that have curled edges.
- Remove clutter and ensure your home is well lit.
- Replace low beds and chairs if you struggle to get up from them.
- Beware of slippery floors in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Keep your home warm.

# Get ready to exercise

## Before you begin the exercises on pages 5 to 13

- Make sure you are wearing comfortable clothing and suitable footwear.
- Make sure your exercise space is clear of any obstacles.
- Have a glass of water ready for afterwards.
- Do some gentle warm up exercises first (see suggestions below).

## Suggested warm up exercises

- Stand up straight and march on the spot at a steady pace for 1-2 minutes.
- Stand (or sit) up straight with your arms at your sides, slowly lift both of your shoulders up towards your ears, then move them backwards and bring them back down to your normal relaxed sitting position – repeat this circular movement five times.
- Stand up straight (or sit up straight on the front edge of your chair) and put your heel down on the floor with your toes pointing upwards, then lift your foot, point your toes down and put them in the same place as you put your heel. Repeat five times on both feet.
- Stand (or sit) up straight with your feet hip width apart. With your arms folded across your chest twist your upper body and head to the right and then to the left. Repeat 5 times in both directions and keep your hips and legs facing forwards.

## Exercise for life

Continue to stay active and stay steady by making the exercises in this leaflet part of your daily routine. Remember just 30 minutes of exercise a day can improve your health and wellbeing and help reduce your risk of a fall.

# Shoulder lift



Sit forward away from the backrest of a stable chair that is a suitable height (your hips and knees should be in line).

Hold a small weight such as a tin of beans or bottle of water in your hand.

Keeping your arm straight, slowly raise it in front of you towards the ceiling. Lift it as high as you can then slowly lower your arm back down.

*Repeat 10 times for each arm. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Elbow bend



Sit forward away from the backrest of a stable chair that is a suitable height (your hips and knees should be in line).

Hold a small weight such as a tin of beans or bottle of water in your hand. Keep your palm facing upwards.

Slowly raise your forearm and hand towards your shoulder bending your arm at the elbow. Then slowly lower your forearm back towards your lap.

*Repeat 10 times for each arm. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Heel raises

When completing the standing exercises you can start using both hands holding. Then when more confident you can progress to finger tips and if possible not holding on at all



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best. If you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Slowly raise up onto your tip toes, ensuring you tuck your bottom in and lean forward slightly. Hold for 3 seconds and slowly lower your heels back down.

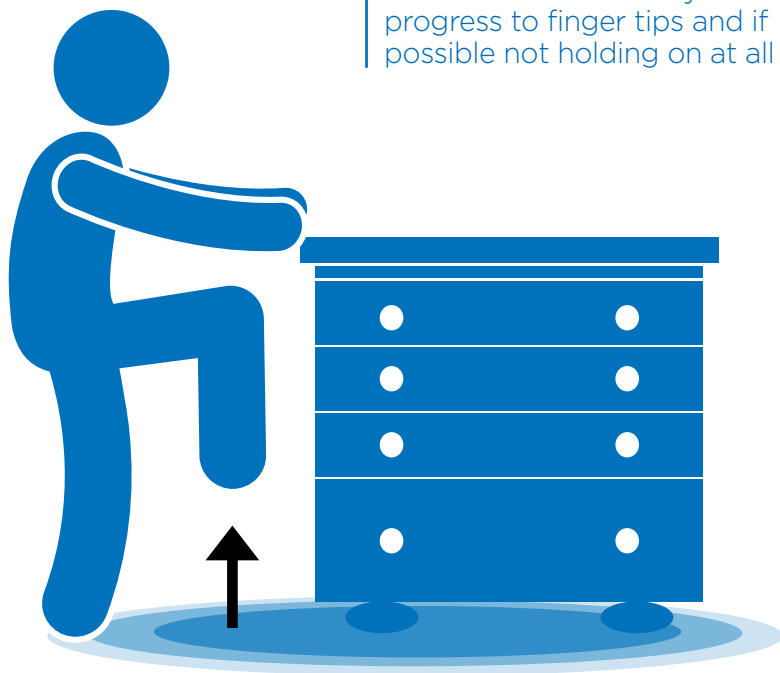
Do not let your body rock backwards when you lower back to the floor.

*Repeat 10 times. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# High knees

When completing the standing exercises you can start using both hands holding. Then when more confident you can progress to finger tips and if possible not holding on at all



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best. If you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Lift your knee as high as possible, lifting your toes up at the same time. Hold your leg up for 3 seconds, then slowly lower making sure your heel touches the ground first.

*Repeat 10 times each leg. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)



# Hip extension

When completing the standing exercises you can start using both hands holding. Then when more confident you can progress to finger tips and if possible not holding on at all



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best. If you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Keeping your knees straight and toes up, move your straight leg backwards, extending your hip.

Make sure you keep your back straight - do not lean forwards.

*Repeat 10 times each leg. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Side leg raises

When completing the standing exercises you can start using both hands holding. Then when more confident you can progress to finger tips and if possible not holding on at all



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best. If you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

**Important: Your toes must face forwards at all times during this exercise.**

Keeping your knee straight and toes forwards, slowly lift one leg out to the side and hold for 3 seconds then return to the original position.

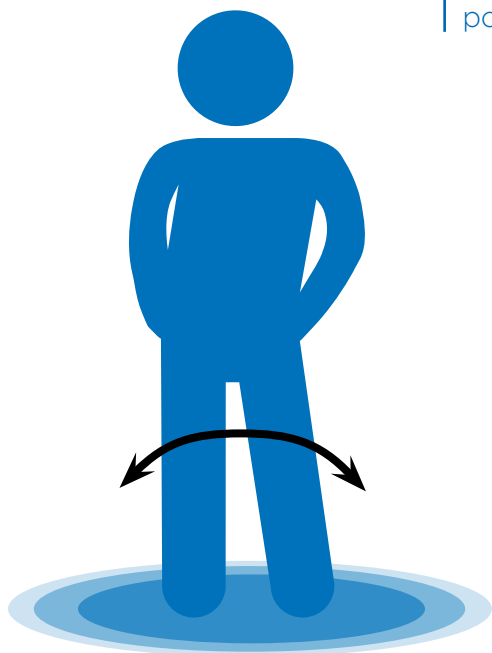
Make sure your body remains upright. Do not lean over to lift your leg higher.

*Repeat 10 times each leg. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Weight shift side-to-side

When completing the standing exercises you can start using both hands holding. Then when more confident you can progress to finger tips and if possible not holding on at all



Standing with feet hip width apart, hands resting on a surface if required. A kitchen worktop or chest of drawers is best. If you use a chair, make sure it is steady.

Slowly shift all your weight on to your right foot and then slowly move your weight on to your left foot. Both feet should remain on the ground and you should feel your body move slightly, from right to left as you shift your weight.

*Repeat 10 times. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Foot lift



Sit forward away from the backrest of a stable chair that is a suitable height (your hips and knees should be in line).

Keeping your heels on the floor, lift your toes upwards and hold for three seconds.

*Repeat 10 times for each foot. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# Sit-to-stand



Sitting in a stable chair of suitable height (your hips and knees should be in line).

Come forwards in the seat, feet flat on the floor and lean forwards with your body.

Push down through your legs and stand up straight without using your arms to assist. Stand for a few seconds before slowly sitting back down.

To sit: stick your bottom out and sit down slowly again without using your arms for support. Do not drop down into the chair

*Repeat 10 times. For maximum benefit, these exercises should be done every day.*

To watch a film demonstrating some of the exercises in this leaflet visit [www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls](http://www.healthandcareleicestershire.co.uk/preventingfalls)

# What to do if you have a fall

## FALL

Stay calm - take some deep breaths

Check for injuries - move your arms and legs

Can you get up?

**YES**

Plan how you will get up

Take your time

Roll onto your side

Move on to your hands and knees

Use a firm chair or surface to help you stand up

Once standing, find a place to sit down

Inform your GP that you have had a fall as soon as possible. It is important to identify the cause of your fall and how to reduce your risk of having another one.

**No**

Summon help

Personal alarm, phone, shout or bang something

Stay warm

If you can reach safely, pull a blanket, towel or the bed clothes over you to keep warm. Support your head with a cushion or rolled up item of clothing

Keep moving

Move limbs if possible to avoid stiffness and help with circulation

Stay dry

If you are able to, move away from any wet areas

## Do you feel safe and secure?

- Would a lifeline or community alarm system help?
- Where do you feel off balance? – would a rail there help?
- Are your alarms/pull cords easy to reach when necessary?

### For further information visit NHS choices:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/Falls/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Falls/Pages/Introduction.aspx)



**The NHS  
non-emergency**

NHS 111 is the number to call if you have an urgent health need and are not sure what to do about it.

## Do you need more advice?

If you are worried about falling or are concerned about a relative falling, talk to your GP.

# Local contacts

This information has been produced as part of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.

You can find out more about the partnership by visiting [www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk)

