

# Preventing falls at home: What can I do?

Information for patients,  
families and carers

world class expertise  local care

## Did you know?

- One in three people over the age of 65 will have a fall this year, and it's not just the frail and elderly.
- Evidence shows that the vast majority of falls can be prevented with modest changes to our lifestyle and homes.
- The best thing we can do is identify any risk factors and make a positive change.

## Don't be afraid to ask for help

### Be active!

- It's good for strength, balance, co-ordination and bone health.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Go for daily walks.
- Perform standing and seated exercises for falls prevention as prescribed by your physiotherapist.
- Practice your balance.

### Sort out the house

- Clear up clutter, especially on the stairs.
- Install a good handrail on both sides of the stairs.
- Use non-slip mats, and install rails in the shower/bath.
- Keep garden paths clear of moss.

### **Visit your GP**

- Discuss any increase in the number of falls with your GP. They can investigate potential causes, as well as refer you to services which may be able to help such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and falls prevention clinics.
- Manage your medicine. Talk to your GP if you experience dizziness or are feeling faint after taking any medication. They may need to check the dose or look for alternatives.

### **Take care of your eyes and ears**

- Have your eyes checked regularly; at least every two years.
- Talk to your GP if you notice hearing changes that affect your day-to-day living.

### **Use technology**

- Personal alarms/pendant alarm
- 'Telecare' automatically alerts carers or emergency services

# 6 exercises for strength and balance

Try these six simple exercises two or three times a week – every day if you like – and you should soon notice improvements to your co-ordination and balance



- MAKE SURE THE CHAIR YOU USE IS STURDY
- WEAR SUPPORTIVE SHOES
- IF YOU EXPERIENCE CHEST PAIN, DIZZINESS OR SEVERE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, STOP AND CALL YOUR GP OR CALL 111
- A SLIGHT SORENESS THE DAY AFTER IS QUITE NORMAL



## Heel Raises

Stand tall, holding the back of a sturdy kitchen-type chair or kitchen sink, then lift your heels off the floor, taking your weight onto your big toes. Hold for three seconds, then lower with control. Repeat 10 times.



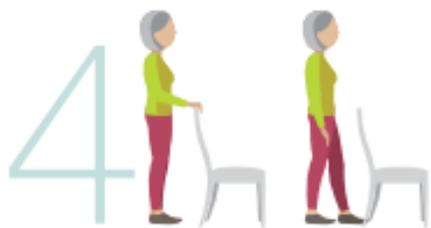
## Toe Raises

Stand tall holding the same support, then raise your toes – taking your weight on your heels. Don't stick your bottom out. Hold for three seconds, then lower with control. Repeat 10 times.



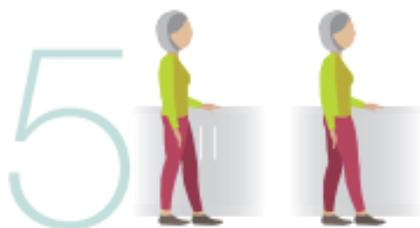
### Sit to Stand

Sit tall near the front of a chair with your feet slightly back. Lean forwards slightly and stand up (with hands on the chair if needed). Step back until your legs touch the chair then slowly lower yourself back into the chair. Repeat 10 times.



### Heel-Toe Stand

Stand tall, with one hand on your support. Put one foot directly in front of the other to make a straight line. Look ahead, take your hand off the support and balance for 10 seconds. Take the front foot back to hip width apart. Then place the other foot in front and balance for 10 seconds.



### Heel-Toe Walking

Stand tall, with one hand on a support like a kitchen cabinet. Look ahead and walk 10 steps forwards, placing one foot directly in front of the other so that the feet form a straight line. Aim for a steady walking action. Take the feet back to hip width apart, turn around and repeat the steps in the other direction.



### One-Leg Stand

Stand close to your support and hold it with one hand. Balance on one leg, keeping the support knee soft and your posture upright. Hold the position for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.



WHY NOT PULL OUT THESE CENTRE PAGES AND KEEP THEM ON THE FRIDGE?

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists for letting us use their '6 exercises for strength and balance' information.

## More information

For more information about the physiotherapy service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website:

[www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapy-services/physiotherapy/#tab-overview](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapy-services/physiotherapy/#tab-overview)

## Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email:

[rf.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net)

## Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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