



Staying Independent

Preventing Falls



Changi
General Hospital

SingHealth

Introduction

A fall may be a warning sign of declining health. It is not normal to fall even if our body ages.

Falls are the leading cause of injury related hospitalisations and death. It is a major cause of increased need of care.

Preventing falls is important to help maintain a healthy and independent lifestyle.

This booklet will help you identify some hazards, and suggest some simple, practical changes to reduce your chances of falling and help you stay independent.



Get a QR code reader app from your smartphone’s app store (“search QR reader”) and scan this code using the app, or visit: **www.cgh.com.sg/nofalls** to read more about how to prevent falls.

There are four main risk factors that cause falls:

Medication and
Medical Conditions

Page **3**



Poor Vision

Page **4**



Lack of Exercise

Page **5**



Environmental Hazards

Page **7**



Medication

- Some medications can cause drowsiness.
- Have your healthcare provider review your medicines including “over the counter” and traditional medicine.



Medical Conditions

- Do you have any problems with daily activities and difficulties in getting around? If so, ask your healthcare provider how to improve your daily activities and ways to reduce pain that limits your movement.
- For each day you are immobile, you will need three days of activities to get back to your normal strength.



Poor Vision

If you cannot see clearly, it can increase your risk of falling. Poor vision may be due to medical conditions such as cataract or glaucoma, or simply due to old age.

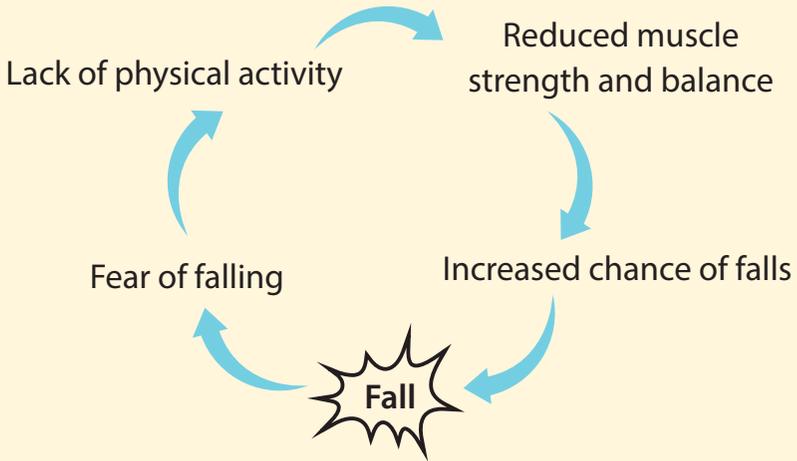
Poor vision and increased glare reduce your ability to notice nearby dangers.

Have your eyes checked at least once a year by an eye doctor or optometrist.

Multifocal lens will make obstacles on the ground difficult to see, causing you to trip and fall.



Lack of Exercise



Start a Regular Exercise Programme

The best types of physical activities are the ones you enjoy doing.

As a start, include more activities in your daily routine such as regular walks around your neighbourhood at a comfortable pace. This will improve your endurance and energy levels.



Additionally, your physical activities should also include strength and balance exercises. It will enhance your flexibility and coordination.

Fitness corners with exercise equipment, such as those shown below, are easily accessible in the neighbourhood. Exercise at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) in total per week, which can be broken down into short sessions each day.

Before exercise:

1. Wear appropriate footwear.
2. Wear cool and loose clothing.
3. Familiarise yourself with the equipment.
4. Drink enough water.



Speak to your doctor and physiotherapist on a recommended exercise programme for you.

Keep Fit. Stay Healthy!

Environmental Hazards

How to Make Your Bedroom Safe



Install a night light.

Place the commode alongside the wall.



Place walking aids close to the bed.

Avoid bedsheets with skirting.





Place frequently used items on the bedside table.

Ensure that the bed is of a correct height. You should be able to place your feet flat on the floor when you sit at the edge of the bed.

Use a cordless or mobile phone or a personal bell if you need to call for help.



How to Make Your Toilet and Bathroom Safe





Sit on a stable shower chair with back support to make shower time safer.

Place items for shower within easy reach.

Lay non-slip mats on the toilet or bathroom floor as wet soapy tiles are very slippery.

How to Make Your Kitchen Safe

Place frequently used items at chest or waist level. Store heavy items within easy reach or in lower cabinets.

Turn in long-handled utensils when cooking.

Do not place hot or sharp items near the edge of the table/shelf.





Have sufficient, non-glaring lighting over the counter top and stove, especially when food is being sliced or cut.

Clean up spills immediately.

Do not leave rugs/
cloth on the floor.

Do not stand on stools
and chairs to reach the
high shelves. Ask for help.

How to Be Safe Outdoors



Use the handrail if necessary when climbing the stairs



Avoid puddles of water



Be careful when using kerbs



Be careful of uneven road surfaces

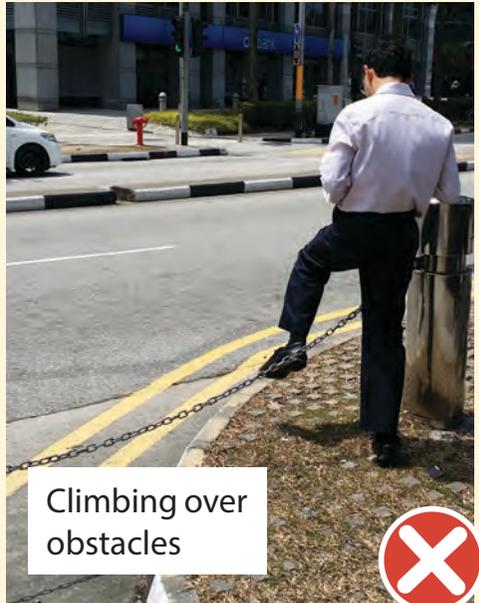
Plan ahead of time to avoid risk-taking behaviours such as:



Chasing after the bus



Jaywalking



Climbing over obstacles

Walking Aids

Some people will benefit from the use of a walking aid. Speak to your healthcare provider on the recommended walking aid for you.

Examples of unsuitable walking aids include:



When using your recommended walking aid, please ensure good posture.



← Standing Upright →



Elbows slightly bent.



Walking aid at arm's length from the body.

Walk Safe: Use Proper Footwear

Foot shape can change as we age. Always ask to have your feet measured when purchasing new footwear. Poor fitting footwear can increase your chance of having a fall.

Firm heel counter with a rounded edge.

Velcro, buckle or laces to hold the foot firmly in place.



The front of the shoe known as the toe box should be deep enough and wide enough to accommodate toes comfortably, but not too loose.

A low, broad, slip-resistant heel to maximise contact with the ground.



How to Get Up from a Fall

It is important to get up or get help as soon as possible. Lying on the floor for long periods of time can lead to more problems such as:

- Dehydration
- Lung infection
- Skin breakdown
- Muscle breakdown

If you are alone:



1. DO NOT PANIC!

- Try moving your body, arms, and legs.
- If you are in pain and unable to move and get up, call for help.
- Sit or lie down on the floor in a comfortable position until help arrives.
- If you have no pain, roll on to your side and rest until you feel strong enough to move.



2. Get onto all fours and move/crawl towards the nearest support, such as a sturdy piece of furniture.



3. Lift one knee and use your supporting foot and arms to brace yourself.



4. Push yourself up and slowly turn yourself around to take a seat.



5. Sit or rest until you feel strong enough to call for help. Seek medical help if needed.

How to Help Someone Who has Fallen

Let the person who has fallen get up on his or her own, you should only act as a guide.



1. CALM THE PERSON DOWN.

- If there is no significant injury and pain, help the person lightly roll onto his/her side and allow him/her to rest.
- If the person is in pain and unable to get up, call for help. Help the person sit or lie down in a comfortable position until help arrives.



2. Place two sturdy chairs nearby.

- Guide the person to place both arms on the chair and prop up into a kneeling position.



3. Guide the person to push himself/ herself into a half-standing position and place a second chair behind the person.



4. Guide the person to sit back on the chair behind him/her.
- Do not lift the person as undetected injuries may be aggravated if you pull on him/her. Keep your back upright when assisting.
 - Seek medical help if needed.

✓ Checklist for Fall Prevention



Medication and Medical Conditions

- Do you have giddiness when you sit/stand upright or have difficulty with movement? Visit a doctor to get a full check-up.
- Review your medication regularly.
- Take steps to strengthen and protect your bones. A diet high in calcium and vitamin D will help.



Vision

- Test your eyes at least once a year.



Exercise

- Exercise at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) in total per week. This can be broken down into short sessions (e.g. 30 minutes) each day.



Environmental Hazards

- Ensure your home is clutter free and safe.
- Ensure commonly used pathways at home are well-lit.

Create a Help Action Plan

A Help Action Plan is important in case of an emergency.

1. Be Proactive — Plan Ahead

- Leave emergency contact numbers with neighbours so they can contact your family members or friends.
- Leave a copy of your keys with family members or a trusted neighbour so they can get into your house.
- Place phones at commonly used areas such as bathroom, kitchen or bedroom. Alternatively, carry a mobile phone with you at all times.

2. Be Responsive — Know What To Do

- If someone is with you, call out for help.
- If you are alone, try to get to a phone.
- Activate your personal alarm or help bell to alert your helper, family members or neighbours.

3. Be Protective – Prevent Future Injuries

- If you are 65 or older, seek medical advice if you have fallen before.
- Take extra caution. The elderly have a higher chance of falling again after the first fall.
- To avoid more injuries, seek professional help early.



Singapore
General Hospital



Changi
General Hospital



Sengkang
General Hospital



KK Women's and
Children's Hospital



National Cancer
Centre Singapore



National Dental
Centre Singapore



National Heart
Centre Singapore



National
Neuroscience Institute



Singapore National
Eye Centre



SingHealth
Community Hospitals



Polyclinics
SingHealth

PATIENTS. AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.®

2 Simei Street 3 Singapore 529889
Tel: 6788 8833 Fax: 6788 0933
Reg No 198904226R

CGH Appointment Centre

For appointments and enquiries,
please call: (65) 6850 3333

Operating hours:
8.30 am to 8.00 pm (Monday to Friday)
8.30 am to 12.30 pm (Saturday & Sunday)
Closed on Public Holidays

For more information, please visit www.cgh.com.sg

