



## Exercises for balance

## Am I at risk of falling?

# Preventing slips, trips and falls



1 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.



2 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.



3 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.



4 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.

- Make sure your chair is sturdy
- Wear supportive shoes
- If you experience chest pain, dizziness or severe shortness of breath, stop and call your GP or 111
- A slight soreness the day after is normal



- I have fallen but not told my GP
- I don't complete regular exercise
- I can feel dizzy or light headed
- I struggle to maintain my home
- I haven't had an eye test in 12 months
- My walkways are cluttered
- I struggle to get off furniture
- I don't drink much water
- My slippers are loose
- I struggle to cut my toe nails
- I have a long term condition.
- I keep lights and heaters off to save electricity
- I don't go out much
- I worry about falling
- I don't wear a falls alarm
- I hold furniture when walking

If you are worried about falling or would like an assessment or more advice, please get in touch with your GP

St Thomas Medical Group

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## It won't happen to me.....

Around 1 in 3 adults over 65 and half of people over 80 will have at least one fall a year. Many of these aren't serious, but can knock a person's confidence.

Some falls can result in a hospital stay and can affect the ability to manage at home.

## How do I prevent having a fall?

### Exercise



Regular gentle exercise will help your strength and balance. This can be as simple as going up and down the stairs a few times a day, or carrying out a set of recommended exercises within the home from your chair in or standing.

### Eye health



Your vision plays an important part in staying steady. You should have a eye test once a year and report any changes in your vision to your GP.

### Feet and footwear



If you have any problems with your feet, loose or ill fitting shoes, this can lead to slips, trips and falls. Try to avoid walking in socks or tights.



### Your environment

Be aware of hazards such as loose rugs, trailing wires and steps without rails. Keep floors clear and walkways well lit at night. Consider using rugs with a non-slip backing, non-slip mats in the shower and double sided carpet tape to keep carpets and mats stuck down.



### Stay hydrated

Dehydration can lead to fatigue, urine infections and dizziness. You should aim to drink 6—8 glasses of fluid a day. Try to avoid caffeine as this makes you want to pass urine more often and can lead to de-hydration.

### Don't rush!



Rushing for the toilet, the front door or telephone can cause falls. Try to not hold on for the loo until the last minute and consider wearing continence protection for peace of mind if worried. Keeping a telephone nearby can help prevent rushing to answer.

### Over reaching / bending down



Try to have items within easy reach, try not to over stretch or bend to cupboards, the fridge or freezer. Consider sitting rather than standing when getting dressed or undressed.

### Medication



Mixing lots of medications together can sometimes increase the risk of falls. Make sure your GP knows about all medication you take, including over the counter remedies.