

10 TIPS TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE FROM FALLS

Read on for useful tips to help you improve your safety, co-ordination and confidence – and most importantly, avoid falls.

As we age, we're more likely to fall over for a myriad of reasons, including poor balance, poor eyesight, environmental hazards, or side effects from medications. Falls can cause serious injury and take time to heal. You may lose confidence in your abilities and restrict your activities to avoid future falls – which in turn, can lead to a cycle of decline in fitness and ability.

Top tips...

1 Keep essential items close by

Make sure you have a call bell or button within reach, or a phone so you can call for help if you need it.

2 Take your time when you get up

If you feel dizzy, weak, or lightheaded, call for help – don't get up by yourself. If no one is available to help, sit on the bed or lie down again for a while before standing up.

3 Ask for help if you need it

Particularly if you feel dizzy, weak, or light-headed. If you're an HBH resident, ask us for help getting to the bathroom or toilet – and use the bell there if you don't feel well, or when you're ready to go back.

4 Don't take unnecessary risks

Try to avoid walking on wet, slippery or uneven surfaces, or ask someone to help you.

5 Dress for success

Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes or slippers, especially at night – and make sure your clothing is not too long or loose, as it might trip you up.

6 Hang on

Get into the habit of using handrails in hallways, stairs and bathrooms.

7 Declutter

Remove any hazards or obstacles in your home that might hinder your progress. Make sure any loose rugs are stuck down, install handrails in bathrooms and hallways, and use non-slip bath or shower mats.

8 Using walking aids appropriately

You might not want to, but they're there to help you! If you have glasses, hearing aids or walking aids, please use them.

9 Light up at night

Have a night light, torch or easily accessible light for getting up at night.

10 Steady does it

Use only fixed objects to help steady yourself. Don't use a tray table, IV pole, wheelchair, or other objects that can move.

What to do if you've had a fall

If you do fall at home or elsewhere, it's important to stay calm. If you can get up, bend your knees, roll onto your side, and get onto all fours. If you can crawl towards a sturdy chair, use that as support to get yourself seated. Rest as much as you need to during this process. If you can't get up, try to roll or crawl towards a phone – or call out to a neighbour. If you're at risk of falls, you may want to consider using a personal medical alarm.

After a fall, make sure you visit your doctor to get assessed for injuries, and to assess your strength and balance to help prevent further falls.

It's okay to ask for help

Most falls happen when our residents are getting in or out of bed, their bedside chair or going to the toilet – so remember that it's okay to ask for a helping hand if you feel unsteady or need assistance at any time. We're here to help and we'll work with you and your family, whānau or caregivers to help you stay safe.

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Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness – it's a step toward protecting your health, independence and confidence. Our team is here to support you whenever you need a hand.

DON'T LET THE FEAR OF FALLING HOLD YOU BACK

It's easy to fall into the trap of avoiding physical activity because you're afraid of hurting yourself. However, moving less can lead to decreased muscle strength, poor balance and weight gain, which increases your risk of falling in the future. And it's important to make the most of life!

Focus on maintaining physical activity to build muscle strength, balance, and coordination, and improve your blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and weight. HBH Howick Views has an in-house gym and Physiologist who can help you with this, or you might like to join **Virtual Village East's** weekly walking group or Safe & Strong exercise programme.

As a charitable organisation, we aim to create opportunities for all older people to age well and live fully, through homes, care, community and advocacy.



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