



GET UP – STAND UP, DON'T FALL DOWN!

A self help guide to
reduce your risk of
falling

Hackney Stop Falls
Network



Network

Preventing falls amongst older people

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Stand up against falls

Falls are NOT an inevitable part of getting older.
The good news is you can reduce your risk of falling.

This booklet tells you what help is available in Hackney if you need it. Even if you have not experienced a fall some of the information will be helpful.

If you have been admitted to hospital as a result of your fall, or are concerned about your falls, you can also contact Stop Falls on **020 7254 3910** or various community therapy services. Refer to page 14 for contact details.

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Have you fallen recently and you don't know why?

It is important to find out why you have fallen.

Making small changes, where possible, will enable you to reduce your risk of future falls.



Action:

✓ Speak to your GP or any other health professional or contact Stop Falls Network on **020 7254 3910** and request a falls assessment.

This usually includes looking at your balance and walking as well as questions about your medication, health and home environment to help find out why you are falling.

Are you worried about having a fall or getting up from the floor afterwards?

People who are worried about falling often stop doing things they used to do such as going out and seeing friends. This can lead to increased loneliness and weakening of your physical ability.

Action:

- ✓ Contact Stop Falls Network – the community falls prevention service on **020 7254 3910** for a falls risk assessment, advice and access to specialist treatment and exercise classes.
- ✓ Telecare provides alarm pendants and other equipment that can help you remain safe and summon help. Contact the Social Service Access Team on **020 8356 6262** for further details.
- ✓ Ask your GP to refer you to your local community physiotherapist for balance and strength retraining. They will also teach you how to get up from the floor.
- ✓ Contact The Sharp End on **020 7923 8690**. They are at 11 Richmond Road E8 and run weekly programmes of exercise, dancing, singing and art classes
- ✓ Contact AgeWell at Age Concern **020 7241 5909**, if you are between 50 and 65 years old.
- ✓ Contact The Befriending Service at the Community Resource Team **020 7275 7092** or **020 7249 1868**, who offer home visits.
- ✓ Contact the Health Trainer Service at the Shoreditch Spa on **0844 225 2054**.

Do you feel light-headed or dizzy when you stand up after lying or sitting down?

When you stand up your blood pressure can drop. This can cause you to fall.

Action:

- ✓ If you have been lying down for a long time, sit on the side of the bed to get your bearings and then slowly stand.
- ✓ If you have been sitting for a long time, get up slowly from a chair and steady yourself before walking.
- ✓ Ask your GP or practice nurse to check your blood pressure.
- ✓ Tell your doctor or Pharmacist if you think your medication is making you feel dizzy.



Do you feel less steady than you used to?

Action:

✓ Consider an exercise class or Tai Chi to improve your balance and strength. For more information about exercise classes in your area, contact Stop Falls on **020 7254 3910** or The Sharp End on **020 7923 8690**.

✓ If unsteadiness is seriously affecting the way that you manage day to day activities, ask your GP to refer you to your local community physiotherapist. You can also refer yourself to a therapy team. See page 14.

A team of Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses and other health professionals will assess your needs and can even work with you in your own home.

✓ Be physically active every day. Even gentle exercise such as walking will make a difference.



Do you take any tablets?

The following tablets may make you fall:

- sleeping tablets
- heart, blood pressure tablets
- water tablets
- tranquillisers
- anti-depressant tablets.



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Action:

- ✓ Ask your GP or practice nurse to check your blood pressure.
- ✓ Always take medicines and tablets as prescribed.
- ✓ Let your doctor know if new medicines or tablets cause you to have side effects.
- ✓ Ask your GP to review your medication. If you are over 65 your doctor should review your medication every 12 months.
- ✓ You can also ask your pharmacist for advice and a medication review should you prefer.

Do you have difficulty with your eyesight?

Poor eyesight can lead to slips and trips, especially in poor lighting.

Action:

- ✓ Make sure your glasses are clean and in good condition.
- ✓ Have a spare pair of glasses.
- ✓ Have good lighting in all areas of your home.
- ✓ Consider changing your bifocals or varifocals to single-vision lenses.
- ✓ You are entitled to a free NHS sight test when you are over 60 or diagnosed with diabetes or glaucoma.
- ✓ If you are unable to get out to see an optician Eyes On Call **0800 047 0425** (freephone), Rose Optical Services **0800 731 0031** (freephone) and The Outside Clinic **0500 295 245** (freephone) all offer a home visit service.

Are you at risk of Osteoporosis or brittle bone disease?

One in two women and one in five men over 50 will suffer a broken bone, mainly as a result of Osteoporosis.

You could be at risk, if you have had a previous fracture, have a family/maternal history of broken hip, had an early menopause or have been on some long-term medications.

If you are concerned, ask your GP to check your risk factors. You might get referred for a DEXA scan (which is similar to an x-ray) and will learn about the state of your bones.

Action:

- ✓ Tuck into bone friendly food, such as milk and dairy products, bread and cereals,
- ✓ Eat meat and fish regularly, particularly sardines and pilchards and plenty of fruit (dried figs and apricots) and green leafy vegetables
- ✓ Take regular weight-bearing exercises, such as brisk walking, aerobics, dancing
- ✓ Get enough vitamin D from the sun by taking breaks outside in spring and summer
- ✓ Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol intake
- ✓ Seek advice, read about your bones (NOS Helpline: **0845 450 0230**).

Do you have difficulty concentrating? Have you been feeling forgetful?

Poor concentration and forgetfulness can be caused by many different things, such as:

- side-effects of medication
- poor appetite or not eating properly
- feeling stressed, nervous or anxious
- feeling sad, lonely or depressed
- grief and loss
- worrying about poor memory
- chronic pain
- feeling afraid of falling.

Action:

- ✓ Speak to a friend or relative to see if they have noticed.
- ✓ Speak to your GP in confidence. There may be an underlying reason, why you are having difficulties.
- ✓ Contact Information and Helpline of Alzheimers Society on **0845 300 0336** or **020 8533 0091** for the Hackney branch.

Do you feel that foot problems are affecting your mobility?



Poor footwear and foot problems like calluses, bunions, corns, untrimmed toenails or ingrown toenails can affect your balance and the way you walk.

Action:

- ✓ Wear comfortable, well-fitting, flat shoes and slippers with non-slip soles.
- ✓ Try shoes that fasten with Velcro.
- ✓ Tie your laces securely.
- ✓ Avoid wearing trainers with thick, soft soles.
- ✓ Replace worn slippers.
- ✓ Buy slippers that have proper backs, rather than slip-ons.
- ✓ See a chiropodist or podiatrist if you have foot problems or have difficulties cutting your own toenails. You can pick up a self-referral form from Department of Foot Health, Ground floor, St. Leonard's, Nuttal St. N1 or phone **020 7683 4046** to receive a form through the post.

Do you have any hazards in or around your home?

There are hazards inside and outside the home that may contribute to falls:

- uneven flooring
- spillages
- poor lighting
- trailing wires and long clothes
- loose or worn rugs and carpets
- steps and stairs with no hand rails
- loose-fitting handrails
- pets rubbing around your legs or lying in the way
- uneven and loose paving
- slippery leaves or icy pavements.

Sometimes the things you do can put you at risk of falling, such as:


- reaching into too low or too high cupboards
- trying to carry too many things at once
- standing on steps to change light-bulbs and curtains
- bending down to pick up letters, or weed the garden.

Most of these are easy to put right.

Action:

- ✓ Free Home Safety Checks with alterations/repairs and small aids fitting are available through Stop Falls Network **020 7254 3910** and Mobile Repair Service **0845 4500 410**.
- ✓ Mobile Repair Service **0845 4500 410** also carries out a wide range of repairs at low cost. They can help with: home maintenance • appliance repairs • plumbing • electrical • heating.
- ✓ Mobile Repair Service **0845 4500 410** also offers a QuickFix service for small jobs, such as: hanging curtains and changing lightbulbs.
- ✓ Hackney Social Services Access Team **020 8356 6262** should be contacted, if you need a wider range of adaptations in your home. An occupational therapist can assess your needs if you have difficulties with day to day tasks.
- ✓ Report loose and uneven pavements, or areas of poor lighting in public areas, to Hackney Highway Maintenance Service , Downham Road, N1 5TR, **020 8356 2897**.

Useful addresses at a glance:



Stop Falls Network
96-102 Springfield House
5 Tyssen Street
E8 2LZ
Tel: **020 7254 3910**
Fax: **020 7923 2748**

Therapy at Home Team
Homerton
Tel: **020 8510 8964**

Adult Community
Rehabilitation Team
St. Leonard's C&H PCT
Nuttal Street, N1
Tel: **020 7683 4382**

First Response Team
Homerton
Tel: **020 8510 7545**

Falls Clinic at the Homerton
Bryning Assessment &
Rehabilitation Unit
Homerton Row, E9
Tel: **020 8510 5050**

Access Team & Telecare
Tel: **020 8356 6262**

Foot Health Clinic
St. Leonard's
Tel: **020 7683 4046**

Mobile Repair Service
Caxton House, N19
Tel: **020 7272 3102**



The Sharp End
11 Richmond Rd, E8
Tel: **020 7923 8690**

Hoxton Health Group
Complementary Therapy
St Leonard's, N1
Tel: **020 7683 4289**

Age Well
Dalston Age Concern
Tel: **020 7241 5909**

Befriending Service
Community Resource Team
Tel: **020 7275 7092**

Hackney Incontinence Service
Tel: **020 7683 4396**

Eyes on Call mobile opticians –
free eye check
Tel: **0800 047 0425**

Alzheimers Society Helpline
Tel: **0845 300 0336**

National Osteoporosis Society
Tel: **01761 471771**
Helpline: **0845 450 0230**

The Stroke Project
Tel: **020 7017 2811**



Useful websites & e-mail:

www.stopfallsnetwork.org.uk

e-mail:
team@stopfallsnetwork.org.uk

www.mobilerepairservice.org.uk

www.thesharpend.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk



Preventing falls
amongst older
people



The contents of this booklet are based on research, the National Framework for Older People and NICE guidelines on falls prevention.

Stop Falls Network is lead by Mobile Repair Service Ltd, Charity reg. no: 801419 Address: Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, London, N19 3RQ

If you need this booklet in a different language or format, please contact Stop Falls Network