

# A Guide to Preventing Falls



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Assistive technology (AT) is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database [www.askned.com.au](http://www.askned.com.au) to view a range of products online.

The following falls prevention principles can assist you to access your environment in a safe manner. It is important to consider both personal behaviours as well as the physical environment.

## Physical environment

Consider your home environment and how safety can be improved inside and outside your home.

**Occupational Therapists can help to assess your home environment to increase your independence and safety.** They can provide specialised advice and assist you to find assistive technology options to suit your needs.

### Lighting

Ensure good lighting in and around the home. Night and sensor lights can be useful to assist with night visibility. Leaving a light on at night (such as a bedside lamp), is especially useful if you get up regularly during the night.

### Circulation space

Remove clutter and move furniture to ensure clear walkways and to reduce trip hazards. Store everyday objects in easy-to-reach places.

### Floors

Remove loose mats or rugs. Placing a non-slip mat under rugs or taping the ends down can reduce trip hazards. Applying slip resistant tapes or treatments to the floor and tiles can be a safer alternative especially in wet areas.

### Rails and stairs

Install handrails on both sides where there are steps. Install grab rails by the toilet, bath and shower and even in hallways if required. Always climb stairs using the rails for support. Use your strongest leg first followed by the weaker leg.

### Ramp and stair lifts

If stairs are becoming an issue, or cannot be used anymore, installation of a ramp or stair lift may be appropriate.

### Shower seats and bath transfer benches

The hot and wet shower environment can sometimes affect balance. Therefore, using a stool, chair or flip down seat can be useful. Ensure the legs of the chair have non-slip stoppers on them and that it is set at the correct height for you to be able to sit down and stand up safely. Transfer benches assist with getting into the bath safely and allow the user to remain seated for bathing. These are particularly useful if your shower is over your bath.

### Modifying the Shower

Install a level walk in shower, if possible, to reduce risk of falls. Consult a plumber when removing a hob as this will affect drainage in wet areas.

### Over toilet frames or raised toilet seats

These offer a higher surface when seated, which is easier for transfers. They can also come with support arms to assist with getting up.

### Outside

Look out for hazards. Put hoses, plants, and other items away from paths. Put down a slip resistant surface where needed.

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## Personal behaviours

### Health

Have regular checks with your G.P and inform them of any changes in your health e.g. vision, balance, muscle weakness and bladder control.

Review medications with your GP as some medications have side effects which could increase your risk of a fall.

Keep a healthy mind by engaging in regular social activities and hobbies.

Stay hydrated and eat regular meals from a wide variety of nutritious food to ensure that your body has sufficient energy.

### Exercise

Continue to exercise regularly to help maintain walking ability, balance and muscle strength. See a physiotherapist for recommendations on what exercises to do.

### Take your time

Sometimes, particularly when on multiple medications, getting up from a chair or seated position can cause postural hypotension or dizziness. Stand up slowly or consider getting a recliner lift chair to reduce the chance of dizziness.

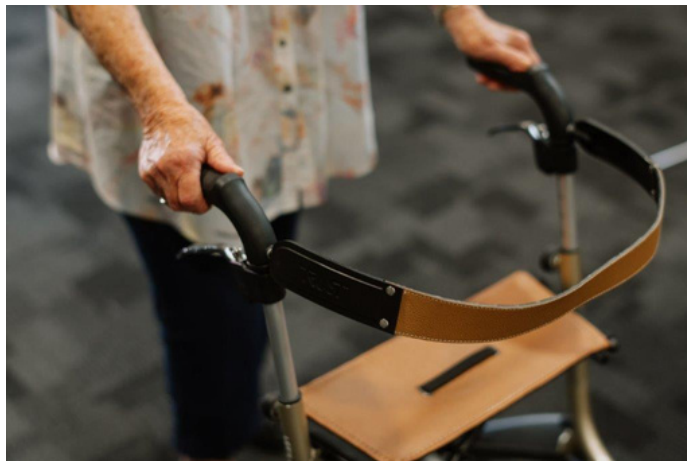
### Walking aids

Consider the use of a mobility aid, such as a walking stick or wheeled walker, if you are concerned about your balance. It is important to discuss this with a Physiotherapist.

### Footwear

Wearing appropriate shoes for the activity can make a significant difference in comfort and safety. Shoes with a non-slip sole and which are secured to the foot (laces, Velcro, straps) are best.

Low heeled shoes with a supportive inner sole are better for balance. Having your feet measured at the store or by a podiatrist will ensure you get the size and style of shoe right for you. Consult a podiatrist for further information on foot health.



For further information on falls prevention please visit:

Injury Matters - Stay on Your Feet: [Info for Over 60s](#) | [Injury Matters](#)

Find out more about a wide range of helpful products and devices on NED, our National Equipment Database at [askned.com.au](http://askned.com.au).

Need help with NED? Call our helpline on 1300 885 886.

Our experienced health professionals can also assist in providing strategies and advice on finding and using the right product for you.

Call us on 9381 0600 or complete an appointment request form via our website at [www.indigo.org.au](http://www.indigo.org.au)

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