

## Fear of falling

Having fears about falling in later life is very common and can be distressing. It can limit your life in so many ways, but help is available. Speak to your GP if this is affecting you.

## Keep active, keep moving

Evidence states the more active we are the more we can offset the effects of ageing. At any age it is important to avoid sitting for long periods of time. If you are frail and elderly it is important to break up your day up by moving around your home.

If you have concerns about your mobility and cannot access support in the community ask your doctor to refer you to a physiotherapist.

Some people enjoy going to the gym, whilst others do not. The key to keeping fit is to choose an activity that you enjoy such as gardening, housework, walking etc.

The fall-proof Barnsley Booklet is an easy to follow guide on how to assess your mobility and provides you with strength and balance exercises to increase physical activity, improve your confidence and reduce the chance of falling.

For an online copy visit [bansley.gov.uk/Fall-Proof](https://bansley.gov.uk/Fall-Proof)

## Further information and references

Further information can be accessed from:

- the council's Assistive Living Technology team at [bansley.gov.uk/able](https://bansley.gov.uk/able)
- the council's Disabled Facilities Grant at [bansley.gov.uk/able](https://bansley.gov.uk/able)
- visit [SouthWestYorkshire.NHS.uk](https://SouthWestYorkshire.NHS.uk)

For more information visit [bansley.gov.uk/fall-proof](https://bansley.gov.uk/fall-proof)



# Falls prevention

As we get older, it can be a little bit harder to do some of the things we take for granted every day.

Falling is not an inevitable part of getting older, there are lots of things we can do to make sure that we reduce our risk of falls and stay happy, healthy and independent. These risks should be taken very seriously because of the significant impact they can have on a person's health.

## Facts about falls:

- Falling is a serious and frequent occurrence for people aged 65 and over.
- Often these falls do not result in serious injury; however previous falls are one of the biggest risk factors for falling again.
- Guidelines recommend that if you have had a fall (with or without injury) you should have a review to establish any underlying risk factors and to prevent future falls.



#FallProofBarnsley

**NHS**

South West  
Yorkshire Partnership  
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Metropolitan Borough Council

## How to reduce your risk of falling

Think about your physical health. Have you fallen or tripped and lost your balance? If you notice any of these problems discuss them with your GP.

### Reduce risks in the home

One of the most important ways to reduce falls in the home and to stay independent is by removing clutter, trailing wires and rugs. Spills and slippery floors are also common culprits, so it's important to avoid these and investigate any problems. At night, it can be hard to see hazards; nightlights in corridors, for example, are a good way to make journeys around the home safer.

Our home tips:

- Make sure continually used items are stored in easy reach especially in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Grab rails and non-slip mats to prevent falls in bathrooms.
- Grab rails and safety rails can be fitted by back/front doors to improve safety when entering or leaving your home.
- It's important to keep paths free of leaves and moss and repair any uneven or cracked pathways.
- Two hand rails on stairs improve your safety and balance. Never store items on stairways and keep well lit.

### Independent living at home with Able

If you have a history of falling you should always have plan to summon help if needed. Barnsley Council's Able team can provide more information on alarm systems for your home. If using mobile phones have numbers on fast –dial and ensure they are charged and switched on. Able's Disabled Facilities Grants team can also help to provide adaptations for people with disabilities, including things such as stairlifts, ramps and showers.

### Properly fitting slippers and shoes

Although old slippers may be comfortable, they can become loose. To help older people to stay on their feet, properly fitted shoes and slippers can help reduce slips and trips. Private podiatry services can be accessed locally for minor issues (e.g. toenail cutting) or for more complex issues contact your GP for a referral.

### Ear checks and dizziness

Regular ear checks help to prevent falls due to dizzy spells and poor balance. GP's can make referrals specialists and if hearing loss affects everyday life, the council's sensory impairment service is here to help.

If you experience dizziness when moving from laying or sitting to standing, speak to your GP to get your blood pressure checked.

### Medication

Some medication can have side effects that make people more likely to fall, so people should have a yearly review. It's also a good idea to avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol as this can contribute to the development of osteoporosis.

### Poor vision

Poor vision can increase the risk of falls, even when wearing glasses, it's a good idea to visit an Optician for a sight test. Regular checks every two years can also help prevent sight loss by identifying problems early.

### Healthy well balanced diet

Maintain a healthy well balanced diet. This will help to prevent you becoming frail and will also help you keep your bones strong. As we get older our bones become more fragile – if we fall they are more likely to break (fracture). If you are falling regularly it is important you tell your GP and ask them to assess your bone health.

### Find out more about Age-friendly Barnsley

Did you know that Barnsley is a member of the UK network of Age-Friendly Communities? We're working with partners to make sure that everyone can enjoy a healthy and active life in our borough. Find out more about Age-friendly Barnsley.

