



Falls can have an adverse psychological impact, particularly on elderly people. It can result in a person losing confidence, becoming withdrawn or feeling like they have lost their independence.

## Top tips for staying safe on your feet

### Preventing falls at home

Many falls occur in the home but you can cut down the risk of falling at home by making some small changes:



<b>Bathroom</b>	Use non-slip mats and grab rails, and avoid using the sink for support. Wipe any wet floors immediately.
<b>Bedroom</b>	Keep a torch, your glasses and walking aid within easy reach and consider having a telephone installed.
<b>Kitchen</b>	Regularly used items should be stored at eye and hip level to avoid stooping and reaching.
<b>Living room</b>	Repair loose carpets and fix rug edges to the floor with double sided tape. Don't place fans and heaters in the middle of the room to avoid tripping over cables.
<b>Stairs</b>	Highlight the edges of each step in contrasting colours to make more visible. Repair damaged steps and add hand rails to either side of the steps. Keep clutter free.
<b>Garden</b>	Keep paths in good repair and free of moss and leaves.

### Maintain an active lifestyle

Stay as active as possible to maintain flexibility and strength - walking, light gardening and housework are all good forms of physical activity. Don't give up if you fall - reducing your activity can make you even more likely to fall. Find out what activities are available for older people in your area from the 'Get up and Go' magazine in local libraries and Edinburgh Leisure Centres. Remember to speak to your doctor before starting a new form of exercise.



### Telecare equipment

Telecare is a simple system that alerts your local authority's health and social care department to emergency situations, such as falls, so they can provide appropriate support. Contact City of Edinburgh Council's Assessment & Advice Service on 0131 529 7661 for an assessment. The equipment includes falls detector and wander alarms which operate around the clock and provide peace of mind for many carers.



### Wearing the right shoes can make a big difference

High cut and firm back to provide stability  
Adjustable fastening  
Breathable material (leather)  
Non-slip and firm sole (eg. rubber)  
Broad-toed shape as opposed to pointy to provide enough space and avoid rubbing



Shoes that don't fit right can cause serious foot problems and falls. Pick a shoe with a flat base to maximise support and ensure it has good support around the heel. Avoid slingbacks or sandals.



### Check your medication

Some medication may make you feel faint or dizzy and can affect your balance. You must discuss any of these symptoms with your GP, but don't stop taking the medicines before your appointment. Get your medication checked regularly.

### Eyesight and hearing can impact on your balance

Varifocal or bifocal lenses can make things seem nearer than they actually are. A build up of wax in your ears, or other conditions such as tinnitus and labyrinthitis can also affect your balance. Have eyes tested regularly and wear the correct glasses. Also have your hearing tested and wear hearing aids if required.