



## Physical Activity and Falls

### How to prevent falls by improving your fitness, strength and balance

An active life and exercise will help to improve strength, balance and prevent falls. Regular physical activity will help to preserve independent living and prevent/postpone age-related decline in strength/balance and co-ordination.

Additional benefits from regular exercise include increasing bone health/strength, which reduces the risk of injuries/fractures associated with a fall.

Things you can do today:

- You can join a class which specialises in preventing falls by improving strength and stability either in a swimming pool or in a community setting. Contact the Health and Wellbeing Service on **0208 630 7511** for more information.
- Speak to your physiotherapist regarding specific exercises tailored to your individual needs.
- Walk instead of driving to the shops
- Walk to talk to a neighbour instead of phoning
- Take the stairs rather than the lift
- Get off the bus a stop early and walk a little further home
- When visitors and family arrive, go for a walk with them
- Try to do some gardening when the weather permits
- Stand to cook your meals, fold washing and do ironing etc, rather than sit
- Try going for a walk regularly

Tips for walking:

- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing
- Start with a warm-up (eg marching on the spot for 2 mins)
- Relax your shoulders and swing arms gently
- Look ahead, not down
- With each step the heel lands first, then you push off on your toes
- Finish with a warm-down (eg marching on the spot for 2 mins)

***Always consult your GP or physiotherapist before starting any new exercise programme***

Information for patients

