Staying steady

Keep active and reduce your risk of falling

age UK
Love later life

AgeUKIG14

Information and advice you need to help you love later life.

We're Age UK and our goal is to enable older people to love later life.

We are passionate about affirming that your later years can be fulfilling years. Whether you're enjoying your later life or going through tough times, we're here to help you make the best of your life.

Our network includes Age Cymru, Age NI, Age Scotland, Age International and more than 160 local partners.

This information guide has been prepared by Age UK and contains general advice only, it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action and cannot be used as a substitute for professional medical advice.

Neither Age UK nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accepts any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age UK or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.

Date of publication: April 2016. © Age UK 2016
Next review date: October 2017

FSC Mixed Sources
Product group from well-managed forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SA-COC-001853
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

Contents

What this guide is about 2

Improving your fitness 3

Improving your strength and balance 4

Getting started...and keeping it up 6

Eyesight, hearing and balance 7

Combined sight and hearing problems 9

Managing your medicines 10

Looking after your feet 11

Keeping your bones healthy 14

Checking your home environment 16

Personal alarms 19

Tackling the fear of falling 20

Help from the NHS 21

Eight steps for staying steady 24

Useful organisations 26

What this guide is about

There are lots of simple things you can do to help you stay steady on your feet. Whether you're fit and active, have difficulty walking and getting around, or are worried about falling, this guide has information for you.

General health and wellbeing can make a big difference to your quality of life, whatever your age. Eating well and keeping fit are important. But there are also specific things you can do to improve your strength and balance, which are set out in this guide. Building and maintaining your strength and balance can help you carry on doing the things you enjoy.

As far as possible, the information given in this guide is applicable across the UK.

Key

This symbol indicates where information differs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

what next? This symbol indicates who to contact for the next steps you need to take.

Improving your fitness

As you get older, it's important to be as active as you can. Regular physical activity will help you maintain strength, flexibility and energy levels, so that you can carry on doing the things you enjoy and stay independent. Try taking a brisk walk, for example, or doing some gardening or dancing. If you need help moving about or don't usually take any exercise, doing any amount of activity is better than nothing. It's never too late to start and you can build up gradually.

The Government advises older people to aim to be active every day and to:

- limit or break up the time you spend sitting still
- build up to two-and-a-half hours per week of moderate intensity activities (those that get you breathing harder and your heart pumping faster) starting with bouts of ten minutes or more
- take part in activities that improve muscle strength at least twice a week – these are repetitive activities that focus on particular muscles (see pages 4–5)
- engage in some activities that improve balance and co-ordination twice a week – this is particularly important if you have had a fall or are afraid of falling (see pages 4–5).

Don't be discouraged if you aren't able to do this much activity to begin with; start slowly and you will soon notice the difference.

Improving your strength and balance

Activities that improve muscle strength in your legs, arms, back, shoulders and chest are particularly important as you get older. They can make it easier to get up out of a chair, and because they improve your posture, co-ordination and balance, they're an effective way to reduce the risk of falling. Moving about less can make you more prone to falling as your leg muscles become weaker.

The kinds of activities that will help your strength and balance are:

- using the stairs frequently, if it's safe for you to do so
- slowly and repeatedly rising to a standing position from a chair
- playing badminton, or taking part in ballroom dancing, yoga, or walking
- taking part in special strength and balance exercise classes, tai chi classes or exercise to music classes, such as those run by EXTEND (see page 27).

Exercises that improve your balance – often known as balance training – can be especially helpful if you have an illness that causes joint pain as they help overcome stiffness and unsteadiness. Best of all, they can make it easier to get out and about without needing to have someone with you.

For more information about recommended activities visit the NHS Choices website. In Wales, visit the NHS Direct Wales website; in Northern Ireland, visit the NI Direct website; and in Scotland, visit the NHS Inform website. See pages 28–29 for contact details for all of these organisations.

You can also find free exercise guides and videos online. For example, NHS Choices provides a series of downloadable exercise guides for older people (visit www.nhs.uk/tools/pages/exercises-for-older-people.aspx). Arthritis Care produces a free booklet called *Exercise and arthritis* (see page 27).

Age Cymru has two free guides called *Avoiding slips, trips and falls* and *Physical activity*. Contact Age Cymru for more information (see page 26).

Age Scotland and NHS Health Scotland have produced a free booklet called *Up and about*, which suggests positive steps to prevent falls. You can order this from Age Scotland or NHS Health Scotland (see pages 26 and 29).

Make sure that any exercise classes, or exercises described in guides or videos, are suitable for you and that you feel comfortable doing the exercises. If you're not sure, or if you have a heart condition or haven't been exercising regularly, speak to your GP first about what activities may best suit you. See 'Help from the NHS' (page 21).

what next?

Ask for information about strength and balance classes in your area at your leisure centre, library, health centre or GP practice. Contact your local Age UK to see if it runs classes too (see page 26).

Getting started... and keeping it up

Once you know what kind of physical activities are right for you, start gently and build up gradually. Aim to do a little bit more every day.

Most people find being more active easier than they expected – and more enjoyable. The more you enjoy an activity, the easier it is to keep it up, and that's when you'll really reap the benefits. You may be surprised by how much you can achieve.

Start by doing a balance-training exercise and building up from 10 to 15 repetitions. A simple balance exercise is a heel raise, where you rise slowly onto your toes and back down again. You can hold on to the back of a chair or the wall, or have someone supporting you, if you need to.

Exercises that make your legs stronger will help prevent falls, so don't give up on your physical activities because you've had a fall or are afraid of falling.

If you live in a care home and need help to move about, you could ask about starting an activities programme with the help of your activities co-ordinator. It should take into account any medical conditions and build on what you can already do.

Remember that the day after you have done some exercises, your muscles may feel a bit stiff. This is normal and shows you are benefiting from the activity.

You should always begin any exercise with a warm-up to prepare your body, and finish with cool-down exercises. If you experience chest pain or feel faint, stop exercising immediately and contact your GP.

Eyesight, hearing and balance

Vision and hearing play a vital role in balance and movement.

Eyecare

Glasses fitted with bifocal or varifocal lenses can make objects and surfaces appear closer than they really are. This could cause you to trip or lose your balance, particularly on stairs. Ask your optician for advice.

Get your eyes checked and your glasses prescription reviewed as often as your optician advises, and at least every two years. Have a regular eye test even if you think your sight is fine, as opticians can detect eye conditions at an early stage. NHS eye tests are free once you reach the age of 60, and if you live in Scotland they're free for everyone.

If you care for someone who is unable to recognise or communicate sight problems, for example someone with dementia, remember to arrange regular eye tests for them. You can ask the optician about using special non-verbal tests. Encourage the person to wear glasses if they need them and make sure the lenses are cleaned frequently.

If you receive certain benefits, such as Income Support, the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit or Universal Credit, you could be entitled to help with the cost of new glasses. If you're not eligible for these benefits but are on a low income, you may be entitled to help through the NHS Low Income Scheme (see page 29). See our free factsheet *Help with health costs*. In Wales, see Age Cymru's free factsheet *Help with health costs in Wales*.

If you or anyone you care for find it difficult to get to the optician for health reasons, look for an optician who offers a home visits service. You can search for opticians near you on the NHS Choices website (see page 28).

In Wales, you can search for opticians, including those who offer home visits, on the NHS Direct Wales website (see page 28). In Scotland, healthcare is organised through local health boards. Call NHS Inform for more information (see page 29). In Northern Ireland, visit the NI Direct website (see page 28).

Contact the RNIB for information about eye problems (see page 29).

Hearing problems

The risk of hearing loss increases as you get older, but people often wait several years after first noticing that their hearing is deteriorating before raising this with their GP. However, it is important to talk to your GP as soon as you notice that your hearing has deteriorated because if you have a problem with your ears it can affect your balance. If there's no medical reason for any issues, such as a build-up of wax or an ear infection, you can be referred for a hearing test and, if necessary, prescribed an NHS digital hearing aid in one or both ears.

If you care for someone who has been prescribed a hearing aid make sure they wear it regularly as advised.

Combined sight and hearing problems

Particular difficulties can be caused when hearing affects your balance and your sight problems can't be corrected by wearing glasses.

Your local council's sensory team can offer help and support. Following an assessment, their specialist staff will explain the help available. They may also offer mobility training, including giving advice on moving around at home and outdoors, and on how to keep as fit and active as you can.

what next?

Contact your local adult social services department (social work department in Scotland) to explain how your vision and hearing difficulties, or both, are affecting your daily life and ask for an assessment. Contact Sense (see page 29) for advice if you have problems with both your sight and hearing.

Managing your medicines

Certain medicines, or illnesses such as poorly controlled diabetes, can make you feel faint or dizzy. Let your GP or pharmacist know if you ever feel like this – they may need to check the dose or look at alternative medicines.

If you take medication, your GP should review your prescription regularly in case you no longer need it or the dose needs to be changed.

Alcohol can interact with some medicines and can affect your balance too. Check the leaflet that comes with your medicine to see if drinking alcohol would make you less alert or drowsy.

what next?

If you have any concerns about your medicines, speak to your GP or pharmacist.

If you ever feel faint or dizzy, **talk to your GP or pharmacist**.

Looking after your feet

Problems with your feet can stop you getting out and about. They can also affect your balance and increase the risk of falling. So it's important to report problems such as foot pain or decreased sensation in your feet promptly to your GP or practice nurse. Keep your toenails short. If you're finding it difficult to cut them yourself, try asking a friend or family member for help. Or contact your local Age UK to find out whether it offers a toenail-cutting service (there may be a charge).

If you have arthritis, you may find that trainers or well-cushioned shoes are more comfortable than ordinary shoes and offer welcome support. But make sure the soles aren't too thick, as you could feel a little unsteady if you can't feel the floor beneath your feet. Ask your GP or chiropodist for advice.

These footwear tips can help you feel more confident on your feet.

- Wear shoes that fit well. High-sided shoes with low heels and thin soles with a good grip are a good choice. Make sure they're firmly secured with laces or velcro.
- Avoid wearing sandals and shoes with high heels.
- Wear slippers that have a good grip and that fasten and stay on properly – make sure they aren't loose or worn out, as this may cause you to trip.
- Make sure that your trousers or skirts don't trail on the ground.
- Always wear shoes or slippers, and never walk indoors in bare feet, socks or tights.

My story

Joining a seated-exercise programme has improved Mary's fitness and balance.

Mary is 82 years old and lives in sheltered accommodation.

'I had polio when I was a youngster and because of this my balance was never any good. It's got worse as I've got older and then recently I had a bad fall in my flat. I tripped over my hearth rug and gashed my head on the fireplace. I needed stitches and looked a real picture with two black eyes. It knocked me for six. I became very wary about going out and doing jobs around the house.

'Then Alison, the warden, asked me if I wanted to join the weekly seated-exercise programme run by my local Age UK in our communal lounge. I knew about it but thought that I was too old for exercising and I like to keep myself to myself. But Alison persuaded me.

'The first session was quite tiring but as we went along I began to feel better. My general fitness, strength and balance have all improved and I am less worried about falling over.

'It's really good fun – not what I expected. Everyone has a good natter afterwards and a cup of tea. It's more of a club than an exercise class. I now speak to people I've seen around for years but never spoke to before, so it's been good in lots of ways.

'One special bonus was meeting Mary, who has become a real friend. She drives and so we go on outings. This has made a big difference to me. I look forward to things again, which I haven't done for a while.'

‘I **look forward** to things again, which I haven’t done **for a while**.’

Keeping your bones healthy

The strength of your bones makes a big difference to the effect of a fall. Regular weight-bearing exercise helps keep bones strong by forcing the bones in the lower half of your body to bear your full weight each time you move. Activities such as brisk walking, bowls and tennis are weight-bearing, but swimming is not.

Vitamin D and calcium

You can help keep your bones strong by eating a diet rich in calcium and making sure that you get enough vitamin D. Calcium makes our bones strong and we need vitamin D to help our bodies absorb it. Your body makes vitamin D mainly when your skin is exposed to sunshine. For this reason, some direct exposure to the sun is necessary, although it's important not to let your skin redden or burn. From March to October, try to go out every day without sunscreen for short periods (around ten minutes) either once or twice a day depending on how dark your skin colour is. Remember to make sure that you are actually outside – your body can't make vitamin D from sunshine coming through closed windows.

There are some food sources of vitamin D – salmon, sardines, other oily fish, eggs and fortified spreads – but sunshine is the main source.

Good sources of calcium are dairy foods, fortified soya products and canned fish (with bones). It is also found in fortified breakfast cereals, white bread, pulses and nuts such as almonds.

The Government recommends that certain groups of the population, including people aged 65 and over, take ten micrograms (10µg) of vitamin D daily as a supplement. If you think you could be at risk of not getting enough vitamin D, particularly if you are housebound, have darker skin, or cover your skin for cultural reasons, raise this with your GP. Always speak to your GP before starting to take a vitamin D supplement or over-the-counter medicine daily.

Osteoporosis

If a minor bump or fall results in a broken bone, this could be because you have a condition called osteoporosis. This causes bones to become fragile and break more easily.

Your risk of osteoporosis is increased by:

- a history of osteoporosis in your close family
- your age – the older you are, the more likely you are to develop this condition
- heavy drinking, smoking and lack of exercise
- some medications, such as long-term use of corticosteroid medications, anti-epileptic drugs and some cancer treatments
- an early menopause or hysterectomy with removal of the ovaries for women
- low levels of testosterone following surgery for some types of cancer for men.

what next?

For more information about osteoporosis, contact the National Osteoporosis Society (see page 28). Speak to your GP if you think you could be at risk of osteoporosis, particularly if either of your parents ever broke a hip.

Checking your home environment

Keeping an eye out for things that could cause you to slip, trip or fall can make your home a safer place to live in. Some of these points may seem obvious, but it's surprising how often they can be overlooked – so it's worth checking them.

- Do you have good lighting, particularly on the stairs?
- Do you have a nightlight in the bedroom or a torch by the bed in case you need to get up in the night?
- Are your floors clear of trailing flexes, wrinkled or fraying carpets, or anything else that you might trip or slip on?
- Does your pet wear a collar with a bell on? Pets are wonderful companions, but they can get under your feet. Be aware of where they are when you're moving about.
- Are your stairs and steps free of clutter?
- Do you have handrails on both sides of your stairs?
- Do you have a non-slip mat in the bath and a fitted handrail?
- Do you have non-slip mats under rugs, in the kitchen, on stair landings and next to the bath?
- Do you always use a stepladder to reach high places? Always ask someone to help if you're using a ladder and never stand on a chair.
- Do you keep your garden paths clear and free from moss? Watch out for uneven paths and slippery surfaces as well. Carefully placed handrails and posts can be helpful if you need them.

Suggestions for keeping safe at home

- Avoid tasks such as cleaning windows or changing a light bulb if they make you feel dizzy or light-headed.
- Mop up any spills straight away so they won't cause you to slip.
- Move your head slowly to avoid dizziness if you have arthritis in your spine or neck.
- Keep warm. Cold muscles don't work as well as warm ones and may lead to accidents and injuries.
- Take your time getting up, and then stand still for a moment to steady yourself before walking. Sitting or standing up too quickly can make you feel light-headed. Tensing your arms and legs a few times before getting up from a chair, or sitting on the side of the bed for a few minutes before standing up, can be helpful.
- Speak to your GP if you need to use furniture for support when moving around your home (see 'Help from the NHS', page 21).

Making small adjustments in your daily life doesn't mean that you have to limit your activities. In fact, it can give you greater freedom and confidence.

Getting a home safety check

Contact your local council to find out if it offers home safety checks or a handyperson scheme. If you live in England, some local Age UKs offer handyperson schemes in some areas to older people who meet certain criteria, to assist with small repairs and reduce risks in the home. Contact Age UK Advice (see page 26) for more information. In Wales, contact Age Cymru to find out if there's a handyperson or HandyVan scheme in your area (see page 26). In Scotland, your local Care and Repair Scotland may be able to help (see page 28). In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI to check the availability of local Handyperson schemes (see page 26).

Your local home improvement agency may also be able to offer a home safety check. To find details of your local agency, contact the umbrella organisation for your nation (see page 28).

what next?

For more information about aids and adaptations that can make your home safer and advice on how to prevent accidents, see our free guides *Adapting your home* and *Home safety checker*.

Keeping an eye out for things that could cause you to slip, trip or fall can make your home a safer place to live in.

Personal alarms

Personal alarms allow you to call for help if you need it, for example if you're unwell or have a fall and can't reach a telephone. You contact a 24-hour response centre by pressing a button on a pendant or wristband that you wear all the time. Staff at the emergency response centre will then call either your chosen contact person – a neighbour, relative or friend – or, if the situation is more urgent, the emergency services.

Your local council may run a personal alarm scheme. You can search based on your postcode by visiting www.gov.uk/apply-for-community-alarm. Age UK also provides Personal Alarms.* For more information about Age UK Personal Alarms and the likely costs, call 0800 011 3846. In Northern Ireland, the Age NI Personal Alarm** service is available. Call 0808 100 4545 for more information.

Telecare

If you've had a fall and are concerned about falling again, simple technology known as telecare can give you support. For example, a bed or chair sensor can detect if you've got up but haven't returned within a set time, and automatically sends an alert to a carer or call centre in case you've fallen.

Speak to your local adult social services department to find out what your options are. See our free guide *Adapting your home* for more information about telecare or go to www.ageuk.org.uk/telecare

*Personal Alarms are provided by Aid-Call Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for Consumer Credit. Financial Services Register number 707455.

Age UK Personal Alarms is a product name of, and is provided by, Aid-Call Limited, registered in England and Wales number 01488490. Registered address Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. VAT number 710 3843 66. Aid-Call Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 06825798) and donates its net profits to Age UK. Age UK is a registered trademark. The use and name of the logo 'Age UK' is done under licence agreement between Age UK and Aid-Call Limited.

**Age NI Personal Alarm is a product name of, and supplied by, Aid Call Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK (registered charity number 1128267). Registered address Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA.

Tackling the fear of falling

We all stumble or trip sometimes. But fear of falling can start to become a serious worry and can be quite difficult to deal with if not addressed quickly.

The anxiety may stem from having had a fall already, but it can prey on your mind, even if you haven't fallen before. This sometimes happens after a period of illness, which can leave you feeling weak and a bit unsure of yourself. Consequently you may become more cautious, limit what you're willing to do, and lose confidence in carrying out daily tasks and activities. You may even stop wanting to go out on your own. Worrying in this way isn't unusual, but it can make you anxious, isolated or depressed.

Fears about losing your independence can also make you reluctant to seek help. Perhaps you're worried that people will think you're unable to look after yourself properly, or that they'll suggest you move into a care home.

It's important not to let such thoughts stop you from taking positive steps to get help. A good falls prevention service will enable you to live as independent and enjoyable a life as possible. This is the case whether you've had a fall already or are concerned about falling and want to know more about how to prevent it.

Talk to your GP. With their help, or the help of your local falls prevention service, you can work out how to get your confidence back, improve your balance and strength, and reduce your risk of falling.

Help from the NHS

You should tell your GP if you've had a fall or start feeling unsteady, even if you feel fine otherwise. There could be many reasons for this and, equally, many different ways to help you feel confident again. Your GP can check your balance and walking to see if they can be improved. With your agreement, your GP can also refer you for a falls risk assessment. You may be referred to the falls prevention service for your assessment, which will be carried out by healthcare professionals with specialist training and experience.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- listen to what you think the problem could be
- try to work out what's making you more likely to fall
- agree an individual action plan with you to reduce your risk of falling.

This could include strength and balance exercises, having your home checked for hazards, investigating any continence problems you have to make sure you don't need to rush to the toilet, checking your eyesight and the medicines you take, and showing you how to get up safely if you fall. The plan should be designed to suit your individual needs and be regularly reviewed so that the healthcare professionals can see how you're getting on.

what next?

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has information on its website, which covers how you can prevent a fall and what treatment may be offered if you have fallen. Visit www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg161/informationforpublic

My story

Removing hazards from his home and joining a light exercise group has made Stan more confident.

Stan has been a farmer all his life, so when a combination of illness and arthritis affected his mobility, he found it difficult to cope.

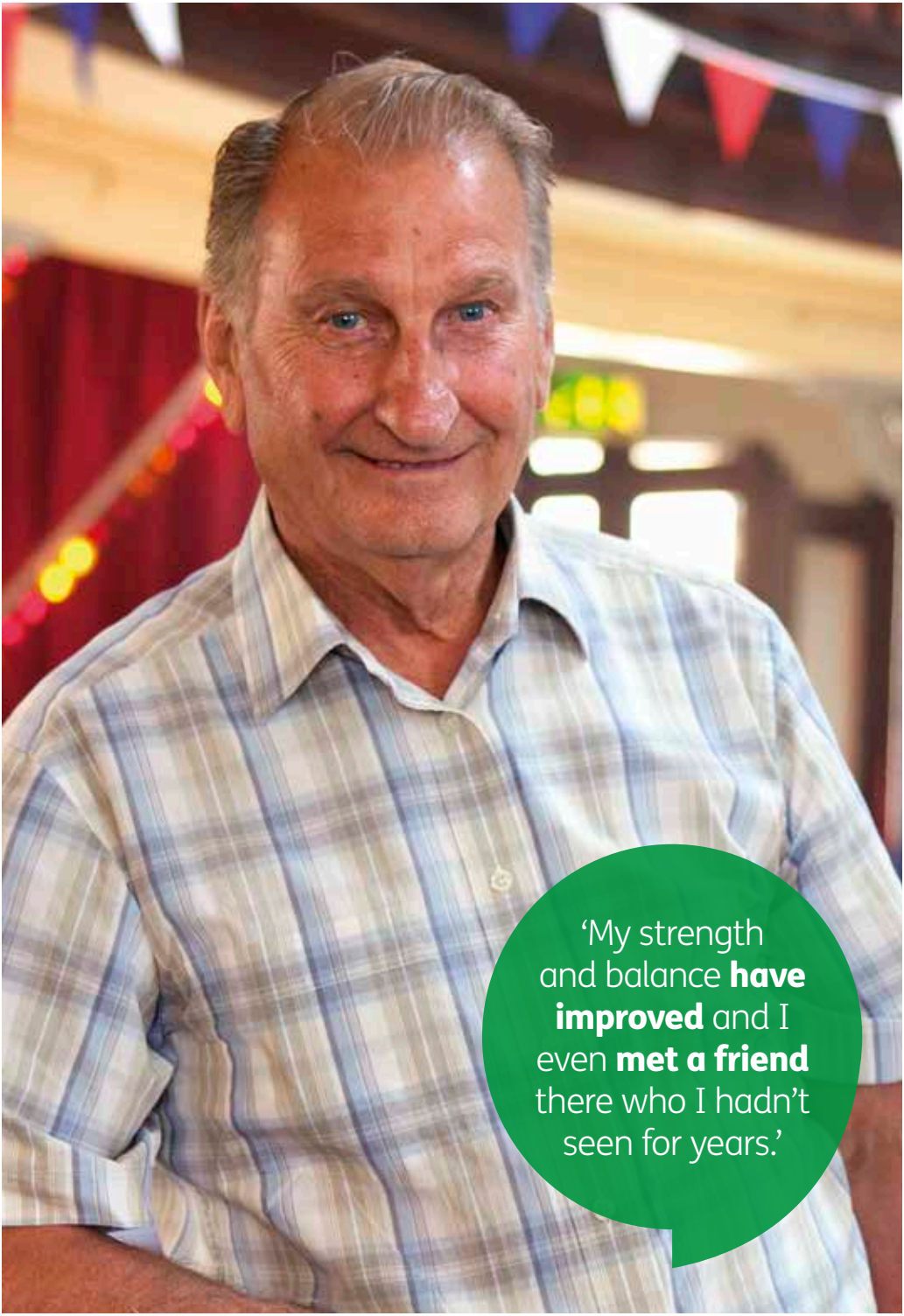
'Having been a farmer, I've always been a fit man and proud of it. But I recently developed breathing difficulties and needed several spells in hospital. I've got the lung condition COPD. Also, arthritis in my knees has caused me to fall a few times.

'My wife worries about me falling. I'm a fairly big man so she can't pick me up. So she called the local Age UK to see if they could help. A lady came round and asked us some questions, then she looked around and pointed out some hazards that she'd spotted straight away.

'I was a bit surprised, but she was right – these were places I'd fallen before. She'd noticed other hazards too, like folded rugs and trailing wires. She put us in touch with a handyperson scheme to get the hazards sorted and my son, who lives away, came and helped too.

'She also told us about a COPD light-exercise group. I wasn't sure, but my wife insisted I try it. I'm not good at mixing and don't like crowds, but now I look forward to going. My strength and balance have improved and I even met a friend there who I hadn't seen for years.

'I haven't fallen again or been in hospital. I know that my condition will not get better, but I feel happier and more confident and so does my wife. And I'm five pounds lighter!'



‘My strength and balance **have improved** and I even **met a friend** there who I hadn’t seen for years.’

Eight steps for staying steady

Use this handy checklist as a guide to the eight key things you can do to stay steady on your feet.

1 EXERCISE REGULARLY

Focus on activities that challenge your balance and strengthen your legs and upper body, like gardening, dancing or tai chi (see pages 3–6).

2 CHECK YOUR EYES AND HEARING

Go for regular sight tests and report difficulties you have with hearing in order to identify problems affecting your balance (see pages 7–9).

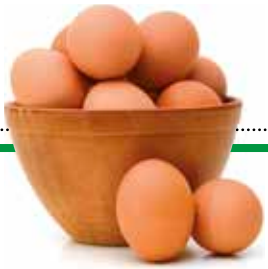
3 LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET

Wear well-fitted shoes and slippers, and report any foot problems to your GP or chiropodist (see page 11).

4 ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICINES

Certain medicines can make you feel faint or affect your balance. Let your GP or pharmacist know if you ever feel like this (see page 10).

5 GET ENOUGH VITAMIN D



Vitamin D is essential for keeping bones strong – the best source is sunshine (see pages 14–15).

6 EAT A DIET RICH IN CALCIUM

Calcium also helps to keep your bones strong. Good sources are dairy foods, fortified soya products and canned fish with bones (see page 14).

7 CHECK FOR HOME HAZARDS

Make sure your home is hazard-free and well lit (see pages 16–18).

8 VISIT YOUR GP

If you've had a fall or are worried about falling, tell your GP. There are many ways to help you feel confident again (see pages 20–21).

Useful organisations

Age UK
We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65
Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.
www.ageuk.org.uk

Call Age UK Advice to find out whether there is a local Age UK near you, and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets.

In Wales, contact
Age Cymru: 0800 022 3444
www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact
Age NI: 0808 808 7575
www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact **Age Scotland** by calling
Silver Line Scotland: 0800 470 8090 (This is a partnership between The Silver Line and Age Scotland)
www.agescotland.org.uk

The evidence sources used to create this guide are available on request. Contact **resources@ageuk.org.uk**

In Wales, Age Cymru runs two physical activity programmes to encourage older people to become more active – Nordic Walking, and Low Impact Functional Training (LIFT), where trained volunteers deliver low-level activities and games to older people. For more information, call 029 2043 1555 or visit the Age Cymru website.

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland to find out whether they know of any special physical activity sessions.

Action on Hearing Loss

Provides advice and support through an information line, tinnitus helpline and range of factsheets.

Tel: 0808 808 0123
Textphone: 0808 808 9000
Tinnitus enquiries: 0808 808 6666
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Arthritis Care

Provides information and support to people with arthritis.

Tel: 0808 800 4050
www.arthritiscare.org.uk

EXTEND

Arranges community-based exercise classes for older people and trains teachers to run exercise classes. Regional contacts are listed on the website.

Tel: 01582 832 760
www.extend.org.uk

Home improvement agencies

Help older homeowners and private tenants organise repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes.

In England, contact **Foundations**
Tel: 0300 124 0315
Email: info@foundations.uk.com
www.foundations.uk.com

In Scotland, contact **Care and Repair Scotland**
Tel: 0141 221 9879
www.careandrepairscotland.co.uk

In Wales, contact **Care & Repair Cymru**
Tel: 0300 111 3333
www.careandrepair.org.uk

National Osteoporosis Society

Offers information and support on prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Tel: 0808 800 0035
www.nos.org.uk

NHS Choices

A comprehensive information service to help you take control of your healthcare; the website includes an A–Z health dictionary and symptom checker.

www.nhs.uk

In Wales, contact **NHS Direct Wales**
Tel: 0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact **NI Direct**
www.nidirect.gov.uk

In Scotland, contact **NHS Inform**
Tel: 0800 224 488
www.nhsinform.co.uk

NHS Health Scotland
Provides information to promote healthy living for people in Scotland and works closely with local health boards.

www.healthscotland.com

NHS Low Income Scheme
Provides full or partial help with health costs if you're on a low income.

Tel: 0300 330 1343
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1125.aspx

RNIB
Provides information and support for blindness and visual impairment.

Tel: 0303 123 9999
www.rnib.org.uk

In Wales, contact **RNIB Cymru**
Tel: 029 2082 8500
www.rnib.org.uk/wales

In Scotland, contact **RNIB Scotland**
Tel: 0131 652 3140
www.rnib.org.uk/scotland

Sense
Supports and campaigns for people who are deafblind. The head office can put you in touch with the appropriate regional office.

Tel/textphone: 0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972
www.sense.org.uk

Can you help Age UK?

Please complete the donation form below with a gift of whatever you can afford and return to: Age UK, Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, LONDON WC1H 9NA. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 169 87 87 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/donate. If you prefer, you can donate directly to one of our national or local partners. Thank you.

Personal details

Title:	Initials:	Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:	Email:

By providing your email address and/or mobile number you are agreeing to us contacting you in these ways. You may contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications.

Your gift

I would like to make a gift of: £

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age UK

Card payment

I wish to pay by (please tick) ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF CharityCard ☐ Maestro ☐ American Express

(Maestro only)

Signature **X**

Expiry date / Issue no. (Maestro only)

Gift aid declaration

☐ (please tick) Yes, I want Age UK and its partner organisations* to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as gift aid donations. I confirm I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the tax year. Date: __/__/__ (please complete). *Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI

age UK
Love later life

The Age UK Group may use the information you have supplied to tell you about our other charitable services or to ask you to support our work. Age UK (registered charity no 1128267) comprises the Charity, its group of companies and national partners (Age Cymru, Age Scotland & Age NI). If you would prefer not to hear from us do let us know by phoning 0800 107 8977 or by writing to us at our registered address. The registered address is Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA.

MXAQ16CA01C010

Supporting the work of Age UK

Age UK aims to enable all older people to love later life. We provide vital services, support, information and advice to thousands of older people across the UK.

In order to offer free information guides like this one, Age UK relies on the generosity of its supporters. If you would like to help us, here are a few ways you could get involved:

1 Make a donation

To make a donation to Age UK, simply complete the enclosed donation form, call us on **0800 169 8787** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved**

2 Donate items to our shops

By donating an unwanted item to one of our shops, you can help generate vital funds to support our work. To find your nearest Age UK shop, visit **www.ageuk.org.uk** and enter your postcode into the 'What does Age UK do in your area?' search function. Alternatively, call us on **0800 169 8787**

3 Leave a gift in your will

Nearly half the money we receive from supporters come from gifts left in wills. To find out more about how you could help in this way, please call the Age UK legacy team on **020 3033 1421** or email **legacies@ageuk.org.uk**

Thank you!

What should I do now?

For more information on the issues covered in this guide, or to order any of our publications, please call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/healthandwellbeing**

Our publications are also available in large print and audio formats.

Health & care information you can trust

The Information Standard Certified Member

The Age UK Group offers a wide range of products and services specially designed for people in later life. For more information, please call **0800 169 18 19**.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the box below, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 15 15**.

Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). Registered address: Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. Age UK and its subsidiary companies and charities form the Age UK Group, dedicated to helping more people love later life. ID203155 04/16