

Staying steady

Improving your strength
and balance

Health &
wellbeing



***Age UK is the new force combining
Age Concern and Help the Aged.***

***With almost 120 years of combined
history to draw on, we are bringing
together our talents, services
and solutions to do more to enrich
the lives of people in later life.***

***The Age UK family includes Age Cymru,
Age NI and Age Scotland. There are
also more than 160 local Age UKs.***

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Please seek medical advice for guidance on appropriate exercise levels and precautions. It is particularly important to seek such advice if you suffer from an ongoing medical condition that may be affected by exercise. Always start any exercise programme slowly, and never force or strain. If you feel any soreness, strain, discomfort, distress or other symptoms, stop the exercise and seek medical advice immediately.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is correct. However, things do change, so it is always a good idea to seek expert advice on your personal situation.

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Introduction

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

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 that you can do to improve your strength and balance, which are set out in this guide.

Throughout this guide you will find suggestions for organisations that can offer further information and advice about your options. Their contact details can be found in the 'Useful organisations' section (see pages 26–34). Contact details for organisations near you can usually be found in your local phone book. If you have difficulty finding them, your local Age UK should be able to help (see page 26).

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.



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

Improving your fitness, strength and balance

Keeping active helps you maintain strength, flexibility and energy levels, so you can carry on doing the things you enjoy and stay independent. There are many good ways to keep fit and healthy without even realising that you're doing it, for example, walking, gardening or dancing. If you don't usually do any exercise, any amount of activity is better than nothing – even taking regular brisk walks in the garden or around the block.

The Government recommends that you try to build up to two-and-a-half hours of moderate aerobic activity (exercise that gets you breathing harder and your heart pumping faster) and two sessions of muscle-strengthening activities each week if you can.

Muscle-strengthening activities are repetitive activities that strengthen muscles throughout your body by using your body weight or working against a resistance. This might be:

- playing badminton, ballroom dancing or doing yoga
- carrying a shopping bag
- repeatedly pushing against a wall
- attending a special chair-based exercise class
- working with resistance bands.

For more information about recommended activities, including aerobic activities, visit the NHS Choices website (see page 32). In Wales, visit the NHS Direct Wales website and in Scotland, visit the NHS Inform website (see page 32).



Balance training

Activities that improve muscle strength and balance – often known as balance training – 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.

Balance training can be especially helpful if you have an illness that causes joint pain as it helps overcome stiffness and unsteadiness. Best of all, it can make it easier to get out and about without needing to have someone with you.

You can fit balance training into your day by doing simple exercises at home, as and when it suits you. Or you may prefer to join a group at a local centre where you'll have a professional to advise and encourage you, plus the opportunity to meet other group members.

To find out about balance-training classes in your area, ask at your local Age UK, leisure centre, library, health centre, or GP practice. Age UK has an exercise DVD and a table-top book of exercises that aim to help improve your balance (see page 27). You can also check to see if there's a Fit as a Fiddle class in your area (see page 27).

what next?

Speak to your GP about how you can exercise safely, especially if you have a heart condition or haven't been exercising regularly. See 'Help from the NHS' (page 22).

Activities that improve muscle strength and balance – often known as balance training – are particularly important as you get older.



Getting started... and keeping it up

Once you get the go-ahead from your GP and know what kind of exercises are right for you, you should start gently and build up slowly.

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. It's important to keep trying to progress, for example, by doing a balance-training exercise for 30 seconds and building it up to 40 seconds the next time. Practice makes perfect and it's important to maintain a good fitness level, so you should do whatever you're able to do on a regular basis.

Don't give up on exercising just because you've had a fall or are afraid of falling. In fact, reducing your physical activity can actually make you more prone to falling.

Of course, you'll benefit most from an exercise programme specifically designed to meet your needs. This is particularly important if you've had a fall or are at all unsteady on your feet. Many care homes arrange exercise classes and activities tailored to meet the varied needs of their residents.

Joining a dance class, using weights and doing yoga can all have similar benefits to doing balance-training exercises.

what next?

Remember, 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, so they might cause you to trip or lose your balance, particularly on stairs. If you've had problems with these glasses or are considering them, ask your optician for advice.

It's recommended that you have your eyes checked and your glasses prescription reviewed at least every two years, or every year if you're over 70. NHS eye tests are free once you reach the age of 60, and if you live in Scotland they are free for everyone.



If you receive certain benefits, such as Income Support or the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit, you may also be entitled to help with the full 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 32).

If you live in England and find it difficult to get to the optician for health reasons, your Primary Care Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) will have a list of local opticians who offer home visits. Call NHS Direct for details of PCT PALS that can help (see page 32).

- i** In Wales, contact NHS Direct Wales for details of opticians who can offer home visits (see page 32). There is also a Primary Eyecare Acute Referral Scheme (PEARS) in Wales. This was introduced as part of the Welsh Government's Welsh Eye Care Initiative (WECI) and aims to give people who experience a sudden eye problem a prompt, free, eye-health assessment without needing to be referred by their GP. You can have a PEARS eye test at any PEARS-registered optometrist. For details of local optometrists taking part in the scheme, call NHS Direct Wales (see page 32).
- i** In Scotland, healthcare is organised through local health boards. Call NHS Inform for more information on local services (see page 32). In Northern Ireland, search for local health services via the NI Direct website (see page 32).

If you have sight loss, you can contact the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for information or call the helpline (see page 33).

See our free guide *Caring for your eyes* to find out more about looking after your eyes. For more information about help with the cost of glasses and the Low Income Scheme, see our free factsheet *Help with health costs*. For more information, contact the NHS Low Income Scheme (see page 32).

what next?

Check when your next sight test is due. If you care for someone who is unable to recognise or communicate sight problems, for example, someone with dementia, remember to arrange for regular eye tests – you can ask the optician about using special non-verbal tests. Encourage the person to wear glasses if they need them.

Hearing problems

Hearing loss is more likely as you get older, but people often wait several years before raising hearing problems with their GP. If you have a problem with your ears, it can severely 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.

what next?


If hearing problems are affecting your day-to-day or social life, make an appointment to see your GP. Action on Hearing Loss offers a free phone-based or online hearing check (see page 28).

If you have a problem with your ears, it can severely affect your balance.



Combined sight and hearing problems

Hearing loss can affect your balance and this can be even harder to manage if you have sight problems that can't be corrected by wearing glasses. Your local authority will have a sensory team that can offer help and support. Following an assessment, their specialist staff will explain the help available to make daily tasks easier. They can also offer mobility training, including advice on moving around at home and outdoors, and how to keep as fit and active as you can.

-  Contact your local social services department (social work department in Scotland) to explain how your vision or hearing difficulties or both are affecting your daily life and ask for an assessment.

what next?

Contact Sense (see page 34) or Deafblind UK (see page 29) for information and advice if you have problems with both your sight and hearing.

Looking after your feet

Looking after your feet is important, as certain problems can affect your balance and stop you getting out and about. Always report any problems with your feet to your GP or practice nurse.

Well-fitting shoes are important, too. High-sided shoes with low heels and thin soles with a good grip can help if you feel unsteady.

If you have arthritis, you may find that trainers or similar, well-cushioned shoes are more comfortable and offer welcome support. But if the soles are too thick, you may not be able to feel contact with the floor so well, and this could make you feel a little unsteady. Ask your GP or chiropodist for advice.

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

- Wear slippers that have 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.
- Avoid wearing sandals and shoes with high heels.
- Make sure that your trousers or skirts don't trail on the ground.
- Always wear shoes or slippers, and don't walk indoors in bare feet, socks or tights.

‘My general fitness, strength and balance have all improved and I am less worried about falling over.’



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, 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.’



Managing your medicines


Certain medicines can make you feel faint or affect your balance. Let your GP know if you ever feel like this after taking medication – they may want to change the dose or look at alternatives.

If you take several medicines, your GP should review them regularly, in case you no longer need them or the dose needs to be changed.

what next?

If you have any questions about your medicines or have difficulty taking them as prescribed, you can have an informal chat with your pharmacist in person or on the phone, or make an appointment with them to have a more formal Medicine Use Review (MUR).

If you take several medicines, your GP should review them regularly.



Osteoporosis

If a minor bump or fall results in a broken bone, then it could be because of 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
- heavy drinking, smoking and lack of exercise
- long-term use of corticosteroid medication
- in women, an early menopause or hysterectomy with removal of the ovaries
- in men, low levels of testosterone following surgery for some types of cancer.

The health of your bones makes a big difference to the effect of a fall. You can help keep your bones strong by eating a diet rich in calcium and ensuring you generate enough vitamin D. You can do this by going outside regularly during the summer months. Although it is essential to protect your skin from burning, some exposure to the sun without sunscreen is important. It should be enough to go out for 10–15 minutes in the middle of the day.

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

The Government recommends extra vitamin D for certain groups of the population, including people aged 65 and over. If you think you could be at risk of not getting enough vitamin D, particularly if you are housebound 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 on a daily basis.

Regular weight-bearing exercise also helps keep bones strong by forcing the bones in the lower half of your body to bear your full weight each time you move. This includes brisk walking, bowls or tennis, but not swimming.

what next?

For more information about osteoporosis, visit the [Age UK website](#) or contact the [National Osteoporosis Society](#) (see page 31). Speak to your GP if you think you could be at risk of osteoporosis, particularly if one of your parents broke a hip.

The health of your bones makes a big difference to the effect of a fall. You can help keep your bones strong by eating a diet rich in calcium and ensuring you generate enough vitamin D.

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 might seem obvious, but it's amazing how often they can be overlooked – so it's worth checking them.

- Make sure that you have good lighting, particularly on the stairs.
- Keep a nightlight on, or a torch by the bed, in case you need to get up in the night.
- Keep your floor clear of trailing flexes, wrinkled or fraying carpets, or anything else that you might trip or slip on.
- Pets are wonderful companions, but they can get under your feet. Be aware of where they are when you're moving about. You could attach a bell to their collar to alert you when they're nearby.
- Make sure that your stairs and steps are free of clutter.
- Handrails on both sides of your stairs make them safer to climb.
- Put a non-slip mat in the bath and get a handrail fitted to help you keep your balance when you are getting in and out.
- Put non-slip mats under rugs, in the kitchen, on stair landings and next to the bath.
- Always use a stepladder to reach high places – never stand on a chair. If you can, ask someone to help you.
- Avoid tasks such as cleaning windows or changing a light bulb if they make you feel dizzy or light-headed.
- If you have arthritis in your spine or neck, move your head slowly to avoid dizziness.

- In the garden, watch out for uneven paths and slippery surfaces and keep paths clear. Carefully placed handrails and posts can be helpful if you need them.
- Keep warm. Cold muscles don't work as well and may lead to accidents and injuries.
- Sitting or standing up too quickly can make you feel light-headed. Take your time getting up, and then stand still for a moment to steady yourself before walking. 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.
- If you need to use furniture for support when moving around your home, discuss this with your GP – see page 22, 'Help from the NHS'.

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.

Contact your local authority to find out if they offer home safety checks or a handyman scheme. The Age UK Group offers Handyman schemes to older people in some areas who meet certain criteria, to assist with small repairs and reduce risks in the home. Contact Age UK Advice (see page 26) for information about our Handyman schemes and to see what is available in your area.

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 30).

**what
next?**

For more information about aids and adaptations that can make your home safer, or about preventing accidents, see our free guides *Adapting your home* and *Home safety checker*.

Community alarms

If you live alone, you might like to think about getting a community alarm.

Community alarms allow you to call for help 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 centre will then call out the best person to help you – a neighbour, relative or friend, or the emergency services.

Many local councils run community alarm schemes. You can contact your council for more information. Age UK also provides Personal Alarms* – for more information about the service and the likely costs, call 0800 77 22 66.

If you've had a fall and are concerned about falling again, there are also other types of technology available – known as telecare – such as fall detectors and chair and occupancy sensors. These can automatically set off an alarm to alert a carer or call centre that you may need help. Speak to your local social services department to find out what your options are.

*Age UK Personal Alarm is a product name of and is provided by Aid-Call Limited, which is a commercial services arm of Age UK.

Dealing with 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.

This 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 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 intent on preventing one.

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, regain your balance and strength, and reduce your risk of falling.

Help from the NHS

You must tell your GP if you've had a fall or start feeling unsteady, even if you feel fine otherwise. There could be many reasons 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, 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 staff can see how you're getting on.

what next?

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has a patient leaflet called *Falls: the assessment and prevention of falls in older people*, which you can download free from the website or order as a printed copy (see page 31). In Scotland, the free leaflet *Taking positive steps to avoid trips and falls* can be downloaded from the Health Scotland website (see page 30).



What to do if you fall

Here are some basic points to remember.

1. Try to stay calm and don't panic.

2. Get help if you can.

- Don't move if you feel pain.
- Try to attract attention – bang on the floor or wall or use your community alarm if you have one.
- Call 999 if you can reach a phone.

3. If you can't get help, and you're not hurt, try to get up.

- First, check carefully that you're not hurt.
- Then roll on to your hands and knees and crawl to a sturdy piece of furniture – for example, a chair or bed.
- Put your hands on the chair or bed and bring one leg up, bending your knee and placing your foot flat on the floor. Lean forwards, pushing with your hands and foot and bring your other foot up so that it is also flat on the floor and you are crouching.
- Turn and sit on the furniture.
- Make sure that you rest for a while before you try to stand up.
- Once you know the technique, it's a good idea to practise doing all this before it ever happens.

4. If you're hurt or can't get up, keep yourself warm.

Cover yourself with a coat or any other warm fabric that you can reach. Keep tensing your arm and leg muscles and roll from side to side if you can, to keep moving.

If you have fallen on a hard floor, try to crawl to a softer, carpeted area if possible.

‘My strength and balance have improved... I feel happier and 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. 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!’



Useful organisations

Age UK

Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. 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 169 65 65

www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact

Age NI: 0808 808 7575

www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact

Age Scotland: 0845 125 9732

www.agescotland.org.uk

Age UK produces the following resources to help if you want to improve your strength and balance:

Strength and balance exercises for healthy ageing

(price £6)

An A4 ring-bound, table-top flip chart with simple illustrations and step-by-step instructions for chair and non-chair-based exercises.

Be strong, be steady

(price £12)

A strength and balance exercise DVD that includes chair-based and standing exercises.

To order these titles, call Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65.

Prices do not include postage and packing.

Fit as a Fiddle is an England-wide project that delivers physical activity and healthy-eating sessions to older people to improve their health and mental wellbeing.

For more information, visit www.fitasafiddle.org.uk, contact your local Age UK, or call Age UK Advice for more information and to find out whether there is a project near you.

In Wales, Age Cymru runs two physical activity programmes to encourage older people to become more active – Nordic Walking, which is suitable for all ages and fitness levels, and Low Impact Functional Training (LIFT), where trained volunteers deliver low level activities and games to older people. For more information, call 029 20431 555 or Age UK Advice, or visit the Age Cymru website.

In Northern Ireland and Scotland, contact Age Northern Ireland or Age Scotland to find out whether they can arrange or know of any special physical activity sessions.

Action for Blind People

Charity providing practical help and support on a local level to blind and partially sighted people. You can search for your local group on the website. Now runs the former RNIB resource centres in England. For local help in Scotland, see RNIB Scotland (see page 33).

14–16 Verney Road
London SE16 3DZ

Tel: 020 7635 4800 (for advice, call the RNIB: 0303 123 9999)
Email: see RNIB email address (page 33)
www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID)

Provides advice and support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing through an information line, tinnitus helpline and range of factsheets.

19–23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL

Tel: 0808 808 0123
Textphone: 0808 808 9000
Hearing check phone line: 0844 800 3838
Tinnitus enquiries: 0808 808 6666
Email: helpline@hearingloss.org.uk
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

British Lung Foundation

Gives support to people with lung disease and funds research. Contact them for more information on conditions including COPD.

73–75 Goswell Road
London EC1V 7ER

Tel: 03000 030 555
www.lunguk.org

Deafblind UK

Offers specialist services and human support to deafblind people and those with progressive sight and hearing loss.

National Centre for Deafblindness
John and Lucille van Geest Place
Cygnet Road, Hampton
Peterborough PE7 8FD

Tel: 0800 132 320
Email: info@deafblind.org.uk
www.deafblind.org.uk

In Wales, contact Deafblind Cymru
Trident Court
Eastmoors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD
Telephone: 029 2060 1471
Email: deafblindcymru@deafblind.org.uk

EXTEND

Arranges community-based exercise classes for older people, and trains teachers to run exercise classes.

2 Place Farm
Wheathampstead
Herts AL4 8SB

Tel: 01582 832 760
Email: admin@extend.org.uk
www.extend.org.uk
(regional contacts are listed on the website)

Health Scotland

Provides information to promote healthy living for people in Scotland, and works closely with local health boards across Scotland. Publishes a useful free booklet on falls prevention called *Taking positive steps to avoid trips and falls*.

Tel: 0131 536 5500

Textphone: 0131 536 5503

Email: nhs.healthscotland-publications@nhs.net

www.healthscotland.com

Home improvement agencies

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

The environmental health or housing department of your council, or a local Citizens Advice Bureau, should be able to tell you if there is a home-improvement agency in your area.

In England, contact:

Foundations

Tel: 0845 864 5210

www.foundations.uk.com

In Northern Ireland, contact:

Fold

Tel: 028 9042 8314

www.foldgroup.co.uk

In Scotland, contact:

Care and Repair Scotland

Tel: 0141 221 9879

www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk

In Wales, contact:

Care and Repair Cymru

Tel: 0300 111 3333

www.careandrepair.org.uk

National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People (NAPA)

Produces a range of resources to help care homes and other organisations. Offers stimulating activities for older people.

Bondway Commercial Centre
Unit 5.12
5th Floor
71 Bondway
London SW8 1SQ

Tel: 020 7078 9375

Email: info@napa-activities.co.uk

www.napa-activities.co.uk

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

Produces guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health in England and Wales.

Tel: 0845 003 7780

NICE order line: 0845 003 7783

Email: nice@nice.org.uk

www.nice.org.uk

National Osteoporosis Society

Provides advice and information on all aspects of osteoporosis through its nurse helpline and information booklets, as well as offering people with osteoporosis support through its network of local groups.

Camerton
Bath BA2 0PJ

Tel: 0845 450 0230

Email: info@nos.org.uk

www.nos.org.uk

NHS Direct

Provides free health advice and can give information about your local PCT PALS in England.

Tel: 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

In England, you can also search for your local PCT and find guidance on physical activity on the **NHS Choices** website www.nhs.uk

NHS Direct Wales

Free health advice and information service available 24 hours a day for information on any health-related matters or concerns. You can also search on the website for local health services, such as pharmacists and GPs, and health boards.

Tel: 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

You can find out further information about your Local Health Board (LHB) on the NHS Wales website www.wales.nhs.uk

In Scotland, contact **NHS Inform** for local service information.

Tel: 0800 22 44 88

www.nhsinform.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, visit **NI Direct** www.nidirect.gov.uk and click on 'Find health services in your area'.

NHS Low Income Scheme

Provides full or partial help with health costs if you are on a low income and have savings below £16,000.

Tel: 0845 850 1166 (England, Scotland and Wales)

0800 587 8982 (Northern Ireland)

www.nhs.uk/healthcosts

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Provides a range of services, advice and information, including leaflets and publications, many of which are available in large print, audio CD or tape and Braille.

105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE

Tel: 0303 123 9999
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
www.rnib.org.uk

In Wales, contact RNIB Cymru
Trident Court
East Moors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD

Tel: 029 2045 0440
Email: cymruevents@rnib.org.uk

In Scotland, contact RNIB Scotland
12–14 Hillside Crescent
Edinburgh EH7 5EA

Tel: 0131 652 3140
Email: rnibscotland@rnib.org.uk

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

Promotes safety and prevention of accidents at work and in the home, and provides information on home safety.

Edgbaston House
28 Calthorpe Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 1RP

Tel: 0121 248 2000
Email: help@rospa.com

www.rospa.com (details for ROSPA offices in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are on the website)

Sense

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

101 Pentonville Road
London N1 9LG

Tel: 0845 127 0066
Textphone: 0845 127 0066
Email: info@sense.org.uk
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, FREEPOST LON13041, PO Box 203, London N1 9BR. 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.

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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



We will use the information you have supplied to communicate with you according to data protection guidelines. Age UK (registered charity number 1128267) comprises the charity, its group of companies and national partners (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). If you would prefer not to hear from them or carefully selected third parties, let us know by phoning 0800 107 8977.

You may be interested in other guides in this range

- Bereavement
- Caring for your eyes
- Going into hospital
- Going solo
- Health services
- Healthy eating
- Healthy living
- Managing incontinence
- Staying cool in a heatwave
- Winter wrapped up



To order any of our **free** publications, please call Age UK Advice free on:

0800 169 65 65

www.ageuk.org.uk/healthandwellbeing

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.

The following Age UK information guides may be useful:

- *Going solo*
- *Health services*
- *Staying steady*

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 65 65**.