

Understanding Home Safety and How to Identify Everyday Hazards

*Practical home accident prevention and information for
those working with and caring for the older person.*

Carolyn Cripps OBE
Consultancy & Training
● Home Accident Prevention



Today's Agenda

Understanding Home Safety and How to Identify Everyday Hazards

9.30 Welcome – Age UK Lambeth

9.40 The aging process – *Carolyn Cripps AgeUKL*

9.50 Looking at associated risks within the home

10.15 Scams and keeping safe –

PC Lance Edmonson, Brixton Police Station

11.00 Comfort break

11.15 London Fire Brigade – *Tamanda Mkoloma and*

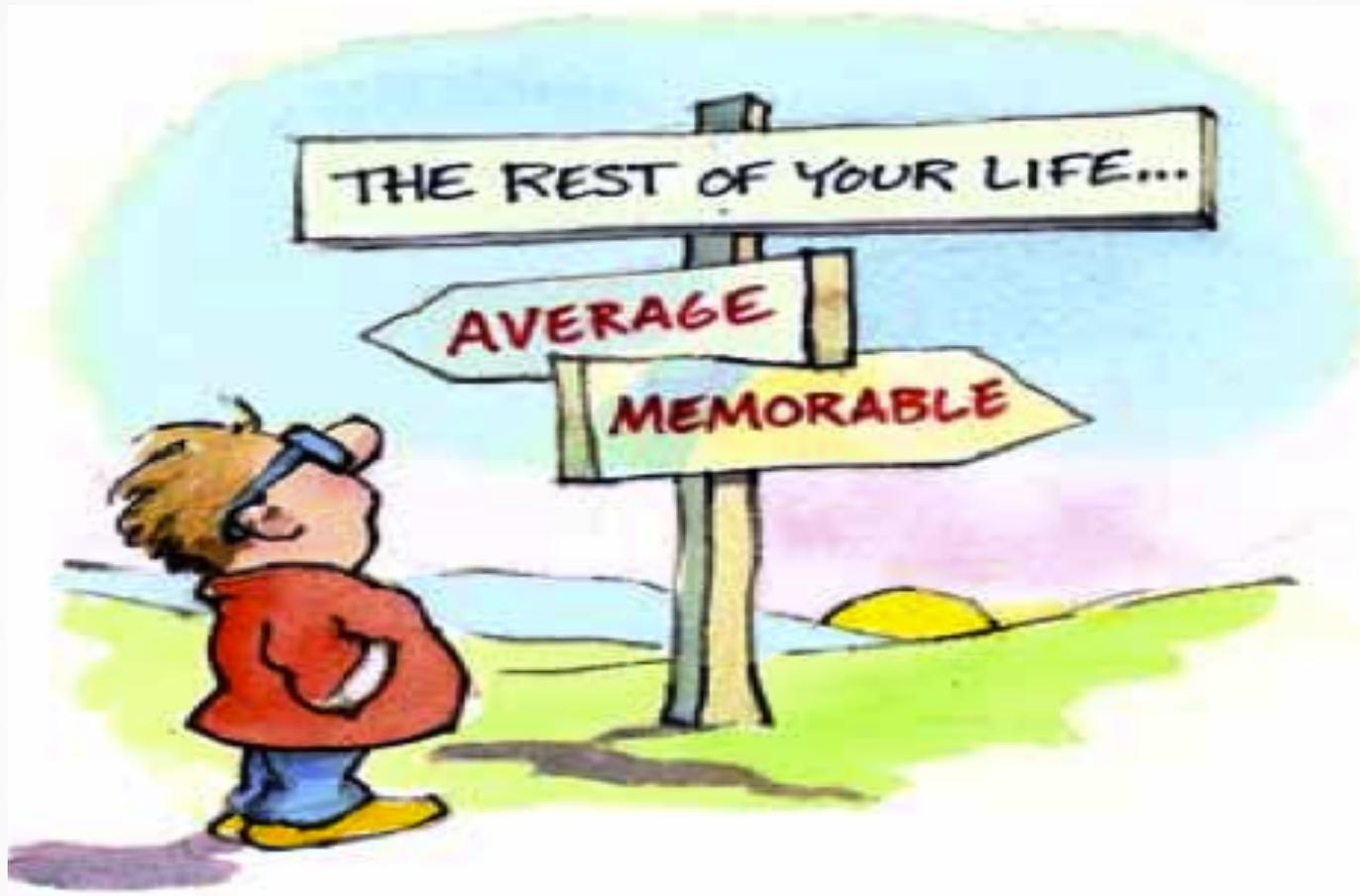
Ed Bywater, South West Community Fire Safety Team

12.00 Trading Standards - *Chris Armstrong*

12.20 First Aid for Life – *Emma Hammett*

Falls, Burns, Medication and other

Q&A followed by lunch



Can you think about

- What positives are there to getting older
- What frightens you most about ageing?
- What's the worst thing you can imagine about being old?
- How could you positively make a difference?



Putting Things into Perspective

- Number of people aged 65 has doubled since the 1930's and now makes up more than a fifth of the population
- Every year, approx. 4,000 people die from a home accident. **54% are over the age of 65**
- 2.7 million need medical treatment of which approx 76,000 are hip fractures
- Just over ½ million of those injured are over 65 years old **72% of all injuries are as a result of falls**

Understanding the Ageing Process



The Ageing Process

After 55 most women cannot give birth through the menopause. Both sexes experience middle age spread!

From 65 the red blood cells become fewer
Sight, hearing and sense of smell decline
Names and words get forgotten!

Bones get thinner & weaker, joints shrink, spine curves

After 80 muscle mass is now only 30% of what it was at 30

The Ageing Process

potential hazard factors

Environmental

- Home re-location – downsizing to unfamiliar home
- Poor design and layout unsuitable for the older person
i.e. granny flats
- Faulty goods/wiring, no gas or carbon monoxide detectors
- Taking incorrect/unsuitable medication or 4 meds plus

Climatic

- Hyperthermia
- Overheating leading to dehydration

Sight Hearing Smell Taste Touch



Who's taken my Five Senses ?



Sight – the first to go

- Longer-sighted and channel vision
- The eyes dry out
- Difficulty in wearing contact lenses
- Regular misplacement of glasses and muddle as to which pair is which
- Fearful of eye test outcome
- Cataracts develop



♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ Hearing
How to spot the loss

- Being asked to repeat yourself in conversation
- The volume on the TV or radio is turned up too high
- Mishear regularly what has been said
- Less interested in socialising in larger groups
- Become easily tired when socialising
- A sense of frustration and irritability in company
- Subdued and withdrawn in conversations
- Can miss doorbell and or telephone ringing

Advise on a visit to a hearing specialist i.e. Boots Chemist

Smell

- Less likely to smell burning toast when in another area of the home
- Less likely to be woken by smoke –
(*a smoke alarm a necessity*)
- Unable to assess if food has turned bad
(unlikely to throw out prehistoric food!)
Have trouble bending down to clean out a low fridge



TASTE



- Food tastes bland – so can overuse salt /sugar
- Less likely to regularly clean mouth and teeth
- Risk of eating food that's gone off leading to sickness and diarrhoea
- Increased risk of choking as not able to chew properly



Touch

- Loss of feeling due to poorer circulation
- Frequent dropping and slopping things
- Diabetes – loss of feeling in the extremities
- Bath scalds and falls due to numbness

Losing the 5 Senses

can lead to:

- Stress
- Frustration
- Loneliness
- Depression



Home accidents affecting later life



The most frequent accidents which have the highest impact

1. Falls
2. Burns and scalds
3. Poisons
4. Choking

When and where do most accidents happen?

Most happen during the day..

When getting out of bed or from a chair - falls

When preparing meals – slips, burns & scalds

Climbing up to reach things – falls

Bending over low – *blacking out*

Generally unsteady - especially on the stairs

Where do most home accidents happen?

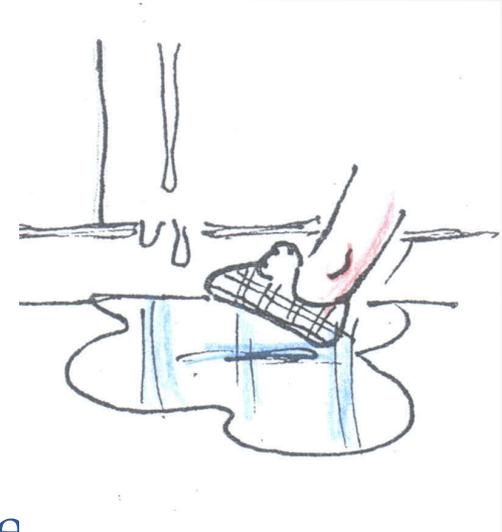
1. Bedroom

2. Garden

3. Stairs

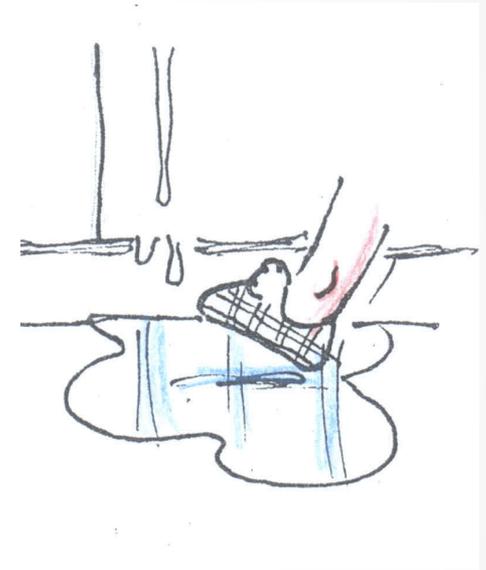
Room by room risk assessment

- **Identify the hazard**
 - What harm could it cause?
 - Who will it harm?
 - How could it harm them?
- **Assess the risk**
 - How severe might the injury be.
- **Control the risk**
 - Does the benefit outweigh the risk
 - Is the activity necessary



Room by room risk assessment *activity*

- **Identify the hazards**
 - What harm could it cause?
 - Who will it harm?
 - How could it harm them?



- **Assess** - How can you make the room safer?

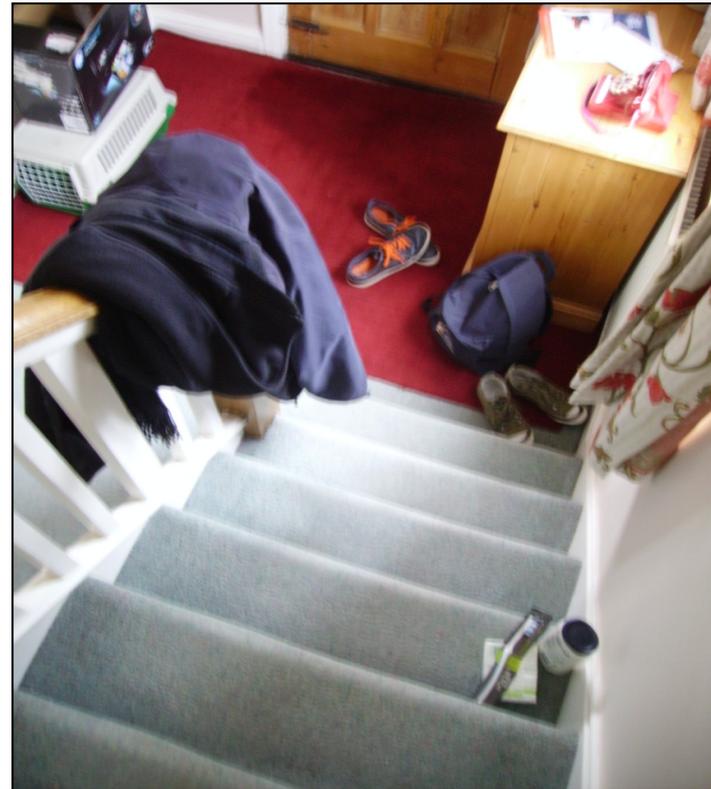
Hallway, Stairs and Living area



"NO NEED TO RUSH DOWN—IT'S ONLY THE GAS BILL!"

Contributing Behavioural Factors *for slips, trips and falls on stairs*

- Lapses of Attention
- Mistaken Actions
- Attitude
- Immobility



Falls on Stairs

Consider carpet patterns as patterns can merge into one, especially with poor lighting



Clear that Clutter!



- Ensure adequate lighting especially at top of stairs
- Move rugs away from top and bottom of stairs
- Be aware of trailing clothes and sloppy slippers
-

Helpful hints

- Good lighting especially on stairs and landings
- Handrails along stairs and hallways
- Wear stable shoes and not sloppy slippers
- Carry small loads – not heavy ones
- Clear routes around furniture
- Get up from chair or bed **SLOWLY**
- **NEVER** stand on wobbly stools or chairs

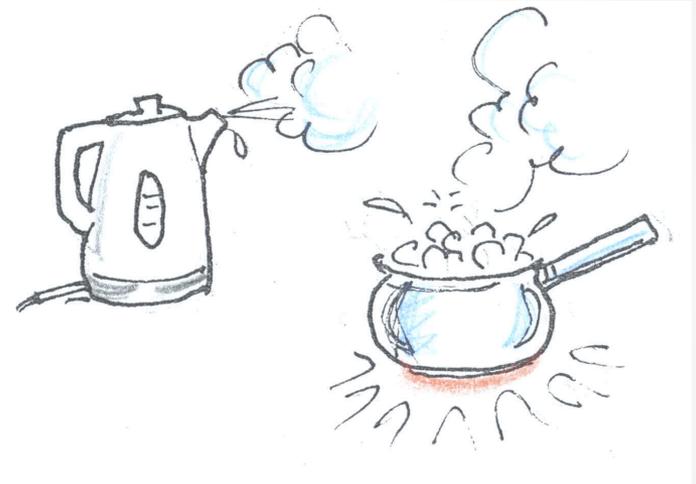


Helpful hints

- Lighter coloured walls help with failing sight
- Allow as much natural light in as possible
(*but larger windows = bigger heat loss*)
- Adequate wattage for artificial lighting
(*invest in the better type of energy light bulb*)
- Coloured tape to mark any trip hazards
- Large button telephone/ remote controls
- Flashing smoke detectors from fire brigade
- Regular Eye tests – for sight & health of the eye

Kitchen - aids available

- Gas leak valve shut-off mechanism
- Perch stool by sink and tops
- Kettle cradle/tippers
- Tap turners – lever taps
- Non-slip table mats
- Tin, bottle, jar openers
- High rimmed plates
- Two-handled cups
- Sturdy trolley for wheeling through meals
- Easy grip scissors



Bedroom



- Bed raisers
- Long-handled shoe horns,
- Tights and socks pull up implements
- Hooks for doing up buttons
- Hand held grabbers for things fallen on floor
- Heated bed warmers – remove before going to bed

Bathroom



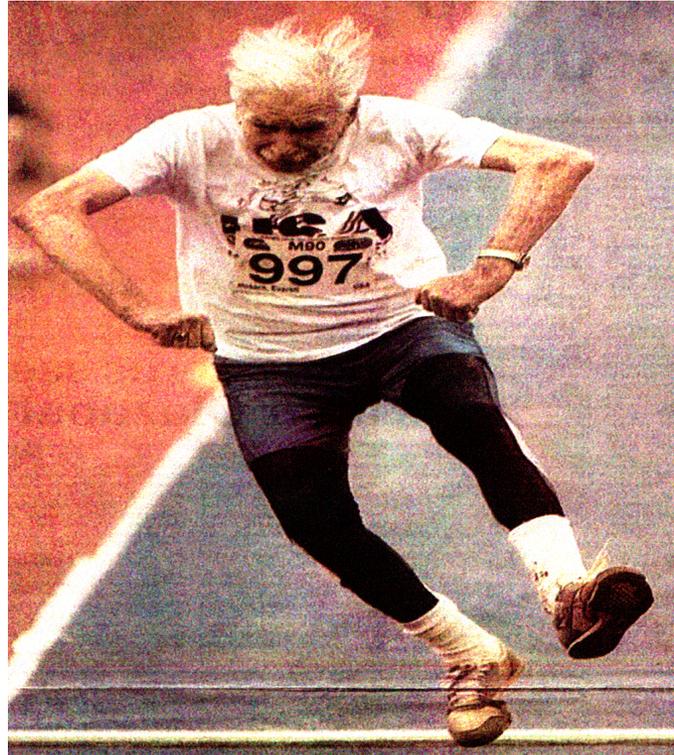
- Use non-slip mats in bath or shower unless bottom of bath is dimpled
- Fix extra hand rails if needed
- Have a chair, perch stool or a flat surface by bath
- available for sitting on
- Check for water on floor in case of slipping over
- Install thermostatic valve controls for baths and showers

Patio & Garden

- Trip free patio doors
- Keep pathways clear and ensure even surfacing
- Have suitable external lighting
- Salt and clear pathway of ice and leaves as required
- Check external handrails for safety regularly
- Slip free paths – gravel or bark



Keep active - lets get Physical !

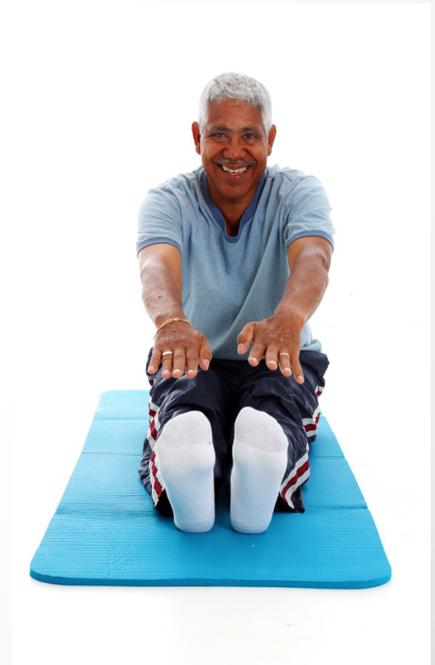


The lack of mobility - Use it or lose it !

- One third of people aged over 70 years cannot walk a 1/4 of a mile on their own
- 9% of men and 38% of women aged 50-74 cannot walk comfortably at 3mph
- 7% of men and 28% of women aged 50-74 lack the leg strength to climb stairs easily
- 47% of women aged 70-74 found it difficult to climb stairs

Why we need to keep fit and flexible

- Flexibility to wash hair or bathe or drive
- Strength to lift household objects
- Bending down - fasten shoes/ pull up tights
- Balance and agility to climb stairs
- Co-ordination and dexterity to use a door key
- Endurance to walk to the shops
- Driving - looking behind when parking



My Social and Vida's

Available Information on Falls

Public Health England / RoSPA

- Falls are by far the largest problem and you can also find some more up to date data on our Stand Up Stay Up pages
- <https://www.rosipa.com/home-safety/stand-up-stay-up/>
- The most recent document produce is the factsheet produced in conjunction with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine
- It's also worth looking at the National Falls Prevention Consensus Statement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/falls-and-fractures-consensus-statement>