

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

Physiotherapy Falls booklet

Physiotherapy Departments

www.ulh.nhs.uk

Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet aims to provide patients who have had a fall, or are at risk of falling, with advice on falls prevention and what to do if you have a fall. There is also a balance and strengthening exercise programme for you to follow.

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Introduction

Falls and fall-related injuries are a common and serious problem for older people. People aged 65 and older have the highest risk of falling. People may fall due to numerous reasons including blood pressure, mobility problems and/or balance problems. This booklet aims to reduce your risk of future falls.

You may feel tired at first, which is normal as your muscles need time to build their strength. It may take some time until you feel back to normal. Everyone is different so it is impossible to give an exact timetable for how much exercise you should take and when.

This booklet contains instructions on exercise for your arms and legs which will help improve your balance and strength, therefore enabling you to complete activities of daily living more easily, for example meal preparation.

You will also find information on how to get up off the floor if you fall, what to do if you are unable to get up and advice on how to prevent future falls.

Your physiotherapist will go through this booklet with you and tailor it to your needs.

Health Professionals comments

This space is for health professionals to make any specific comments:

Notes:

Please use the space below to make any notes of your own:

Age UK Lincoln

Age UK offer several activity classes including Tai chi, Zumba, keep fit and indoor bowls. As well as other services including a gardening and handyman service and foot care service. There is a charge for some of these services. Please ask your Physiotherapist for further information or contact Age UK 01522 696 000 or 03455 564 144.

Visit their website: www.ageuk.org.uk/lincolnsouthlincolnshire

Acknowledgements

Information provided is based on recommendations from the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this leaflet please contact:

Physiotherapy Department

Lincoln County Hospital: 01522 573945
Pilgrim Hospital: 01205 445457
Grantham Hospital: 01476 464253

Why exercise

Exercise is important because it can improve your:

- Strength, making daily tasks easier
- Endurance, e.g. you can walk further
- Flexibility, allowing joints to move more easily
- Balance and co-ordination
- Ability to fight infections
- Sleep quality
- Concentration
- Well-being and mood
- Confidence, self-esteem and social activity

Safety advice

Please prepare a suitable space for you to perform your exercises. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear. Ensure that the chair you use for the seated exercises is sturdy and stable. When completing the standing exercises make sure you hold on to a solid surface such as a heavy table or kitchen work surface.

You should stop exercising and rest if you experience any of the following:

- ⇒ Severe chest pain
- ⇒ Increase in chest tightness
- ⇒ Dizziness or feeling faint
- ⇒ Severe breathlessness
- ⇒ Severe joint or muscle pain

If the symptoms persist contact your physiotherapist or nurse immediately if you are in hospital, or your GP if you are at home. If these symptoms settle within 2 to 3 minutes, do not continue with the exercise but contact your physiotherapist or GP for advice.

Warm up and cool down

Toe and heel raises

- Sit tall away from the chair back
- Lift both heels together keeping your toes flat on the floor
- Place feet flat on the floor
- Now lift both toes whilst keeping your heels on the floor
- Repeat 5 times on each leg



Shoulder circles

- Sit tall with your arms at your sides
- Lift both shoulders up to your ears, draw them back, then press them down
- Repeat slowly 5 times



Arm swings

- Sit tall, away from the chair back
- Place your feet flat on the floor below your knees
- Bend your elbows and swing your arms from the shoulder
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable for you
- Continue for 30 seconds



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Exercises in sitting

Please complete warm up exercises

Chair march

- Sit tall
- Alternately lift your feet and place them down with control
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable for you
- Continue for seconds



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What to do if you are unable to get up off the floor

- Try to stay calm, you will probably feel a little shocked and shaken
- Summon help by:
 - Pressing your pendant alarm
 - Using your phone
 - Shouting for help
 - Banging on the floor, wall or radiator
- Try to keep warm by finding a blanket, tablecloth or coat and moving around if you are not injured
- If possible, move to a soft surface or put a cushion under your head
- Try to keep uninjured limbs moving
- If you need to go to the toilet try and move away from the wet area and if possible remove any wet clothes

Advice on preventing future falls

- Have regular eye tests and keep your glasses clean
- Take care of your feet, toenails should be cut regularly
- Wear well-fitting shoes or slippers with backs on and good grips
- Check for hazards in your home, for example: loose carpets, rugs, trailing wires and clutter
- Ensure good lighting, especially on the stairs and in hallways
- Have your medication reviewed yearly and also if you notice changes in your symptoms
- Items that you use frequently should be kept within easy reach to avoid climbing, stretching or bending
- Have a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids
- Regular activity is important, consider taking frequent walks indoors or outdoors
- Avoid getting up too quickly and bending too low to avoid dizziness
- Report any falls to your GP or health professional
- Keep your heating on a timer so that if you do fall and can't get up then you won't get cold
- Keep a blanket in each room to reach if you do fall
- Keep telephones at a level that can be reached from the floor, keep your piper lifeline/phone on you at all times
- Ask your neighbours to check on you if they don't see your curtains drawn by a certain time

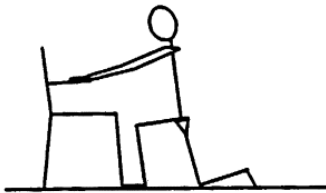
What to do if you have had a fall (backward chaining)

If you have fallen try to stay calm as you will probably feel a little shocked and shaken. This method has been identified as one of the safest ways of getting up from the floor. It is called backward chaining.

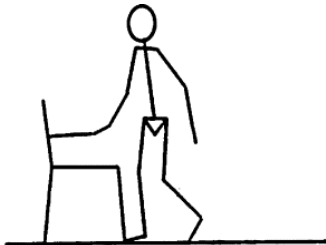
1. Turn over onto your hands and knees and move along the floor by crawling, creeping or pulling yourself along.



2. Place your hands on a chair, bed or stool and put the foot of your stronger leg on the floor in front of you with your knee close to your tummy. You should be in a half kneeling position.



3. Lean forward, pushing with your hands and feet. Bring your second foot up next to the first.



4. Slowly turn around and slide your bottom onto the chair, bed or stool. Sit down and rest for a while before trying to stand up.

Please contact your GP and inform them of your fall.

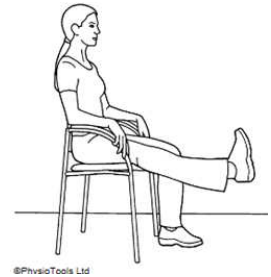
Overhead reach

- Sit tall, away from the chair back
- Stretch one arm up into the air
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Relax and repeat with the other arm
- Continue times



Leg straightening

- Sit tall, away from the chair back
- Straighten your right leg while keeping the back of the thigh on the chair
- Pull your foot towards you and count for seconds
- Repeat with the other leg
- Continuetimes



Sit to stand

- Sit tall, at the front of the chair
- Place your feet slightly behind your knees
- Lean forwards a little and stand up slowly
- Use the arms of the chair if needed, but progress to doing this with no support from your hands, if able
- Stand up tall and use your walking aid for balance once stood if needed
- Bend your knees gently and lower yourself into the chair, place your hands back onto the arms of the chair if needed
- Continue times



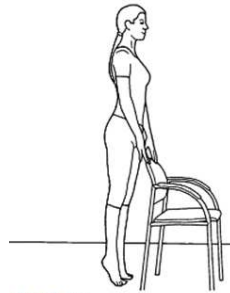
Please complete cool down exercises

Exercises in standing

Please complete warm up exercises

Heel and toe raises

- Holding onto support
- Raise both toes off the floor and lower back down
- Raise both heels off the floor and lower back down
- Continue times



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Mini knee bends

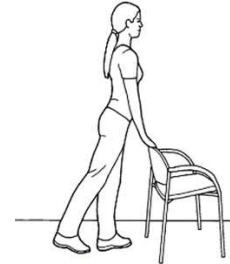
- Holding onto support
- Legs shoulder width apart
- Gently bend both knees as far as is comfortable
- Return to standing position
- Continue times



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Leg extensions

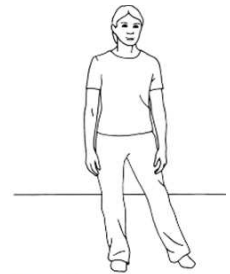
- Holding onto support
- Keeping both legs straight, move your right leg behind you
- Keep your back straight and do not lean forwards
- Return leg to starting position
- Repeat on the left leg
- Continue times



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Leg side swings

- Holding onto support
- Keep both legs straight and lift your right leg out to the side
- Keep your back straight and your toes and head facing forward
- Do not lean your body to the side
- Return leg to starting position
- Repeat on the left leg
- Continue times



Balance exercises

Tandem stance

- Holding onto a support
- Place one foot directly in front of the other
- Hold for seconds then return to your start position
- Repeat on the other leg
- Continue times



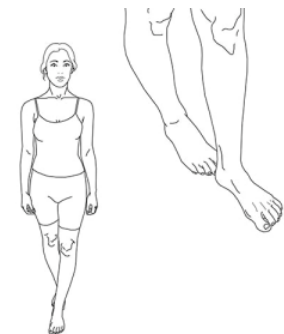
Single leg stand

- Hold onto support surface
- Bend one leg behind so you are standing on one leg
- Hold for seconds then return to your start position
- Repeat on the other leg
- Continue times



Heel-toe walking

- Stand tall with one hand on a support for example a kitchen cabinet
- Look ahead and walk 10 steps forwards placing one foot directly in front of the other so that your feet form a straight line
- Take your feet back to hip width apart, slowly turn around and repeat in the other direction



Please complete warm down exercises