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# Tips to reduce risk of falling

**QUESTION:** Who is at Risk of falling?

**Answer:** Everyone! One in three people aged 65 years and over will fall each year and 50 per cent of those who injure themselves in a fall never regain their previous level of function, and women are three times more likely to be hospitalised after a fall than men.

So if you are 65 or over, what can you do to make sure it's not you?

Firstly it is a good idea to have a realistic idea of your personal risk of falling. A few questions to ask yourself are:

- Have you had a fall in the last year?

Having previously fallen increases your chance of falling again.

- Do you do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per day?

- Are you unsteady on your feet?

- Do you find it difficult to get up from a chair?

- Do you have trouble walking?

Many falls are the result of muscle weakness and/or impaired balance.

- Are you taking 3+ medicines?

- Are you taking sleeping tablets, tranquilisers or anti-depressants?

- Has it been more than one year since your GP reviewed your medicines?

Some side effects and combinations of medicines can increase your risk of a fall.

- Do you have diabetes, arthritis or Parkinson's disease?

- Have you had a stroke?

- Do you have problems with your heart or circulation?

- Has it been more than a year since your eyes were tested or your glasses checked?

- Do you experience dizziness, light

## Healthy Living



headedness, unsteadiness, drowsiness, blurred or double vision or have difficulty thinking clearly?

Many health conditions can increase your risk of falling.

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions then you are at risk of falling.

So what is the good news?

There are steps you can take now to reduce your risk.

### **Nine steps to stay on your feet:**

- Be active.
- Manage your medicines.
- Manage your health.
- Improve your balance.
- Walk tall.
- Foot care and safe footwear.
- Check your eyesight.
- Eat well for life.
- Identify, remove and report hazards.

There are many professionals in the community that can assist with the above nine steps – physiotherapists, pharmacists, GPs, exercise groups, podiatrists, optometrists, dietitians and occupational therapists. If you are at risk of falling, I urge you to consult with the appropriate person to help reduce your risk of falls and not become a statistic!

— Zoe Campbell

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**Having your eyes regularly tested can help prevent a fall.**