

Standing up to falls

Planning ahead is a good idea in case you have a fall

No one expects to have a fall. Planning ahead will help you to be confident and get on with life.

If you spend long periods of time alone, it is worth thinking about how you could get help in an emergency, how you could get up from the floor and what to do after a fall. Read on for some ideas.

Doctors or health professionals can help you to make a falls plan.

Be prepared – plan what you would do in the event of a fall

- > Daily contact with a relative, friend, neighbour or carer will help alert others if you need assistance. The Telecross service can provide you with a daily phone call.
- > Ensure your telephone is within reach from the floor, or carry a portable telephone with you.
- > Consider getting a personal alarm.
- > Leave a spare key with someone you trust or install a key safe outside your house. This will allow someone to reach you.
- > Discuss your plan with someone you trust.



"I had a bad fall in the kitchen. I had hurt my shoulder, so I couldn't move much. At least I knew I wouldn't have to wait long for help to arrive."

If you fall

1. Stay still and slow your breathing.
2. Check for injuries or hazards before you move, or before you allow anyone to help you up.
3. Decide if you will try to get up.
4. Get up the way that you know is best for you.
5. Seek medical attention if you need.

If you can't get up

Call for help by using your personal alarm, a phone or by calling out.

While waiting for help:

- > stay as warm and comfortable as possible by using nearby pillows, blankets or towels
- > if you are outside, shelter yourself and try to move out of direct sunlight
- > if you need to urinate find something absorbent to use, so you protect your skin
- > if you can, gently move to take pressure off a part of your body
- > if you can, drink to prevent dehydration.

If you can get up

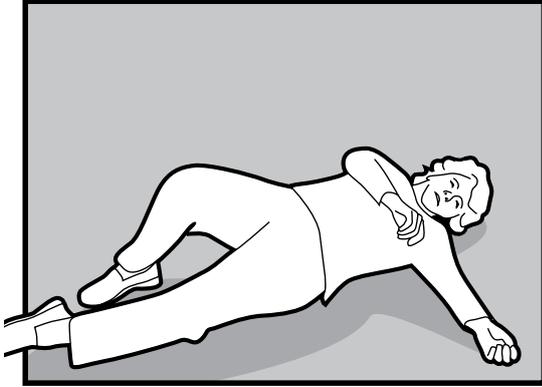
1. Look for any hazards such as broken glass or electrical cords. Decide if it is safe to move or see if you can avoid them.
2. Think about how you will get up off the floor. One method is shown on the next page.
3. If you do not manage the first time, rest before trying again.

Getting up from the floor if you are not badly injured

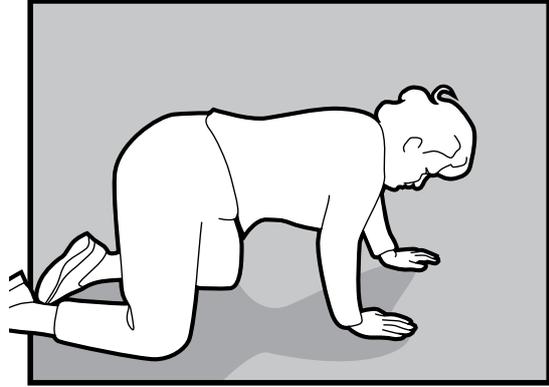
It may be a long time since you tried to get on and off the floor, so it is a good idea to practise this when someone is with you. On the next page is a suggested way to get up from the floor.

Check with a Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist to find the method that best suits you and help you to practise it safely.

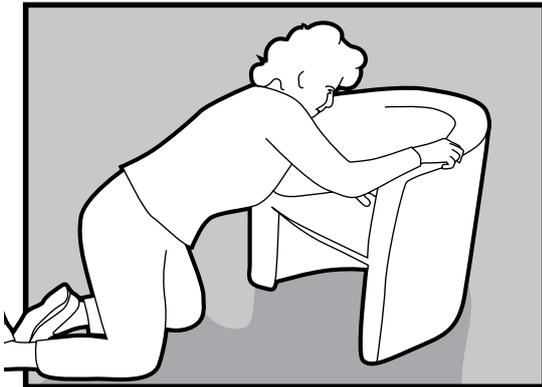
A suggested way of getting up if you are not badly injured



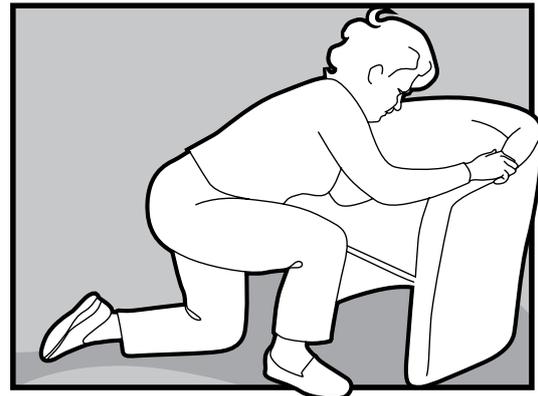
1. Roll onto your side.



2. Get onto hands and knees and crawl or slide to a sturdy piece of furniture e.g. chair, stairs or rail.



3. From a kneeling position, put arms up onto the furniture.



4. Bring one knee forward, putting that foot on the floor.



5. Push up with your arms and legs, pivot your bottom around.



6. Sit Down. Rest before trying to move.

What to do after a fall

- > Record the details of the fall (when, what, how).
- > Tell your doctor or health professional about the fall. This can help them to look into possible causes and treatment options.
- > Talk to your health professional so you can work together to prevent future falls.

Tell your daily contact about your fall. Stay in close touch as injuries may not show straight away.

Who can help?

Your Doctor can refer you to a private Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist to help you to develop a falls plan. These health professionals can help you to maintain strength and well being and help prevent falls.

To help you find the nearest Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist ring Commonwealth Care Link 1800 052 222.

Your doctor can refer you to Department of Veteran Affairs services (if you are entitled).

Red Cross Telecross service ph 8100 4500 can provide daily telephone contact.

Contact details for personal alarm suppliers can be found in the Yellow Pages under "Alerting systems and/or services".

For advice about personal alarms contact the Independant Living Centre 1300 885 886 or (08) 8266 5260 or www.disability.sa.gov.au

For more information

**Falls and Fall Injury Prevention
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