

Staying steady

Keep active and reduce
your risk of falling

Health &
wellbeing



We are Age UK.

*Our network includes Age Cymru,
Age NI, Age Scotland, Age International
and more than 160 local partners.*

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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. Building and maintaining your strength and balance can help you carry on doing the things you enjoy.

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 30–38). 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 30).

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

As you get older, it's important to be as active as you can. Regular physical activity will help you maintain strength, flexibility and energy levels, so you can carry on doing the things you enjoy and stay independent. There are many daily activities that will keep you fit and healthy. Try taking a brisk walk, for example, or doing some gardening or dancing. If you need help moving about or don't usually do any exercise, doing any amount of activity is better than nothing. It's never too late to start and you can gradually build up your physical activity.

Reducing the amount you move about can actually make you more prone to falling as your muscles become weaker. The Government advises older people to aim to be active every day and to:

- build up to two-and-a-half hours per week of moderate intensity activity (activities that get you breathing harder and your heart pumping faster) in bouts of ten minutes or more
- do activities that improve muscle strength at least twice a week – these are activities that strengthen muscles throughout your body by using your body weight or working against a resistance
- do some activities that improve balance and co-ordination twice a week – this is important if you have had a fall or are afraid of falling
- limit or break up the time you spend sitting still.

Improving your strength and balance

Activities that improve muscle strength and balance 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.

The kinds of activities that will help your strength and balance might be:

- using the stairs frequently, if it's safe for you to do so
- slowly and repeatedly rising to a standing position from a chair
- playing badminton, taking up ballroom dancing, yoga, or joining a walking group
- attending special strength and balance exercise classes, tai chi classes or exercise to music classes, such as those run by EXTEND (see page 33).

Exercises that improve your balance – often known as balance training – can be especially helpful if you have an illness that causes joint pain as they help overcome stiffness and unsteadiness. Best of all, they can make it easier to get out and about without needing to have someone with you.



For more information about recommended activities visit the NHS Choices website (see page 36). In Wales, visit the NHS Direct Wales website (see page 36) and in Scotland, visit the NHS Inform website (see page 36).

You can find free exercise guides and videos online. For example, NHS Choices provides a series of downloadable exercise guides for older people (visit www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Exercises-for-older-people.aspx).

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 25).

what next?

To find out about strength and balance classes in your area, ask at your local Age UK, leisure centre, library, health centre or GP practice. Age UK has a table-top book of exercises that aims to help improve your balance (see page 31). You can also check to see whether there's a Fit as a Fiddle class in your area (see page 31).

Getting started... and keeping it up

Once you know what kind of physical activities are right for you, remember to start gently and build up gradually. Aim to do a little bit more every day.

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. This could be something like slow heel raises, either on your own or supported by someone else. Practice makes perfect and it's important to maintain a good fitness level, so you should do whatever you're able to on a regular basis.

Exercises that make your legs stronger will help prevent falls, so don't give up on your physical activities because you've had a fall or are afraid of falling.

If you live in a care home and need help to move about, you could start an activities programme with the help of your activities co-ordinator and care home manager. It should take into account any medical conditions and build upon what you can already do.

If you haven't exercised in a while, or you have worries due to a health condition, speak to your GP before starting a new activity. Remember that the day after you have done some strengthening activities, your muscles will feel a bit stiff. This is quite normal and shows the activity had a positive effect.

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.

***Exercises that make
your legs stronger
will help prevent falls.***

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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 (every year if you're over 70), or as often as your optician advises. Have a regular eye test even if you think your sight is fine, as it can detect any eye conditions at an early stage.





NHS eye tests are free once you reach the age of 60, and if you live in Scotland they're 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 37).

Universal Credit, a new means-tested benefit for people of working age, will be introduced during 2013 and 2014. If you're receiving Universal Credit, contact Age UK Advice to find out whether you're entitled to help with the cost of your glasses.

If you live in England and you, or anyone you care for, 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 36). PCT PALS is being abolished from April 2013. Call Age UK Advice after this date to find out more.

-  In Wales, contact NHS Direct Wales for details of opticians who can offer home visits (see page 36). 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 (WEICI) 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 36).
-  In Scotland, healthcare is organised through local health boards. Call NHS Inform for more information on local services (see page 36). In Northern Ireland, search for local health services via the NI Direct website (see page 36).

If you have sight loss, you can contact the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for information or call the helpline (see page 37).

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* or contact the NHS Low Income Scheme (see page 37). In Wales, see Age Cymru's free factsheet *Help with health costs in Wales*.



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 and make sure the lenses are cleaned regularly.

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 32).

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 advice on 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 38) or Deafblind UK (see page 33) for information and advice if you have problems with both your sight and hearing.

Looking after your feet

Foot problems can stop you getting out and about. They can also affect your balance and increase your risk of falling. So it's important to report problems such as foot pain or any decreased sensation in your feet promptly to your GP or practice nurse. Make sure you keep your toenails short. If you're finding reaching down to cut your toenails difficult, try asking a family member for help. If that isn't an option, many local Age UKs in England and Wales offer toenail-cutting services (there may be a charge) so try contacting your local Age UK to find out about services in your area.

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 shoes that fit well. High-sided shoes with low heels and thin soles with a good grip can help if you feel unsteady. Make sure they're firmly secured with laces or velcro.
- Avoid wearing sandals and shoes with high heels.
- Wear slippers that have a 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.
- 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 or illnesses, such as poorly controlled diabetes, can make you feel faint or affect your balance. Let your GP or pharmacist know if you ever feel like this – 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.

For more information on getting health advice, see our free guide *Health services*.

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).

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
- your age – the older you are, the more likely you are to develop this condition.

The strength 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 making sure that you get enough vitamin D. Your body makes vitamin D mainly through the action of the sun's rays directly on your skin. For this reason, some direct exposure to the sun is necessary, although it's important not to let your skin redden or burn. In May to September, try to go out every day without sunscreen for around ten minutes, either once or twice a day depending on your skin type. Remember to make sure that you are actually outside – your body can't make vitamin D from sunshine coming through closed windows.

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

The Government recommends that certain groups of the population take ten micrograms (10mcg) of vitamin D daily as a supplement, 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 35). Speak to your GP if you think you could be at risk of osteoporosis, particularly if one of your parents broke a hip.

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.

- Do you have good lighting, particularly on the stairs?
- Do you have a nightlight in the bedroom or a torch by the bed in case you need to get up in the night?
- Are your floors clear of trailing flexes, wrinkled or fraying carpets or anything else that you might trip or slip on?
- Does your pet wear a collar with a bell on? Pets are wonderful companions, but they can get under your feet. Be aware of where they are when you're moving about.
- Are your stairs and steps free of clutter?
- Do you have handrails on both sides of your stairs?
- Do you have a non-slip mat in the bath and a fitted handrail?
- Do you have non-slip mats under rugs, in the kitchen, on stair landings and next to the bath?
- Do you always use a stepladder to reach high places? Never stand on a chair. If you can, ask someone to help you.
- Do you keep your garden paths clear? Watch out for uneven paths and slippery surfaces as well. Carefully placed handrails and posts can be helpful if you need them.

It's also a good idea to remember the following.

- 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.
- 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 'Help from the NHS', page 25).

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 handy person scheme. If you live in England and Wales, the Age UK Group offers handy person schemes in some areas to older people who meet certain criteria, to assist with small repairs and reduce risks in the home. Contact Age UK Advice (see page 30) for information about our handy person schemes and to see what is available in your area. In Scotland, your local Care and Repair service may be able to help (see page 34).



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 34).

**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*.

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.



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. Aid-Call Limited is registered in England and Wales number 01488490. Registered address Tavis House, 1–6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. VAT number 710 3843 66. Aid-Call Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 06825798) and donates its net profits to Age UK. Age UK is a registered trademark. The use and name of the logo 'Age UK' is done under licence agreement between Age UK and Aid-Call Limited.

Community alarms allow you to call for help if you're unwell or have a fall and can't reach a telephone.



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 it 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 that 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 (type CG21 in the search bar) (see page 35). In Scotland, the free leaflet *Taking positive steps to avoid trips and falls* can be picked up from your local health promotion centre or downloaded from the Health Scotland website or ordered by email (see page 34).

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.

Regular physical activity will help you maintain strength, flexibility and energy levels, so you can carry on doing the things you enjoy and stay independent.



‘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. But 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

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 resource to help if you want to improve your strength and balance:



Strength and balance exercises for healthy ageing
(price £6 plus £1.75 p&p)

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

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

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.

To find out more information and whether there is a project near you, call Age UK Advice, or you can visit www.fitasafiddle.org.uk or email fitasafiddle@ageuk.org.uk

-  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 2043 1555 or visit the Age Cymru website.
-  In Northern Ireland and Scotland, contact Age Northern Ireland or Age Scotland to find out whether they 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 37).

53 Sandgate Street
London SE15 1LE

Tel: 020 7635 4800 (for advice, call the RNIB: 0303 123 9999)
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
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
Text number for mobile phones: 0780 0000 360
Hearing check phone line: 0844 800 3838
Tinnitus enquiries: 0808 808 6666
Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Deafblind UK

Offers specialist services and help 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 and textphone: 0800 132 323
Email: info@deafblind.org.uk
www.deafblind.org.uk

In Wales, contact Deafblind Cymru
Trident Court
Eastmoors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD
Tel: 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.

Tel: 0131 536 5500

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 whether there is a home improvement agency in your area.

In England, contact **Foundations**

Tel: 0845 864 5210

wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com

In Northern Ireland, contact **Fold**

Tel: 028 9042 8314

Email: info@foldgroup.co.uk

www.foldgroup.co.uk

In Scotland, contact **Care and Repair Scotland**

Tel: 0141 221 9879

www.careandrepairsScotland.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

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 until April 2013.

Tel: 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

In England, you can also search for your local PCT and find guidance on physical activity in the 'Live Well' section of 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 'Health services' (listed under 'Health and wellbeing') to 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.

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.

RoSPA 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: 020 7520 0972
Textphone: 020 7520 0972
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: RSXZ-KTTS-KSHT, Age UK, Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, LONDON WC1H 9NA. 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.

Personal details

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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.

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- 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 into hospital*
- *Health services*
- *Healthy living*

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**.

