

## 10 Top Tips for Falls Prevention

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**These tips are not a substitute for a good OT assessment**

1. Make sure the hallway and stairs have working lights - if possible, replace with low-energy light bulbs and keep lights on overnight.
2. Wear slippers with an appropriate heel, so that they stay firmly on the feet.
3. Regular, gentle exercise can help reduce risk of falling and also fear of falling. Exercise such as Tai Chi is particularly helpful at improving balance.
4. Check out signs that a person is unsure on their feet such as "furniture walking", or clear dirty marks where walls are used for support. Having grab rails installed at key sites around the home or at the entrance to the home can be arranged by local community OT services.
5. Fasten any torn bits of carpet or lino down. Gaffer tape is ideal for this, if an older person can't afford to replace floor coverings.
6. Tripping over the edges of rugs is very common- either remove rugs, or fasten down the edges to reduce this risk.
7. Medication management - GPs and pharmacists are well placed to review and reduce any unnecessary medications.
8. Check for use of alcohol- this increases the risk of falls and may interact with medications, or even be used to self-medicate undiagnosed depression.
9. Poor foot care can be a reason for not wearing slippers, and can contribute to falls. Check if the person needs a chiropody referral, if foot care is difficult for an individual.
10. Multi-disciplinary team-working can solve many issues- so don't be shy about asking for help! Occupational therapists, physiotherapists and chiropodists can be really useful contacts for falls prevention.

Information from the College of Occupational Therapy about falls prevention is available from COT at:

<http://www.cot.co.uk/ot-helps-your-client/falls-prevention>

## A Few Falls Facts

1. A fall at home that leads to a hip fracture costs the state £28,665 on average (726 million a year in total). This is 4.5 times the average cost of a major housing adaptation and over 100 times the cost of fitting hand and grab rails to prevent falls (Heywood et al 2007).
2. The provision of a home safety programme and exercise programme delivered by occupational therapists was found to reduce falls significantly (Campbell AJ et al, 2005).
3. A community based occupational therapy based falls prevention service cut the number of falls among older people by half according to evidence published in the BMJ: [bit.ly/bmDGly](http://bit.ly/bmDGly)"

from COT website available at <http://www.cot.co.uk/ot-helps-your-client/falls-prevention>)

### References from COT website:

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