

Falls and Fall Prevention

Supporting safety, independence, and ageing well

Why Falls Matter

Falls are a natural part of life, but the risk increases with age. They can lead to serious injuries, a loss of confidence, and fear of everyday activities. Many people worry that a fall could result in losing their independence or needing to enter aged care. In addition to physical harm, falls can also have significant emotional impacts.

Ageing and HIV: Increased Risk

People living with HIV (PLWH) are living longer, with over half now older adults and nearly one in four expected to be 65+ by 2030. Ageing with HIV can increase fall risk due to:

- Higher rates of health conditions
- Earlier onset of frailty
- Medication side effects
- Social isolation, financial hardship, and concerns about independence

A Fall Can Be a Warning Sign

Even a single fall, especially at home, may signal a higher risk of future falls. Acting early can identify underlying issues and prevent more serious incidents.

Factors That Increase Fall Risk

- Frailty or muscle weakness
- Changes in balance or mobility
- Low blood pressure, especially when standing
- Medication side effects
- Rushing or standing up too quickly
- Musculoskeletal damage from previous falls (e.g., fractures, stiffness, reduced bone strength)



Practice strength conditioning exercises to help improve balance, flexibility, and overall mobility, reducing the risk of falls

Making your Home Safer

- Remove or secure loose rugs
- Clear clutter, cords, and cables from walkways
- Improve lighting in hallways, stairs, and bathrooms
- Use night lights for bathroom trips
- Install handrails

Physio & Strength Conditioning Exercises

Regular exercises improve balance, flexibility, and overall mobility, reducing fall risk.

Examples include:

- Balance exercises: standing on one leg, heel-to-toe walking
- Strength training: legs, core, and upper body to support stability
- Flexibility & stretching: maintain joint mobility and prevent stiffness
- Functional movements: practice everyday tasks safely, like getting up from a chair or climbing stairs

Tip: Consult a physiotherapist to create a program tailored to your needs. Regular practice boosts confidence, independence, and safety.



Key Message

Falls are not just accidents—they are often preventable. Preparing your body and your environment can significantly reduce your risk. Regular strength and balance exercises, combined with understanding your personal risk factors, making small home changes, reviewing health and medications, and using safety supports, help you stay independent, confident, and able to age well on your own terms.

Need help or advice?

Speak to one of our Peer Navigators or visit:

<https://www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au/preventing-falls/home-safety-checklist>

For more information phone 02 8357 8386 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit www.positivelife.org.au

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