



STANDING UP TO FALLS



Government of South Australia
SA Health

Plan what you would do if you fall over

No one expects to have a fall, but having a plan will help you to be confident and get on with life.

If you spend a lot of time alone, it is worth thinking about how to get help in an emergency, how to get up from the floor and what to do after a fall.

Here are some ideas.

Be prepared

- > Make daily contact with a relative, friend, neighbour, carer or Telecross service. They will check if you need assistance if they don't hear from you.
- > Ensure your telephone can be reached from the floor, or carry a cordless or mobile telephone with you.
- > Consider getting a personal alert system so that you can attract attention quickly in an emergency, such as a fall.
- > Leave a spare key with someone you trust, or install a key safe outside your house. This means someone will be able to reach you.
- > Discuss your plan with someone you trust.



Check with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist to find the method that best suits you and to help you to practise it safely.

How would you get up from the floor if you are not badly hurt?

On page three there is a suggested way to get up from the floor. 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, so that you know what to do.





What to do if you fall

1. Stay still and slow your breathing.
2. Check if you have injuries.
3. Look for hazards such as broken glass or electrical cords before you move, or before you allow anyone to help you up.
4. Decide if you will try to get up.
If you can get up:
 - a. think about how you will get up off the floor
 - b. if you do not manage the first time, rest before trying again.
5. Seek medical attention if you are hurt.

If you can't get up

Call for help by using your personal alert, 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, drag yourself under shelter and try to move out of direct sunlight and off hot paving
- > if you need to urinate, find something absorbent to use, so you protect your skin
- > if you can, change position from time to time to take pressure off a part of your body
- > if you can, drink to prevent dehydration.

What you should do after a fall

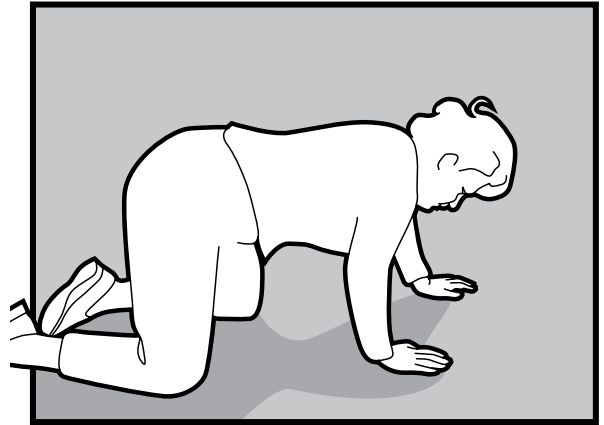
- > Seek urgent medical help if you start to feel confused, develop a bad headache, nausea and vomiting, blurry vision, limb weakness, neck stiffness, feeling tired or having no energy after the fall.
- > Write down the details of the fall (when, what, how).
- > Tell your doctor or health professional about the fall as soon as possible after it happened, even if you are not hurt. He or she can look into possible causes and treatment options. This is particularly important if you are on blood thinners.
- > Talk to your health professional so you can work together to prevent future falls, keep your independence and confidence.
- > Tell your daily contact person about your fall. Stay in contact frequently as injuries may not show up straight away.



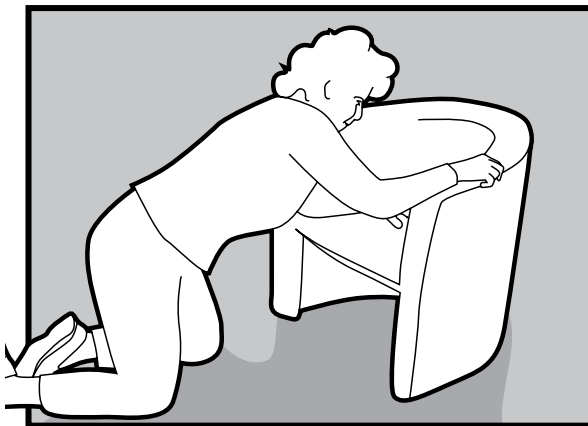
A suggested way of getting up if you are not badly injured



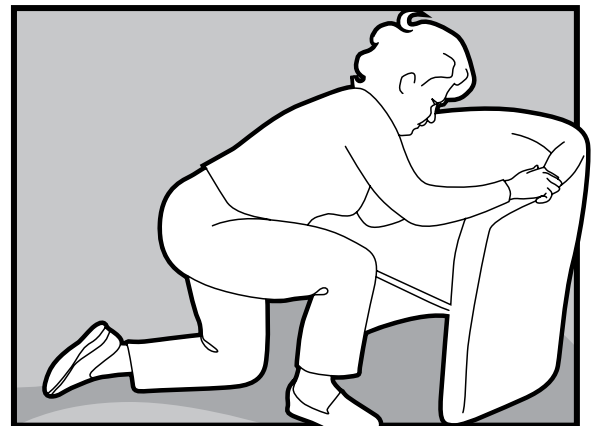
1. Roll onto your side.



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



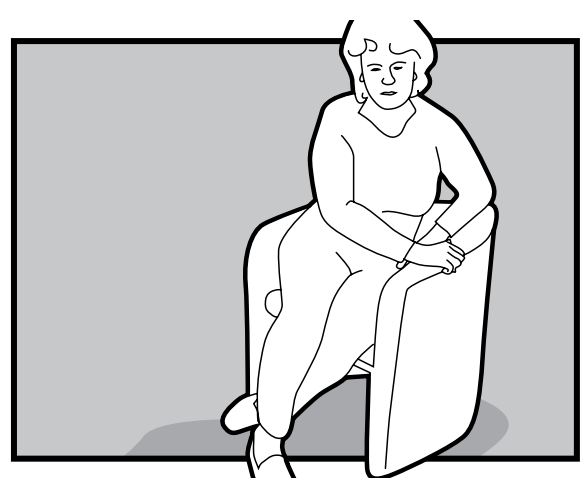
3. From a kneeling position, put arms up onto the furniture.



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.



Who can help?

- > Your **doctor** for concerns you have about what to do if you had an emergency at home such as a fall. Your doctor can refer you to other health professionals or any services you may be eligible for.
- > **Physiotherapists** or **occupational therapists** can help you to develop a falls plan and talk about other ways to prevent falls.
- > To find an occupational therapist or physiotherapist near you, phone **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre** 1800 052 222, or look in the Yellow Pages.
- > **Catalyst Foundation** (formerly Seniors Information Services): (08) 8168 8776 Country callers 1800 636 368
- > **Red Cross Telecross service** provide a phone call a day to check you're OK 1800 885 698
- > **Personal Alarm Systems Rebate Scheme** 1300 700 169 or www.sa.gov.au/topics/seniors
- > **Independent Living Centre** for advice about personal alarms systems 1300 885 886 or (08) 8266 5260 or dhs.sa.gov.au/services/disability/independent-living-centre
- > **Department of Veteran Affairs** (if you are eligible) phone 1800 555 254
- > **My Aged Care** for information and access to Australian Government-funded aged care services 1800 200 422 (free call) or www.myagedcare.gov.au

For more information

Adelaide area: Call 1300 0 FALLS (1300 0 32557) for information about falls prevention services that are close to you.

Country SA: Please contact your local health service for information about services close to you. You can also email the Country Health Falls Prevention coordinator at Health.CHSAFallsPreventionProject@sa.gov.au

sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls

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This document has been reviewed and endorsed by SA Health PwC&CAG* for consumers and the community, March 2015.

*SA Health Partnering with Consumers and Community Advisory Group



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