



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Reduce Your Risk of Falling in Hospital

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet contains advice and information to help us to reduce your risk of falling

① For more information, please contact the department or ward where you have been receiving treatment

If you do not have a direct number
please telephone 01904 631313
and ask for the department or ward

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Introduction

This guide, for patients and visitors, explains how you can help reduce the risk of falling whilst in hospital. We want your stay in hospital to be as safe as possible, but we need your help. It is not possible to stop all falls in hospital but by working together, we can reduce the chances of falls occurring. We encourage you to ask questions and discuss with the staff what can be done to help reduce your risk of falling.

What can I do? (Patient)

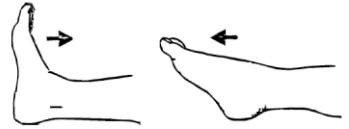
You can help to reduce your risk of falling by following this advice:

- Tell the nurse or doctor if you have fallen in the last year, have a history of falls, or are worried about falling
- Keep the nurse call bell within easy reach, and use it if you need assistance to move.
- Do not walk alone if you have been advised that you need assistance when walking.
- If you have a walking aid, keep it close by and use it when moving around. Do not use the hospital furniture such as the bedside tables to support you, as they are not stable. If your walking aid is damaged or missing, let staff know.

- Ensure you wear your hearing aids and spectacles (if you use them). Ensure your glasses are clean and ask for help if you have any difficulty seeing.
- Get up slowly from the bed or chair. Sit upright for a few moments before standing and ensure you feel steady before moving. Remember your blood pressure may fall as you stand up, which can make you feel dizzy or unsteady. If you do feel dizzy, stop, sit down and let staff know.
- Familiarise yourself with the bedside environment, keep everything you need within easy reach, and ask staff to remove any clutter. Avoid stretching or bending to reach things.
- Wear non-slip well-fitting slippers or light weight shoes.
- Drink plenty of fluids (preferably water) to keep hydrated (unless advised otherwise) and eat well.
- Let staff know if you are concerned about moving around or falling. Remember you are in an unfamiliar environment, and we are here to help.

The next page shows you some simple exercises that you can do on the bed or chair. These exercises will not stop you falling, but will help prevent your legs getting weaker whilst you are in hospital. Do not do the exercises if you have a particular injury or pain that you are concerned about – speak to the nurse or physio for advice.

1. Move your ankles up and down as far as is comfortable. Point your toes away from you, and then pull them up towards you.



Repeat 10 times. You can then also circle your ankles 10 times in each direction. This exercise can be done on the bed or the chair.

2. Sitting in your chair, with good posture. Straighten one leg out in front of you. Hold for 5 secs then slowly lower. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



3. Do not do this exercise if you have recently had a hip replacement.

Sitting in your chair, with good posture. March your knees on the spot, lifting one leg at a time up towards your chest. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



4. Lying on your bed with your legs straight. You can elevate your head if this is more comfortable.

Lift one leg a few inches off the bed, ensuring that you keep your knee straight. Hold for three to five seconds, and then slowly lower. Repeat 10 times on each leg.



What can I do? (Visitors)

If you are a relative, carer or friend, you can help by doing the following:

- Where possible, make sure the patient has well-fitting non-slip footwear and well-fitting clothes.
- Bring in spectacles / dentures / hearing aids and all medication
- If you are aware that your relative or friend has fallen in the past, or are concerned about them falling please inform the nursing staff
- Let us know if you spot any spillages that may be a hazard

Before you leave:

- Make sure that the patient realises you are leaving
- Make sure the nurse call bell is near the patient, as well as anything else they may want
- Please put your chair away

Bed Rails

Please be aware that the rails on the side of the bed may not be in use. In some instances, bed rails can increase the risk of injury. If you are unsure if they should be up or down, please speak to a member of the team.

What we will do:

If you are at risk of falling, we will:

1. Complete an assessment that will look at several different aspects that may contribute to your chances of falling.
2. Based on the assessment, we will take steps to reduce your risk of falls, this may involve:
 - Moving you to another area of the ward, where we can easily observe you.
 - Regularly checking and offering you assistance to the toilet.
 - Providing you with any walking aid you may need to use in hospital.
 - Assessing whether bed rails should be used.
 - Checking your footwear and offering advice on suitable alternatives.
 - Reviewing your medication.
 - Checking your lying and standing blood pressure, to see if there is any drop that may be contributing to you feeling unsteady.

If you fall in hospital

Some patients still fall, even when advice is followed, and we have tried to do the things mentioned in this leaflet. If you do fall, the nurses and doctor will check you for signs of injury and give you any treatment necessary.

Following a fall, you will be re-assessed, and we may advise you of additional actions to keep you safe.
References and further information

NHS online help and advice: www.nhs.uk

Age UK have produced a range of free advice leaflets for older people.

For more information or contact Age UK on:
0800 169 6565 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

The Patient Safety Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 631313.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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