



Positive Steps

**Positive Steps to Avoid Slips,
Trips and Falls**





This booklet has been designed to support the Positive Steps falls awareness programme aimed at older people who are at risk of falls.

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Alcohol

The safe drinking guidelines are as follows:

Older Adults = 2 to 3 units per day

(maximum of 14 units per week, with at least 2 alcohol free days per week)

This may be too high for older adults as alcohol can:

- increase unsteadiness and risk of having a fall
- disturb sleep patterns
- impact on co-ordination and memory, leading to falls and general confusion
- lower your mood
- interfere with prescribed medications, causing some drugs to be exaggerated such as diazepam (Valium) and reducing the effectiveness of some others e.g. tablets to reduce high blood pressure
- cause thinning of the bones when drunk at higher levels.

Experts* recommend reducing the daily alcohol units for over 65's:

Older Adults = 1.5 to 2 alcohol units per day (with at least 2 alcohol free days per week).

Contact Drinkline on 0800 7314 314 or visit www.drinksmarter.org for further information and advice.

Renfrewshire Council on Alcohol

8 Ince Street

PA1 1HP

Tel: 0141 8870880



*Guidance from The Royal College of Psychiatrists



Sensory impairment

Problems with vision and hearing can be important factors in a fall. Poor vision can affect balance and co-ordination as well as the more obvious difficulties of negotiating uneven ground or steps.



Eyesight

Fact – older people with a visual impairment have double the risk of falling

Fact – 80% of people with a visual impairment are over 60

Fact – a 60 year old needs three times as much light as a 20 year old!

Action – Go for regular eye tests and wear glasses of the correct strength

Action - Improve lighting and de-clutter

Action - Use bold and bright colours to highlight areas of your home (e.g. steps). A good colour contrast makes things easier to see.



Hearing loss

Loss of hearing is common as people age, and is frequently ignored or not treated.

Hearing loss can be caused by inner ear problems which tend to affect balance. People with hearing loss may also have a general lower awareness of their surroundings, or may be distracted by their hearing problem from carrying out tasks such as balance and walking.

Even mild hearing loss may increase the risk of having a fall. It might be worth having a hearing test and investigating hearing problems further.



For further information contact:

RNIB Scotland **07825 282 544**

Action on Hearing Loss Scotland **0808 808 0123**

Sensory Impairment **0141 207 7878**

**or adultservicesreferral.sw@renfrewshire.gcsx.gov.uk
text / SMS: 07958 010325**





Continence

Incontinence is urgency where you need to get to the toilet quickly. It is better to go to the toilet regularly rather than waiting until the need is at its highest. Constipation can also irritate the bladder.

Nocturia is where you need to get up several times during the night to go to the toilet. Falls can occur due to stumbling in the dark or through tiredness. Please try to not rush and have adequate lighting e.g. safety lights, touch lamps.

Don't struggle with incontinence by yourself, here are some useful tips:

- Try to drink as normally as possible. Normal fluid intake is 6-8 cups per day. Cutting down on liquids will make things worse
- Reduce caffeine intake e.g. coffee, tea
- Try to avoid constipation by eating a balanced diet with plenty of fibre
- Contact your GP (family doctor), practice or district nurse to access specialist continence services and clinics.



Diet



The most important areas around diet that older people need to be aware of are:

Calcium and Vitamin D – both are important for healthy teeth and bones

Osteoporosis - thinning of the bones

Malnutrition - where your body lacks essential nutrients

You could be malnourished whether you are over or underweight because you aren't getting the balance of foods in your diet right. For example, you can be a healthy weight but if you eat a limited range of foods your body may lack essential nutrients.

Tips for eating well:

- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables
- Base your meals on starchy foods (e.g. pasta, rice, potatoes, bread)
- Cut down on saturated fat and sugar (e.g. cakes, biscuits, fried foods, ice cream)
- Eat less salt – no more than 6g a day for adults
- Eat more fish – including a portion of oily fish each week
- Drink plenty of water
- Be more active and try to be a healthy weight
- Don't skip breakfast.



Reducing the risk of malnutrition*

You may be at risk of malnutrition if you are eating or drinking less than usual, or if you are losing weight without trying. There are some important changes you can make to your diet if you think you may be at risk of malnutrition:

- Try and use one pint of full fat milk a day
- Enrich milk by adding four tablespoons of dried, skimmed milk powder to one pint of full fat milk. Use this in tea, coffee, milky drinks, cereals and puddings
- Spread butter or margarine thickly and add to potatoes and vegetables
- Add cheese to sauces, vegetables, potatoes, pasta and grate over ready meals
- Add cream to soups, stews, porridge, potatoes, fruit and puddings
- Eat little and often. Try to include two to three nourishing snacks a day
- Avoid low fat or diet products
- Make sure you take at least six to eight drinks throughout the day. Nourishing drinks include milky tea, coffee, milkshakes, smoothies, hot chocolate or malted milk drinks.





* If you have diabetes please consult your family doctor (GP), nurse or dietitian before making any of these changes. If you continue to struggle with your appetite or are still losing weight after 4 weeks of following this advice speak to your GP, nurse or dietitian.

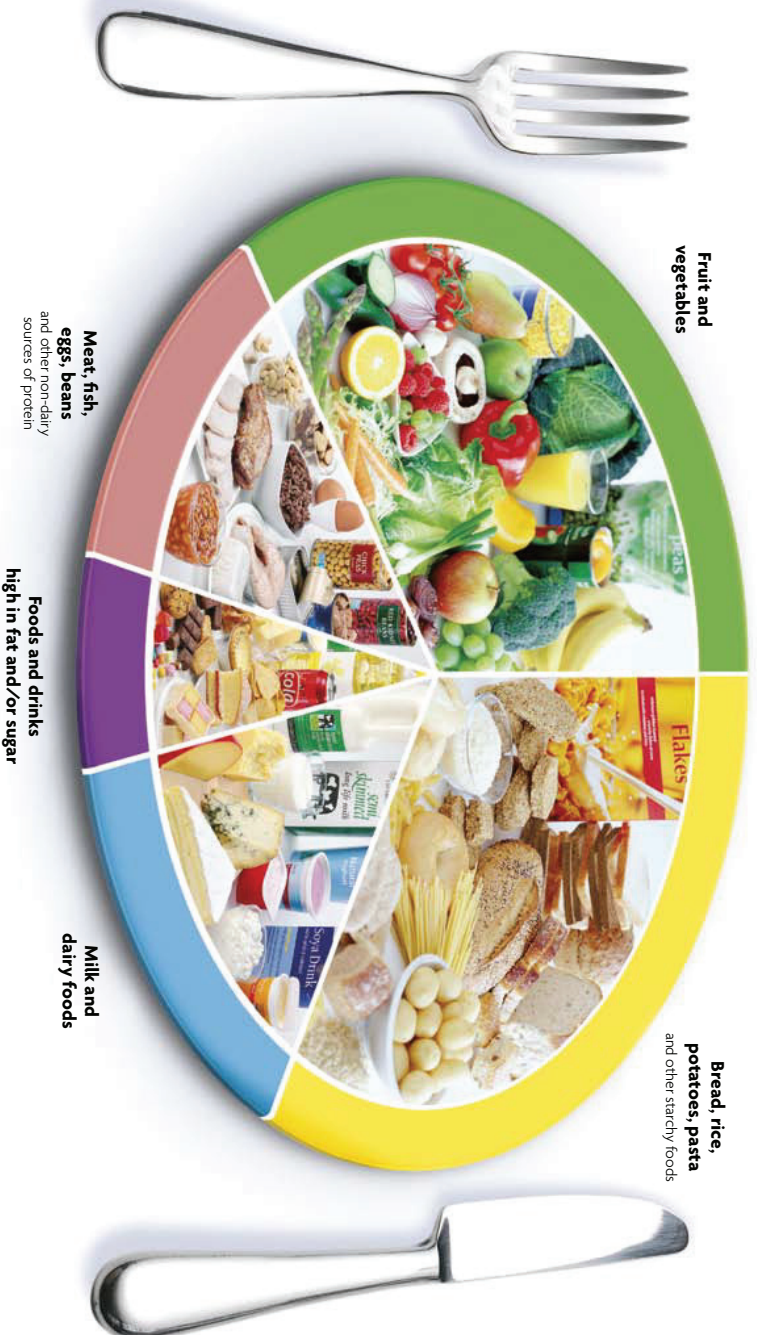
Further information:

Fact sheets on diet and health are available on the 'Food Facts' section of the British Dietetic Association website, www.bda.uk.com



The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Department of Health in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland



Stay Active

Try to be active every day and aim to include moderate and vigorous intensity activities in your routine. Moderate intensity activities include ballroom dancing and brisk walking. Vigorous intensity activities include climbing stairs or running.

Try to improve muscle strength by carrying shopping or taking part in chair based exercise classes.

Improving balance and co-ordination can help reduce the risk of falls. Take part in activities like yoga, tai chi or the Vitality classes programme.

Spend less time sitting and slot in activity to your daily routine, such as gardening, washing the car or walking part of the way instead of taking the bus or car.

Local activity opportunities

Vitality - Is a programme of exercise classes that supports participants to exercise at a level suitable to their abilities. The classes are suitable for people with different physical abilities and medical conditions. Classes are designed to help build and maintain strength, balance, co-ordination, endurance, flexibility, which are important in preventing falls and helping participants to carry out daily activities more easily. All vitality classes are led by highly trained and experienced instructors. There is a small charge for these classes. You can self refer to the programme by filling in a self-referral form at your local leisure centre or be referred by a healthcare professional.



Live Active – is an exercise referral scheme which may help you if you want to become more active, or have been advised to become more active e.g. by your GP or Practice nurse, and you are not sure how to start. When referred, you will attend a consultation with an exercise counsellor, who will provide advice, support and encouragement. If you are interested in the scheme, contact your GP, Practice Nurse or Physiotherapist.

For more information about Vitality classes, Live Active scheme and other physical activity opportunities in Renfrewshire contact Renfrewshire Leisure on:

Paisley	0141 618 4947
Johnstone and Linwood	0141 618 4948
Erskine and Renfrew	0141 618 4949
General Enquires	0141 618 6339

The Renfrewshire Walking Network organise free health walks, walking groups and events in Renfrewshire to suit all health and fitness levels, for further information contact:

Senga McLeod (Walking Officer) **0141 889 1110**
senga.mcleod@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Search for activities in your local area at:

Renfrewshire Leisure website: www.renfrewshireleisure.com

Active Scotland website: www.activescotland.org.uk

Active Communities website: www.activecommunities.co.uk

Living it up website: www.livingitup.org.uk

For those who prefer to exercise at home Keeping Fit and Active exercise booklets and dvds are available from the health improvement team by contacting **01505 821800**

Voluntary organisations often provide details of local health and wellbeing opportunities in your area.

Contact: **Engage Renfrewshire 0141 887 7707**



Keep your feet healthy

Toenail care

- Cut, clip and file toenails safely; keep them at a length which feels comfortable. Trim your nails straight across and smooth the corners with an emery board or nail file. This prevents the nail from growing into the skin.

Skin care

- Wash feet daily using warm water and mild soap but don't leave them to soak as this destroys the natural oils in your skin and can increase damage. Dry thoroughly especially between the toes.
- Smooth and moisturise dry and rough skin. Avoid use of moisturiser between the toes.
- Check for cracks and breaks in the skin and signs of inflammation. Look for signs of infection or other obvious early problems and seek professional advice.



Checking footwear

- 70% of foot problems are caused by footwear, therefore it is important to ensure you are wearing shoes that fit well and do not cause your feet any pain
- Always get the right size and width. You should be able to wriggle your toes inside the shoes comfortably
- For everyday use, choose a shoe with a fastening strap or lace. This will act like the seat belt in a car and prevent too much movement of the foot in the shoe
- A thick rubber sole is recommended in most cases. This acts as a shock absorber and protects the soles
- Watch out for seams or stitching - these can lead to painful areas on the toes
- Avoid use of ill fitting, soft, sloppy shoes or slippers as these can cause you to slip, trip or fall.

Further information, guidance and useful resources are available at: www.lookafteryourfeet.info

Referral to local podiatry services can be made by contacting your local podiatry centre, or through your GP or other health professional:

Johnstone Health Centre	01505 821 306
New Sneddon Street Clinic Paisley	0141 887 7771
Foxbar Health Centre	01505 821 600
Linwood Health Centre	01505 821 400
Renfrew Health and Social Work Centre	0141 207 7407
Erskine Health Centre	0141 314 9300



Home Hazards

There are many hazards around your home which can be removed to help reduce the risk of falls. Use this checklist to see what changes you can make.

Home safety checklist

- Are your hall, stairs and walking areas well lit and kept free of clutter?
- Is there enough room to walk around the furniture in your home and to use a walking aid safely? (if needed)
- Are flooring and rugs in good repair with no curled edges?
- Are electrical cables and telephone cords kept tidy?
- Do you have a light and telephone beside your bed?
- Do you keep a nightlight on for night time trips to the toilet?
- Do you keep bedcovers and dressing gowns off the floor so they don't present a trip hazard?
- Are your light switches well placed and close to doors?
- Is there a light switch at the top and bottom of your stairs?
- Do you have handrails or bannisters at your steps and stairs?
- Do you have a sturdy stepping stool with slip resistant feet, no more than three steps high, for simple household tasks such as changing a lightbulb? Ask a family member or friend to help you with these jobs.



- Do you have a slip resistant mat for use in the bath or shower?
- Do you keep items which are used most often at a suitable height to avoid bending or climbing?
- Are your windows and blinds easily accessible without having to reach or lean too far?
- Do you clean up spills as soon as they happen?
- Are your garden paths and steps level, stable and kept free of moss? Do you have safety rails and barriers where there are changes in garden levels?

What do I need to do to my home to make it safer?

1.

2.

3.

You should complete this section, and then discuss with a family member or professional if you need help to put things in place.





Local services

Care and Repair is a service which provides advice and practical assistance, including small repairs, on home maintenance to elderly and disabled home owners and private tenants. For more information contact your local office.

Care & Repair 0141 812 4111
www.carerepairenfrewshire.org.uk





Assistive Technology



Assistive technology allows support to be given to people to help maintain their independent lifestyle in the community by providing a response service in emergencies.

Assistive technology provides reassurance and can raise confidence of the individual service user, particularly if they have had a fall.

A variety of telecare sensors are available and can be used in certain situations where a particular need has been identified.

These consist of:

- **Triggers:** a personal pendant or wrist strap supplied with a standard alarm installation.
- **Fall detector:** for people with a history of falls
- **Bed monitor:** used to detect when someone gets out of bed during the night and fails to return after a specified period of time has elapsed. The installation can be set up to trigger only when falling out of bed at night.
- **Pressure mat:** used for people with dementia who may be at risk when they get out of bed during the night. Can also be used to assist a carer, looking after their partner or relative in their own home.



- **Smoke detector:** can be used where it has been identified that someone is at risk from fire, through cooking or smoking issues.

These triggers activate an alert to an alarm receiving centre that then contacts the local responder service (or a nominated person of choice) to attend to the emergency.

To find out more about assistive technology, contact the Telecare Service Coordinator on **0141 618 2584**

Anyone can self refer or refer another person for a standard alarm installation. To do this, contact the Adult Service Referral Team (ASeRT) on **0141 207 7878**.





What should I do if I have a fall?

I can get up...

Ease yourself up onto your elbows



Move onto your hands and knees



Hold onto a stable/firm surface to support yourself



Raise yourself into a standing position



Turn yourself gently and sit on a firm surface





I can't get up...

Can I attract attention?

- **Shout and bang something**
- **Press your pendant alarm**
- **Use the telephone if you can**



Can I get comfortable?

- **Find a nearby cushion or rolled up jumper as a pillow**
- **Keep warm, cover yourself with clothing, a tablecloth or rug**



Can I keep moving?

- **Move positions to avoid getting sores**
- **Move joints to avoid stiffness and help circulation**
- **Roll away from damp area if your bladder 'lets go'**

Always tell your GP or health professional about your fall.





Falls screening

A falls screening is where a professional looks at you in your own home, and identifies any things which might make you more likely to have a slip, trip or fall. It can also help to see what further help may reduce the risks of falling. Falls screening in Renfrewshire is provided by two services:

Community Falls Prevention Programme - this service is for people aged 65 and over who live in the community, who have fallen at least once in the past year, and where help is not required straight away.

Rehabilitation & Enablement Service (RES) - this service is for people aged 16 and over who are unable to get out without help, and where there are concerns over how the individual is managing, and their risk of falling.

Contact:

Community Falls Prevention Programme

0141 427 8311

Rehabilitation & Enablement Service (RES)

0141 207 7878



Health and lifestyle checklist

If you answer **No** or **Not always** or **Not sure** to more than **one** of these questions then you may be at risk of a fall. You might like to discuss this checklist during your next appointment with a health professional.

Staying active

Are you physically active for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week? This can be broken down into 3 sets of 10 minutes and includes activity that makes you breathe faster and feel warmer like walking, gardening or housework.

Do you take part in balance and strength activities twice a week, like dancing, tai chi or yoga?

Calcium, vitamin D and water

Do you eat three healthy meals per day?

Do you eat 3-4 servings of high calcium foods (milk, yoghurt, cheese, fish, bread or green leafy vegetables) per day?

Do you spend a little bit of time in the sun? (10-15 minutes per day in summer, between 11am and 3pm)

Do you drink 8-10 glasses of water (or other fluids) per day?

No	Not always	Yes



Getting out and about

Can you get out of a chair easily?

Is it easy for you to keep your balance when walking?

Managing health conditions

Does your health allow you to manage all your normal activities?

Can you stand up and move around without feeling light-headed, dizzy or faint?

Do you have good control of your bladder and bowel so that you can get to the toilet without rushing?

Eyesight and hearing

Have you had your eyes examined in the last 12 months?

Do you find it easy to hear people?

Feet

Have you had your feet checked for corns, bunions or other problems that can cause pain or affect balance?

Medicines

Have you had your medications reviewed by your doctor in the last 12 months?

History of falling

Have you stayed on your feet (been free of falls) for at least the last 6 months?

No

Not
always

Yes

No	Not always	Yes





Your falls plan

What are your goals after listening to the Positive Steps presentation?

1.

2.

3.

What difference will this make to your life?



What changes will you make after taking part in the Positive Steps programme? Consider discussing these changes with a family member, carer or professional if you need help to put things in place.

1.

2.

3.

What would you do if you had a fall?

1.

2.

3.





Top tips for Positive Steps

These top tips provide a summary of the measures you can take to reduce your risk of falls.

- **Lower your alcohol intake**

Alcohol can increase unsteadiness and the risk of having a fall, as well as interfering with prescribed medication.

- **Take medication as prescribed**

Always take medication as prescribed by your doctor and if any side effect is troubling you, speak to your doctor or pharmacist, or ask for a review of your medications.

- **Keep up your health checks**

Ensure you have your eyes tested regularly, your hearing checked if needed and take your annual free flu jab.

- **Have a healthy diet**

Calcium and vitamin D are important for bone strength. Aim to eat 2-3 portions of food rich in calcium per day, and try to get out in the sunshine for 10-15 minutes per day. Balance this with a healthy diet.

- **Stay active**

Keep mobile and try to include activities that focus on strength and balance, such as walking, dancing or tai chi.



- **Walking aid**

If you have a walking aid, make sure you use it and that it is maintained. Your physiotherapist can repair or replace your walking aid if needed.

- **Look after your feet**

Make sure you wear well fitting shoes around the home and get any foot problems checked.

- **Check your home for hazards**

Make sure your home is well lit and there are no trailing cables or trip hazards.

- **Find out about Assistive Technology**

The installation of a basic alarm unit or discreet sensors can support people to live in their own home for longer. Find out by contacting the Community Alarm and Telecare Service on **0141 618 2584**

- **Make a falls plan**

After reading the information in the Positive Steps booklet, see what changes you can make to your lifestyle to ensure that you live free of falls.



Useful contact numbers

The contact details below are examples of some services that you may find useful.

NHS 24	111
Emergency service	999
GP (family doctor)	
Rehabilitation & Enablement Service (RES)	0141 207 7878
Community falls prevention team	0141 427 8311
RNIB Scotland (Shona Spence)	07825 282 544
Sensory Impairment Numbers	0141 207 7878
fax: 0141 886 3460 or text / SMS 07958 010325	

Podiatry:

Johnstone Health Centre	01505 821 300/6
New Sneddon Street Clinic Paisley	0141 887 7771
Foxbar Health Centre	01505 821 600
Linwood Health Centre	01505 821 400
Renfrew Health and Social Work Centre	0141 207 7407
Erskine Health Centre	0141 314 9300
Scottish Fire and Rescue service	0800 0731 999
Police Scotland free home security check	101
Drinkline	0800 7314 314



Telecare Service Coordinator

0141 618 2584

Vitality and Renfrewshire Leisure Opportunities:

Paisley

0141 618 4947

Johnstone and Linwood

0141 618 4948

Erskine and Renfrew

0141 618 4949

General Enquires

0141 618 6339

Renfrewshire Walking Network

0141 889 1110

Active Communities

0141 258 9923

Health Improvement Team

01505 821 800

Engage Renfrewshire

0141 887 7707

Care and Repair

0141 812 4111

Roar-Connections for Life

0141 889 7481

Roar - Connections For Life is a service for older adults designed to connect lives and build communities.

Food Train

0141 887 2557

Food Train provides a grocery shopping and delivery service to people aged 65 and over with age or health related difficulties. It is a volunteer led service, which costs £3 per delivery.





Environmental Services

0141 842 4448

For help with taking wheelie bins out and further help and assistance on land and environment issues.

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

0141 887 3643

Supporting unpaid carers throughout Renfrewshire.

Contact the Elderly

0141 812 1555

Contact the Elderly - charity who aim to reduce loneliness of isolated older people living alone with limited support from family, friends and statutory services. Volunteers host afternoon teas in their home each month, providing transport to and from, where a small group enjoy warm hospitality and friendship.

Renfrewshire Council website

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

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The material has been reproduced in Renfrewshire, with the kind permission of NHS Ayrshire & Arran

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Your notes







Let's take action

**Positive steps ...
... prevent falls!**

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