

[www.islington.gov.uk](http://www.islington.gov.uk)



**ISLINGTON**

In partnership with

Islington **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

**AGE** Islington  
*Concern*

# Stand up against falls!

A self help guide to reduce your risk of falling



## Stand up against falls!

Falls are not an inevitable part of getting older. You can reduce your risk of falling.

Read on to find out what help is available if you need it. Even if you haven't experienced a fall some of the information will be helpful.

If you have been admitted to hospital as a result of your fall, or are concerned about your falls, you can also contact **Age Concern Islington** Home from Hospital service. They can go through this booklet in detail with you. They can also support you in making appointments and offer practical assistance.

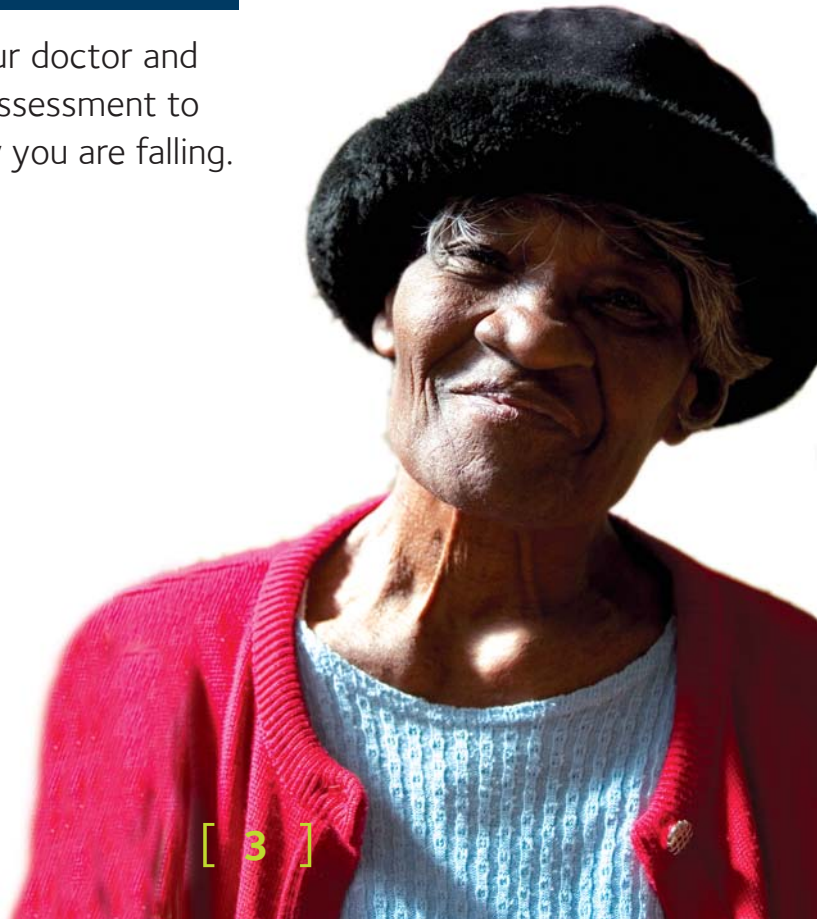
All the organisations have been highlighted. All the numbers you will need are at the back of the booklet on page 14.

## Have you fallen recently and you don't know why?

It is important to find out why you have fallen so you can make small changes where possible to reduce the risk of future falls.

### ACTION

- Speak to your doctor and request an assessment to find out why you are falling.



## Do you feel light-headed or dizzy when you stand up after lying or sitting down?

When you stand up your blood pressure can drop. This can cause you to fall.

### ACTION

- If you have been lying down for a long time, sit on the side of the bed for a couple of minutes and then slowly stand.
- If you have been sitting for a long time get up slowly and make sure you are steady before walking.
- Tell your doctor if you think your medication is making you feel dizzy.
- Ask your doctor or nurse to check your blood pressure.



## Do you take any tablets?

These tablets:

- sleeping tablets
- heart, blood pressure tablets
- water tablets
- tranquilisers
- anti-depressant tablets

may make you fall, because they can cause your blood pressure to drop.

### ACTION

- Ask your doctor or nurse to check your blood pressure.
- Always take medicines and tablets as prescribed.
- Let your doctor know if new medicines or tablets cause you to have side effects.
- Ask your doctor to review your medication. If you are over 65 your doctor should review your medication every 12 months.
- You can also ask your local pharmacist for advice regarding your medication.

## Do you have difficulty with your eyesight?

There are things you can do to avoid slips and trips.

### ACTION

- Make sure your glasses are clean and are in good condition.
- Have a spare pair of glasses.
- Have good lighting in all areas of your home.
- Consider changing your bifocals or varifocals to single-vision lenses.
- If you are unable to get out to see an optician, the **RNIB low vision service** can come and see you at home.
- If you are registered blind or partially sighted, **Islington Social Services Sensory Team** can help. After an assessment they could provide you with specialist equipment and give advice as required.



## Do you need to go to the toilet often?

There could be a number of reasons why you need to go to the toilet frequently or urgently:

- infection
- not drinking enough liquids
- some medications
- drinking too much caffeine or alcohol

Rushing to the toilet to avoid an accident may lead to a fall.

### ACTION

- At night, always turn a light on.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse.
- You can refer yourself to the **Islington Bladder and Bowel Care service** for a confidential specialist assessment.

## Have you been feeling forgetful or have difficulty concentrating?

Poor concentration and forgetfulness can be caused by many different things, such as:

- side-effects of medication
- poor appetite or not eating properly
- feeling stressed, nervous or anxious
- feeling sad, lonely or depressed
- grief and loss
- worrying about poor memory
- chronic pain
- feeling afraid of falling

### ACTION

- Speak to your doctor in confidence about this.

## Do you have difficulty walking?

Poor footwear and foot problems can affect your balance and the way you walk.

### ACTION

- Wear comfortable, well-fitting, flat shoes and slippers with non-slip soles.
- Try shoes that fasten with Velcro.
- Tie your laces securely.
- Replace worn slippers.
- Buy slippers that have proper backs, rather than slip ons.
- If you have foot problems, see a podiatrist or chiropodist. You can pick up a referral form from your local health centre and refer yourself to **Islington Primary Care Trust Podiatry Service**.



## Do you feel less steady than you used to?

### ACTION

- Be active every day. Even gentle exercise such as walking can help.
- **Aquaterra Leisure** runs lots of different exercise classes such as T'ai Chi to improve your balance and strength.
- If unsteadiness is seriously affecting the way you manage day to day

activities, contact your doctor to refer you to the **REACH team**. They provide a falls clinic, and individual and group falls advice. They also hold a 'staying steady' group which runs for two hours each week. One hour focuses on falls prevention and the other on specific balance exercises.



## Are you worried about having a fall, or getting up from the floor afterwards?

Islington Council could provide you with 24 hours support 365 days of the year. You can use the Contact Islington community alarm service or Telecare.

### ACTION

- **Contact Islington Community Alarm Service** provides you with a body pendant. This has a button on it which you can press if you have a fall. The alarm will then automatically put a call through to the contact centre and provide the help you need.

- **Telecare** uses wireless sensors that are placed around your home. These sensors automatically respond to an emergency situation such as a fall. The alert is sent through to the Islington control centre where you will be provided with the help you need.

## Around the house

There are hazards inside and outside your home that may contribute to falls:

- uneven flooring
- spillages
- poor lighting
- trailing wires and long clothes
- loose or worn rugs
- steps and stairs with no hand rails
- loose-fitting handrails
- uneven and loose paving
- slippery leaves or icy paving

Sometimes the things that you do put you at risk of falling, such as:

- reaching into too low or too high cupboards
- trying to carry too many things at once
- standing on steps to change light-bulbs and curtains
- bending down to pick up letters, or weed the garden

Most of these are easy to put right.



## ACTION

- The **Mobile Repair service** can carry out a wide range of repairs at a low cost. They can help with:

- appliance repairs
- home maintenance
- plumbing
- electrical
- security
- heating repairs

**Mobile Repair service** also offer a quick fix service for small jobs such as:

- putting up curtains
- changing a light bulb

- **Islington Social Services Occupational Therapy Team** work with people of all ages, to help overcome difficulties with everyday activities at home. After an assessment, they could provide you with specialist equipment and adaptations to make everyday tasks easier and safer. They can also recommend rehousing.
- You can report uneven paving, or areas of poor lighting in your area to the council by calling **Contact Islington**.

## Useful Contacts

**Adult Social Services  
Information and Access Team**  
for information on

- **Telecare**
- **Islington Social Services  
Occupational Therapy Team**

**T 020 7527 2299**

**Age Concern Islington:**

**T 020 7281 6018**

**E [admin@acislington.org.uk](mailto:admin@acislington.org.uk)**

**W [www.acislington.org.uk](http://www.acislington.org.uk)**

**Aquaterra Leisure**

**T 020 7689 9846**

**Contact Islington:**

**T 020 7527 2000**

**W [www.islington.gov.uk](http://www.islington.gov.uk)**

**Contact Islington Community  
Alarm Service:**

**T 020 7527 2000**

**Islington Bladder and  
Bowel Care Service:**

**T 020 7530 3542**

**Islington REACH Team:**

**T 020 7530 3350**

**W [www.islingtonpct.nhs.uk](http://www.islingtonpct.nhs.uk)**

**Islington Social Services  
Sensory Team:**

**T 020 7527 3394**

**Mobile Repair Service:**

**T 0845 450 0410**

**RNIB low vision service:**

**T 020 7391 2053**



**If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7281 6018.**

Age Concern Islington

6-9 Manor Gardens

London

N7 6LA

E [admin@acislington.org.uk](mailto:admin@acislington.org.uk)

T 020 7281 6018

F 020 7281 4901

W [www.acislington.org.uk](http://www.acislington.org.uk)