

Falls prevention at home

A practical short guide from Restore OT — private occupational therapy in Grantham and Lincolnshire.

Why falls happen

Most falls at home have more than one cause: how you move, what you are wearing on your feet, medication effects, lighting, clutter and the layout of the rooms you use most. The good news is that nearly all of these can be changed.

Room-by-room checklist

- Hallway and stairs: both handrails secure, no loose runners or trailing cables, light switches at the top and bottom.
- Living room: clear walking routes, no low footstools in the path, a chair with arms at a height you can rise from unaided.
- Kitchen: everyday items between hip and shoulder height, spills wiped straight away, no reaching or standing on chairs.
- Bathroom: non-slip mat, grab rail by the bath or shower, raised toilet seat if standing up is hard.
- Bedroom: lamp and phone within reach of the bed, a clear route to the toilet, night light on the landing.
- Outdoors: even paths, a rail at the front step, salt or grit ready for icy weather.

Everyday habits that reduce risk

- Wear well-fitting shoes or slippers with a back and a firm sole — never loose slippers or socks alone.
- Sit on the edge of the bed for a few moments before standing, especially at night.
- Keep moving daily; strength and balance decline quickly with rest.
- Ask your GP or pharmacist for a medication review if you feel dizzy or drowsy.
- Have your eyes and hearing checked regularly, and keep glasses clean.
- Carry items in a bag or trolley so one hand stays free for rails.

If you do fall

- Stay still for a moment and check for pain or injury before trying to move.
- If you can get up, roll onto your side, come up onto hands and knees, and use a sturdy chair to push up — never pull on furniture that can tip.
- If you cannot get up, call for help, keep warm with anything within reach, and move your arms and legs gently.
- Tell someone about every fall, even if you were not hurt — patterns matter more than single events.

How an OT can help

A home falls assessment looks at your movement, your routine and your home together. You get a written plan with prioritised, practical actions — equipment, rails, lighting, seating heights and confidence strategies — that you can share with family, your GP or a contractor. This guide is general information and does not replace individual assessment. To arrange an appointment call 0115 647 7997 or email edith@restoreot.co.uk.