In anyone with weak and fragile bones due to osteoporosis, even a minor fall from standing height can result in a broken bone.

Read on and learn how you can decrease your risk of falls by safe-proofing your home and becoming stronger and steadier on your feet.
Accidental falls are common and in adults aged 65 and over, 30% fall annually and 10-15% will suffer injuries as a result. If you have osteoporosis falls prevention is especially important because your bones are fragile and could break easily, even as a result of a minor slip.

Don’t let broken bones threaten your independence – take steps now to reduce your risk of falls.

**FACTORS WHICH INCREASE YOUR RISK OF FALLS**

**Medical conditions and symptoms**
- Dementia (Alzheimer)
- Fracture
- Delirium
- Stroke
- Neurological Conditions
- Diabetes
- Low Blood Pressure when standing after sitting or lying down
- Dizziness
- Foot problems
- Vision Impairment
- Muscle Weakness

**Medications**
- Certain medicines, including some used to treat anxiety, depression, other forms of mental illness, high blood pressure or to help sleep, or taking multiple medications

**Other Factors**
- Age
- History of falling
- Fear of falling
- Assistive devices
- Inadequate footwear
- Unsafe environment e.g. loose rugs in the home

**DON’T LET THE FEAR OF FALLING STOP YOU IN YOUR TRACKS**

Although it is good to be careful, excessive fear of falling can lead to inactivity and prolonged sitting, a cycle which eventually leads to increased falls risk.

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A targeted exercise programme that improves your muscle strength and balance will help you reduce your risk of falling and give you confidence to stay active.
**6 STEPS TO PREVENT FALLS**

**PREVENTING FALLS IS AN IMPORTANT WAY TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO YOUR BONE HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Talk to Your Doctor About Falls Prevention**
Mention any previous falls, whether you tend to feel dizzy, and review your prescription medications as they can contribute to falling, particularly if you take multiple medications.

**Find a Good Exercise Programme**
Exercise regularly, with attention to muscle-strengthening exercise and balance training.

**Maintain Good Vision**
Have your eyes checked at least once a year, and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed. Be careful on stairs if wearing bifocals, and wear sunglasses if needed to reduce glare.

**Maintain a Healthy Diet and Don’t Skip Meals**
Maintain a nutritious and protein-rich diet, and don’t skip meals if you feel dizzy as a result.

**Stay Steady On Your Feet**
Wear comfortable shoes with good support, a broad heel and non-slip soles.

**Fall-Proof Your Home**
Remove obstacles and use supports (e.g. handrails) to prevent slips.

**How to Fall-Proof Your Home**
- **Remove objects** you could trip over
- Ensure mats are firmly affixed, repair loose carpet or raised areas on the floor
- Move furniture out of walking paths
- Be aware of raised doorways and steps
- Use non-skid floor wax
- Install handrails by the bathtub or shower
- Have non-skid mats (and watch out for slippery, wet surfaces)
- Keep your home well lit, especially hallways, stairways, and outside walkways
- Add extra light switches or use lights triggered by motion sensors
- Always hold on to handrails and ensure they are stable and secure
- Wipe up any spills immediately
- Keep regularly used kitchen items at an easy-to-reach level

Please ask for help from family, friends, neighbours or carers so that changes can be made safely!
Depending on where you live, you may be able to participate in exercise programmes offered by your local osteoporosis society or you can sign up for training workshops which are specifically designed for people with osteoporosis. Free online exercise guidance includes:

- **Strong, Steady, Straight** (Royal Osteoporosis Society – UK)
- **Too Fit to Fracture** (Osteoporosis Canada)

EXERCISE PROGRAMMES TO HELP YOU PREVENT FALLS

THE KEY TO REDUCING YOUR RISK OF FALLS IS TO MAINTAIN STRONG MUSCLES AND GOOD BALANCE. EXERCISE SHOULD BE TAKEN AT LEAST 2-3 DAYS PER WEEK, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON BUILDING MUSCLE STRENGTH AND IMPROVING YOUR BALANCE

- **Balance Exercise**
  - Activities such as Tai Chi, yoga or Pilates are excellent for balance. Simple exercises like heel-to-toe walking or standing on one leg also help you improve your balance.

- **Muscle Strengthening/Resistance Exercise**
  - These include activities where you move your body, a weight or some other resistance against gravity. Examples include using elastic resistance bands, weights machines or simply standing and rising onto your toes or standing from a sitting position.

- **Music-Based Multitask Exercise Programme**
  - Senior eurythmic courses have been shown to prevent age-related physical decline in older adults.

**Participate in an Exercise Programme!**

Depending on where you live, you may be able to participate in exercise programmes offered by your local osteoporosis society or you can sign up for training workshops which are specifically designed for people with osteoporosis.

**Free online exercise guidance includes:**

- Strong, Steady, Straight (Royal Osteoporosis Society – UK)
- Too Fit to Fracture (Osteoporosis Canada)

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND ASK FOR ADVICE**

If you have osteoporosis or you fall frequently (more than once in the past year) be sure to discuss falls prevention with your doctor.

- **ASK** for advice about which specific things you can do to help prevent falls
- **ASK** for a review of your medications to see if any might increase your risk of falling
- **ASK** for an evaluation of your risk of falling

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2. Hars M et al. Long-Term Exercise in Older Adults: 4-Year Outcomes of Music-Based Multitask Training. Calcif Tissue Int, 2014; 95:393-404