

# After a Fall

These recommendations are from the National Institutes of Health and should not replace instructions from your doctor. If you have any concerns about getting up after a fall, remain where you are and call 911.

1. Take several deep breaths.
2. Remain still on the floor for a few minutes.
3. Before trying to get up, determine if you are hurt. Trying to get up quickly or in the wrong manner could make an injury worse.
4. Roll onto your side. **Slowly** get up on your hands and knees, and crawl to a sturdy chair.
5. Put your hands on the chair, slide one foot forward, and then slowly rise to a kneeling position. Turn your body to sit in the chair.
6. If you think you are hurt, don't try getting up. Ask for help or call 911.
7. Log your fall details (where, when, how) and talk about it with your doctor.

# What is the ATSPA?

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is a non-profit organization committed to preventing traumatic injury and death through education.

The ATSPA provides educational presentations and materials on a variety of trauma prevention topics. As a non profit organization, all presentations and materials are provided free of charge for any organization, school, business or community group in Pennsylvania.

Contact us today to learn more about our work.



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# Prevent a Fall

Prepare | Plan | Prevent



# Risk Factors:

Many factors can affect the likelihood of a fall. Some of these include:

- **Muscle weakness** – you are more likely to fall if your legs are weak.
- **Balance and gait** – if you have poor balance and find it difficult to walk, you're more likely to fall.
- **Dizziness** – this can be due to a drop in blood pressure from rising too quickly.
- **Reflexes** – inactivity can cause your muscles to react slower when a quick response is needed.
- **Foot problems** – problems with our feet: such as corns, calluses, bunions, ingrown or thick nails and ulcerations - and footwear that is poorly fitted and inappropriate for the occasion, can also increase a person's risk of falling.
- **Sight** – slight variations in your eyesight can cause you to feel unbalanced.
- **Medications** – some medications can cause dizziness and a loss of balance.



# Prevention Tips:

## For your Home

Falls don't "just happen." The first step to preventing a fall is to make simple changes in your lifestyle.

You can "fall proof" your home inside and outside by:

- Removing any **loose area rugs**, cords, furniture or other objects which could pose tripping hazards. If you use rugs, secure them to the floor with double-sided tape or replace with slip resistant rugs.
- Improving the **lighting** throughout your home. Nightlights are a great tool to use in every room, especially those frequented at night.
- Placing items you use frequently within easy reach.
- Using slip resistant **bath mats**. If needed, use a shower chair and install grab bars.
- Installing **handrails** at stairs and walkways, and using them.



# Prevention Tips:

## For your Health

Now that you know how to "fall proof" your home, consider these suggestions to "fall proof" your lifestyle:

- Enroll in a local **falls prevention** program.
- Increase your **physical activity**. Spend at least 30 minutes a day doing low-impact exercises.
- Eat a **well-balanced diet**, rich in calcium.
- Quit smoking and **limit your alcohol**. Even a small amount of alcohol can affect your balance and reflexes.
- Get **regular check-ups** and have your doctor evaluate your medications for side effects.
- Have your **vision checked** yearly, especially if you experience poor depth perception, blurry vision and/or double vision.
- Wear **comfortable shoes**. Choosing sensible footwear can help alleviate imbalance and foot pain.

Looking for a falls prevention program? Contact our office for information on local resources in your area.