

No one wants to have a fall, but if you live alone, or are alone for long periods, you should plan what you'll do, who you'll contact and how they'll get to you. The quicker you can get help after a fall, the less likely you are to experience unnecessary distress and complications.

If you fall you can summon help 24/7 via Taking Care by pressing the button on the personal alarm. Keep mobile phones handy as we may contact you after you've raised the alarm, to check-in and ensure your condition hasn't worsened.

What to do if you fall.

If you fall try to stay calm. Take time to assess the situation as it can take a few minutes to feel pain from injuries. What you do next will depend on if you're hurt and whether or not you're able to get up without help.

Checking for injuries

The first thing you need to do after a fall is work out if you're hurt. Take a few minutes to check your body for any pain or injuries, then:

- if you're not hurt, try to get up from the floor,
- if you're hurt or unable to get off the floor, press your alarm or use your mobile to call for help. Keep warm and moving as best you can while you wait.

Getting up from a fall.

If you're not hurt and feel well enough, you could try to get up from the floor. The best way will differ from person to person, but as a guide, you can:

1. Roll onto your side.
2. Push yourself up to a side sitting position.
3. Slowly get onto your hands and knees.
4. Crawl towards a sturdy piece of furniture that can support you to get up – such as a solid chair or sofa.
5. Kneel side-on to the chair or sofa with your strongest leg next to it, then slide the foot of your strongest leg forward so that it's flat on the floor. Your other knee should remain on the floor.
6. Put both hands on the chair or sofa.
7. Raise and turn your body, pushing through your hands and foot until your bottom is safely on the chair or sofa.
8. Sit for a few minutes before you try to do anything else and check again for injuries.

What to do if you can't get up.

Keeping warm and dry

After calling for help, it's important to keep warm.

- Move onto a carpet, rug or other soft surface. Hard surfaces like tiles and stone floors are often colder and take longer to warm up. If you have to empty your bladder while you're on the floor, move away from the wet area.
- Reach for a nearby duvet cover, blanket or clothing that you can use to cover yourself.
- Move away from areas where there's a draught.
- Keep your body moving.

If you're with someone, ask them to put the heating on or make you a hot drink.

Keeping moving

You should also attempt to keep your body moving as best you can. Lying in one position for too long can make you stiff, sore and damage the skin.

Moving your body, even gently, will keep you warm, focused and calm until help arrives. If you can, try to rock from side to side. If it hurts to move, stop.

Keeping hydrated

If you're on the floor for a long time, you could become dehydrated.

If you have a glass or bottle of water within reach, you can take small sips from it.

Keeping comfortable

Loosen any restrictive clothing – this will help with blood circulation and breathing.

If weakness is obvious in any limb, support it but avoid pulling on it when moving.

What to do if someone else falls.

First, stay calm and don't rush. It can take a few minutes to feel pain from injuries. Reassure them, and assess the situation together, before you act. Don't try to lift them up yourself, unless you really know what you're doing. Consider together the tips in this guide.