



Have you fallen or do you fear falling?

*Four easy ways to remain surefooted and safe everyday,
from an 80 year old ex physio*

1. Don't rush

- the faster you go, the bigger the mess
- rushing is inefficient and hard on us
- enjoy a steadier pace



Slow down

- to answer phone or doorbell
- to catch buses
- when turning

Stop before looking

- in shop windows
- at scenery



2. Be aware of heel-roll-toe

As we get older we lose the spring in our step and the muscles that lift our toes weaken. We need to compensate for these losses and walk safely.

Your feet matter

Wear firm fitting shoes, sandals or bare feet.

Feel the soles of your feet move inside your shoes. They will tell you:

- where your feet are
- the kind of surface you are walking on
- if your weight is evenly balanced.



Place feet slightly apart with toes slightly turned out.

Exaggerate the natural heel-roll-toe action:



Practice heel-roll-toe whenever you walk

- slowly for several weeks. When you feel familiar with the action, take longer and quicker steps
- from first step of the day, and when up at night (if drowsy take smaller steps with your feet wider apart).
- when out walking: if you start to scuff or when paths are rough.

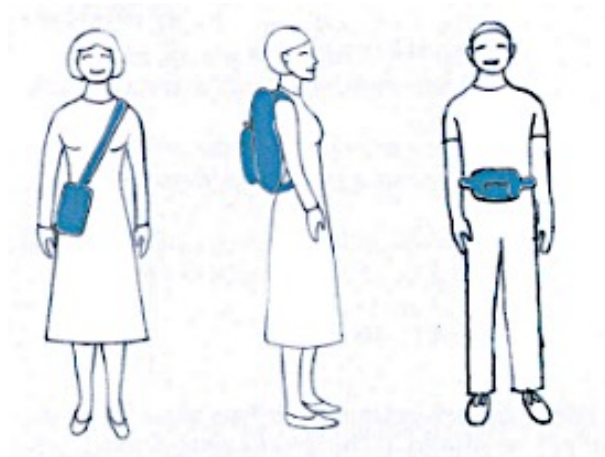
As many falls occur at home, heel-roll-toe is as important when you go from room to room as it is going from street to street.

3. Carry objects close to your body

To maintain good posture when you carry objects, stand tall with your neck and shoulders loose.

When walking and carrying:

- stand tall
- lean with the crown of your head keeping your feet well grounded
- aim to keep your hands empty and arms free to swing
- balance small items in pockets of your vest, jacket or coat
- attach light bags to body
- carry waterproofs and extras in a light backpack
- avoid awkward, uncomfortable bags and umbrellas.



If you must carry heavy objects, try not to hunch or lean towards the weight, even if it is on wheels. Keep tall and straight, then the weight will seem lighter.



4. Keep your legs strong

Climb hills and stairs when available.

Don't always depend on sticks and handrails.

If hills and stairs aren't available, standing up from sitting is a great exercise for thigh and core muscles.



Stand up in three simple moves:

1. Sit tall, relax neck and shoulders, look ahead.
2. Bring head and shoulders forward.
3. Straighten your knees to stand up.

Sit down again in three simple moves:

1. Bring head and shoulders forward
2. Bend your knees
3. Gently lower

Do you need some hand-support to stand up? If so, push through your feet using your legs as well. You'll be surprised how much your legs can and will do.

In conclusion

Establish these activities NOW, before you learn "special" balance exercises. These habits will be with you when you are past doing the balance exercises. They will be with you until the end of your life.