

Steady on...
Stay **SAFE**



Strength



And Balance



Falls History



Environment



***Falls awareness
education resource pack***
Key stage 2

How to use this resource

Falling over is a leading cause of injuries, especially among older adults, however, falling over isn't an inevitable part of getting older. There's lots that older people, and the people around them can do to reduce the risks.

This resource is designed to help children think about falling over, the impact that this could have on people, how they can support friends, relatives and loved ones to reduce their risk of falling and think about how they can age healthily and prevent falling over in their own future.

This session which runs up to 1-hour begins with a classroom-based discussion then an interactive falls 'incident scene' exploration exercise, the second part of the session is preferably in a different room or school hall. There are then extra options for additional activities or further learning including an online 360° falls 'incident scene' which children can investigate themselves.

The pack is targeted towards pupils aged 7-11, but it can easily be adapted for lower and upper age ranges.

This resource is a useful tool to support working towards the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) National Quality Award. It can be used to promote, protect and embed the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of its community through positive action. Find out more: www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/

It can also be used towards the CREST Awards, Superstar level, the British Science Association's scheme for STEM

project work that inspires young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers. This is free for schools to sign up for in Wales. Find out more: www.crestawards.org/

This resource is produced by the National Falls Prevention Taskforce for Wales in conjunction with Age Cymru, Care & Repair Cymru, Age Connects Wales, Swansea Bay Health Board and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.

Find out more about the National Falls Prevention Taskforce for Wales and falls prevention go to: www.agecymru.org.uk/falls

Thank you for taking the time to download this pack. We hope you enjoy it!



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Preparation for the session

How to set up the fall ‘incident scene’

A fall ‘incident scene’ will need to be set up prior to the session, preferably in a separate space such as a school hall but this isn’t essential. This is a scenario which demonstrates potential fall risks and is used for pupils to investigate. The suggested scene is a living room, although falling over can occur in any room in the house. If it’s not possible to set up an ‘incident scene’ we also have an online 360 ‘incident scene’ which

children can use for the investigation, as a group or individually. This included in the ‘Useful links and resources’ section of this resource.

The list below includes key hazards that could cause someone to fall over in their home, and how to set the item up in the ‘incident scene’. Not all items need to be included, this list is to give a variety of ideas of what to include.

Hazard	Key points to set up as a hazard
Rug	Lay the rug to form folds, it could also be laid on a shiny surface. Ideally use a rug that is old with curled up edges or loose threads.
Cables	Trailing cables across floor, extension cords not tucked away, plugs or items that need turning off regularly positioned low down.
Chair	A low or a very high chair, which is difficult to get out of, possibly on wheels, it could have no arms, or the chair could have a shiny surface
TV	TV remote not within reach or no remote, or no batteries in the remote
Coffee table	Low height coffee table preferably with sharp corners/edges
Electric fire	Placed in front of the chair
Books and magazines	Left scattered on the floor
Kid’s toys (ie; toy cars, crayons, Lego, balls)	Left scattered on the floor
Toy cat/dog	Represents pets
Dressing gown	Hung up somewhere but with the tie trailing down
Slippers	Worn slippers with no back or slip ons

Walking frame/Stick/ Crutch	Left out of reach – Could be placed on the other side of room, and/or used as a storage rack for clothes/bags etc
Blankets	Placed over the arm of a chair and dragging on floor
Curtains	Closed not allowing natural light in
Lighting	Low wattage lighting or low-level lighting such as a lamp on floor
Eyeglasses	Glasses placed out of reach
Alcohol	Empty bottle of something by side of the chair
Medication boxes	Disorganised with some pretend pills spilt on the floor
Broken glasses or broken hearing aid	Placed on a table
Telephone	Corded or mobile telephone not within reach
Hot drinks	Full hot drink left not within easy reach
Water glasses	Placed on the table
Crisp packets and chocolate wrappers	Placed on the table

Example of a falls ‘incident scene’





Lesson plan

Classroom exercise – 20 minutes

This part of the activity is designed to get children thinking about falling over, what can cause them or others to fall over and think about the impact that this could have on people they know including older relatives.

What to do

Ask the class the following questions to facilitate a discussion.

1. Who has fallen over this week?
2. What made you fall over?
3. How did this feel?
4. Did you hurt yourself? Were you a little scared?
5. Has anyone had any older relatives or people that you know who have fallen over?
6. Did they hurt themselves?
7. What happened?

Once this discussion has taken place feedback the information below to the class:

Falling over is a big reason for people getting hurt, especially older people. In Wales between 230,000 and 460,000 people aged over 60 fall over each year. That's the same amount as filling the Principality Stadium in Cardiff between 3 and 6 times over.

Once you've fallen over and hurt yourself, it can take time to get over it and feel like your usual self again. Falling over doesn't just cause physical pain, but it can hurt

you mentally and emotionally too. When something unexpected and unplanned happens, suddenly (falling over) it can be a shock. At first, you may laugh, then you may cry, you may think back over what just happened and feel embarrassed or angry. These feelings are completely normal for everyone, at any age. Our cuts and bruises will get better, but we will always remember how it made us feel. And we may worry that it could happen again. We may stop doing the things we love, and playing the games we play but this can make us even sadder and we can lose confidence in our abilities.

The same is true for older people. As you get much older, falling over can be more serious and harder to get better from. Part of getting older is that your bones and muscles get older too! But we shouldn't worry about the things we can't control, like getting older. What we can do is focus on the things we can control, like putting our learning into action. Exercising our muscles that we need to keep our body working for us when we're 14, 40 and even 94!

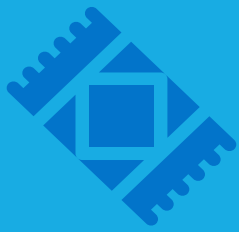
It's one body you have for your entire life, it's yours to look after so you can still enjoy doing the things you love at every stage of life.

Additional resources to support and extend the session

[falling-over-your-body-and-you-resource-eng.pdf](#) (ageuk.org.uk)

Stay safe poster about helping older people to reduce their risk of falling over:

www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/faw-2023/take-action-09023.pdf



Lesson plan

Falls ‘incident scene’ – 25 minutes

The ‘incident scene’ will already be set up before coming into the room. This activity is designed to help children discover what could potentially cause people, particularly older people, to fall over at home, and what could be done to prevent this happening.

What to do

Introduce the session with this explainer:

“Mrs Jones has fallen over in her house, hurt her leg and is now being looked after.

I need you to be detectives and work together to find out what might have happened and how she may have fallen over, and how we can make things safe for when she comes home”.

Then follow with the activity below:

- 1. If the group is small, then ask the children to shout out what they can see in the incident scene which they think may cause someone to fall over. Everyone has to shout out one hazard they can see. There is also the option with larger groups to nominate one or more members of the class to be the detective whilst the others direct them to the different hazards. They could take turns.**
- 2. For each recognised hazard, ask why this could cause someone to fall over and how they think it could be made safer**

Below are prompts to aid the discussion for each of the identified hazards.

Hazard	Key points to set up as a hazard
Rug	Rugs are a classic trip hazard particularly when they move or gather up. Ideally consider removing rugs but only with the person’s agreement. You could consider taping down rug edges, or replacing with a heavy rug which won’t move. Make sure rugs aren’t placed at the top or bottom of stairs.
Cables	Cables are another trip hazard. Remove any trailing wires, reposition behind furniture where possible so they’re not in a walkway. Tape down any wires that can’t be moved. Consider mounting extension cables on a wall to avoid bending down.

Chair	If someone has reduced mobility the more effort, they've to put into standing from the chair the less energy they'll have to move around the house - a low chair will lead to people overcompensating and leaning forward too much to get the momentum to get up. A chair too high could lead to someone slipping forward and off the chair. Chairs should be firm, appropriate height, with firm arms. An extra pillow could be added on seat or back, or the chair could be raised on purpose-built raisers, or it could be swapped for a more appropriate chair
TV	TV remotes are great if they work and if you can reach them – Make sure any remotes are within reach on a good height table next to chair, and add batteries if they're missing.
Coffee table	Low coffee tables may not be in the line of sight when someone is walking around their home, a higher table is recommended. Sharp corners could cause more injury during a fall, avoid glass tops, and sharp edges. Foam lagging could be put around the edge of the table if it's not possible to swap it. Also, you paint a table so it's a different colour to the carpet so it stands out more.
Electric fire	This could be a trip hazard but will also cause serious harm if fallen on. Consider something wall mounted that directs the heat, encourage the use of central heating, add additional layers of clothing (this will keep people warmer if they do fall).
Books and magazines	Books and magazines can cause a slide if stepped on. Remove them and keep on a good height table to avoid bending down. Bending down can cause dizziness which could also lead to falling over.
Kid's toys (ie; toy cars, crayons, Lego, balls)	Remove any toys on the floor. Add a storage box kept out of the way, and always tidy up toys!
Toy cat/dog	Pets especially ones that like to stay close can cause a hazard - large animals can easily knock someone over and smaller animals are less predictable and move quicker often effecting balance. Raise awareness of the risks and think how to reduce the risks through training or support
Dressing gown	Dressing gown ties or wide leg trousers etc (anything long) are a trip hazard particularly on the stairs, raise awareness, tie or sew dressing gown cords in place using the positioning loops, advise on alternative clothing
Slippers	Replace with slippers with wide nonslip base, adjustable straps with a back.
Walking frame/Stick/ Crutch	These are no good if they can't be reached, reposition next to the chair, remove any items that may be hanging on them. Also check that the frame/stick is a safe aid with straight legs and intact feet.
Blankets	Remove any trailing blankets and replace with a smaller lap blanket.
Curtains	Open curtains to allow natural light in, and remove furniture blocking the window to ensure easy access and avoid overreaching and becoming off balance.

Lighting	Low light means trip hazards are likely to be missed and things like thresholds change in surface and depth of steps can be distorted. Encourage higher wattage bulbs, consider night lights in areas walked at night (eg; to the toilet), raise lamps from floor, consider take lighting in areas where specific activities occur.
Eyeglasses	Not having access to glasses when needed can be dangerous as many hazards will be missed. Keep within reach at all times and consider a neck chain.
Alcohol	Alcohol consumption can affect balance and blood pressure which will increase risk of falls. Remove or swap for non-alcoholic alternatives
Medication	This could lead to vital meds being missed or people trying to get to floor to pick up. Consider a strategy to simplify medication such as Dossett boxes which are good for organisation. Sort medication in a well-lit area at a table or tray and keep in an area where you can remove medication carefully and be able to access it.
Telephone	People often rush to the phone which could lead to a fall. Cordless or mobile is best but ensure they're kept on your person and charged regularly as they'll be vital to call for help. Alternatively, a lifeline could be considered, which is a device to be worn on wrist or around neck and can call for help when required. Some will identify a fall automatically without having to be pressed.
Hot drinks	If overreaching in standing or in seating there is a risk of toppling over, add a hot drink and you could cause more harm. Bring hot drinks closer, don't fill so high, and possibly top with a little cold water.
Water glasses	These represent not drinking enough water. This can cause dizziness and tiredness and increase the chance of falling over. Drink plenty of water and make sure the glass is in easy reach of where someone is sitting.
Crisp packets and chocolate wrappers	This represents an unbalanced diet. Good nutrition and a balanced diet helps us to stay well and can reduce the risk of falling over.



After the session

- **Homework:** The children have a checklist to take home for them and their families.
- **Survey:** We appreciate it if the children could fill in a survey to let us know what they thought about the falls awareness activities. They can help us understand what worked and what can be improved for other people under taking the session.

Optional activities to extend the session and further learning

- **Poster competition** - Get the children to consider what was the most surprising falls hazard that they learnt about during the session. Ask them to design a poster to warn others of this hazard. This could be for their home and/or classroom.
- **Quiz** - A useful way to consolidate the learning of this session is a quiz after the session covering the key areas of learning.
- **Talk about ageing** - Ageing is inevitable, but falls are not. There are things that we can all do to age healthily. Consider here, does your school take part in the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme? If so, this is an opportunity to encourage pupils to consider how the topics covered in the scheme are also important throughout the life course and lead to healthy ageing, for example, food and fitness; environment and safety.
- **Have a movement or exercise session** This demonstrates the importance of strength and balance and keeping fit, helping us reduce the risk falling over as we age. For example, tai chi is a great way to meditate, improve strength and balance and promote mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
Examples of balance and strength exercises

can be found in the 'Useful links and resources' section.

- **Consider inviting** your local Age Cymru, Age Connects, Care & Repair Agency to come and talk to you about the work they do to keep older people safe from falling in your local community.
- **Age Cymru could offer a movement or exercise session**, demonstration of their tai chi and or LIFT (Low Impact Functional Training) session and introduce you to some of their community volunteers, where children could ask questions about why they take part, what it means to them, and what message would they give to their younger self.
- **You could discuss the importance of good foot care and foot wear to help prevent falls.** Fun fact: Did you know toenails grow about two millimetres per month so they need cutting every 4-6 weeks. Cutting your own toenails can become difficult as you get older. Organisations like local Age Connects Wales provide simple nail cutting services administering basic foot care services and information on foot wear.
- **Consider inviting other professionals** in to talk about nutrition, foot health and care.

Useful links and resources

Online 360° falls 'incident scene' investigation

Follow the link below to access an online scene where the children can spot potential trip hazards in the home and learn how they can be made safer. This can be accessed by both a VR headset or a non-VR headset.

For non-VR headsets: <https://kuula.co/share/collection/7JdLC?logo=1&info=0&logosize=115&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

For VR headsets: <https://kuula.co/share/collection/7Jj06?logo=1&info=0&logosize=115&fs=1&vr=1&sd=1&initload=0&thumbs=1>

Strength and balance exercises

Follow the links below for useful information and strength and balance exercises from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Self-management: strength and balance | The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (csp.org.uk)

www.csp.org.uk/publications/get-go-guide-supplement-six-exercises-staying-steady

www.csp.org.uk/news/2017-09-27-csp-launches-video-demonstrate-six-simple-exercises-stop-falls

Contacts

Age Cymru: Email enquiries@agecymru.org.uk or call on 029 2043 1555
www.agecymru.org.uk

Care & Repair Cymru: Email enquiries@careandrepair.org.uk or call 0300 111 3333
www.careandrepaircymru.org.uk

Age Connects Wales: Email enquiries@ageconnectswales.org.uk or call 01639 617 333
www.ageconnectswales.org.uk

