



Falls prevention information for lower limb amputees

Research suggests that more than half of amputees fall in the first year after their amputation. This can have a significant impact on your residual limb, mobility and confidence. Here are some ways you can reduce your risk of falling.

Key points to remember

- You can minimise your risk of falling.
- Plan ahead, concentrate and take your time during activities.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help if required.
- If you do fall, make sure you let someone know.

Common risks for falls and what you can do about them:

Environmental factors

- Remove hazards such as rugs, cables, door thresholds, and excess furniture.
- Reduce clutter and arrange furniture for safe access.
- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Speak to your occupational therapist if you have any questions about your home environment.

Transfers

- Pay attention, plan ahead and allow adequate time.
- Ensure appropriate set-up of your environment and all equipment before you move.
- Reposition the footplates on your wheelchair before transferring and always apply wheelchair brakes.
- Follow the advice given to you by your rehab team regarding the set-up, level of assistance or aid you should use for all transfers.
- Wear secure, non-slip footwear on your residual limb.

Move your body

- Build your balance and strength by participating in a regular exercise program and/or physiotherapy.
- Continue to engage in the things you enjoy or take up new activities you can still manage.

Phantom sensations

- Many amputees experience phantom sensations, such as the feeling that the leg is still there, despite amputation.
- This feeling can be reduced through gentle massage over the residual limb and use of a rigid removal cast and/or shrinker. Speak to your rehab team for further advice.

Improve your general health

- Some amputees have diabetes or vascular disease, which can affect eyesight and leg sensation. Get regular vision check-ups and monitor your skin for any changes (such as colour, sensation, cuts/ulcers, etc). Visit your GP if you notice any changes.
- Know your medications, including their side effects and interactions.
- Stay alert: Consume minimal alcohol and avoid sleeping tablets or other sedatives.
- Maintain a healthy diet and drink plenty of water.
- If you have diabetes, make sure it is well controlled.
- If you are a smoker, consider engaging in a quit smoking program.
- Ensure healthy vitamin D levels for strong bones.



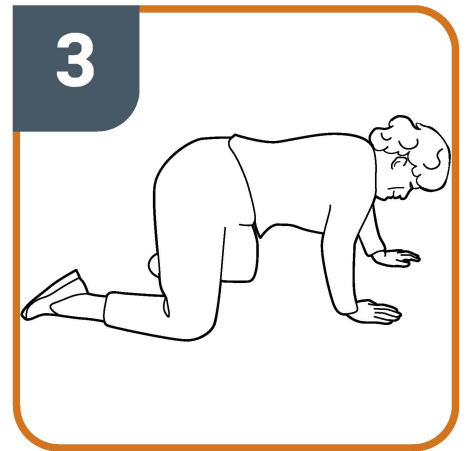
If you have a fall, how can you get back up?



1. Stay calm and check for injuries. Call for assistance if you are injured.



2. If you are not injured and it is safe to get up, roll on to your side.



3. Bring yourself up on to your hands and knee(s).



4. Move towards something solid that you can hold and transfer on to, such as a sturdy chair.



5. Bend residual limb forward. Push up through your arms and foot and pivot around onto the chair. Be careful not to push up from your residual limb as this may affect wound healing.



6. Inform a family member or carer that you have fallen. Seek medical attention if you feel confused, have a headache, nausea, vomiting, blurry vision, limb weakness or stiffness.

Even if you are not injured, inform your GP of the fall as soon as you are able. Consider getting a personal alarm so you can call for help if you are unable to get yourself up, or if you are injured.

Contact us

Falls specialist physiotherapist
Phone 6457 8630
Email PT.FSP.OPH@health.wa.gov.au

SCGOPHCG CNC Falls Management
Phone 0400 754 300
Email scgophcgsallscnc@health.wa.gov.au

For further information on falls prevention

Visit <https://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au> or speak to your treating rehabilitation team.



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