

Reducing the risk of falls in hospital

i Information for patients and visitors



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



This leaflet provides information about risks of falling and what you and your visitors can do to reduce the risks.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals take falls very seriously and we try to make every effort to reduce your falls risk.

Sometimes people do fall whilst they are in hospital and many of our patients have been admitted following a fall.

What are we doing to prevent falls?

Some wards have started doing daily '**falls huddles**' which you may see.

This involves members of the ward team gathering to discuss each person and their individual falls risk.

As a result of this, you may find yourself or another patient moving beds to be more visible to staff. A symbol will also be used at the bed side to show you are at risk of falling.

As a team, we regularly check to ensure that all patients have everything they need within reach. We closely monitor very high risk patients, which sometimes involves one to one care. Sometimes patients will be nursed closer to the floor.

Why might falls occur?

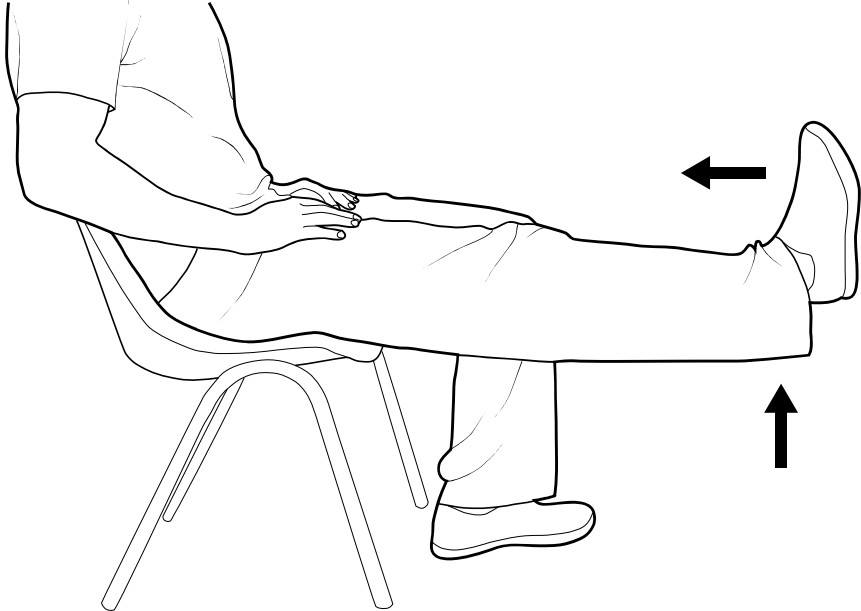
- If your health changes and you are unwell.
- If you become disorientated in the unfamiliar surroundings.
- If you have started a new medication.
- If your mobility has reduced, you experience stiffness or pain.
- If you have problems with your balance.
- If you have general frailty or weakness following a period of being in bed.

Did you know that ten days in a hospital bed for those over the age of 80 can age muscles by ten years!

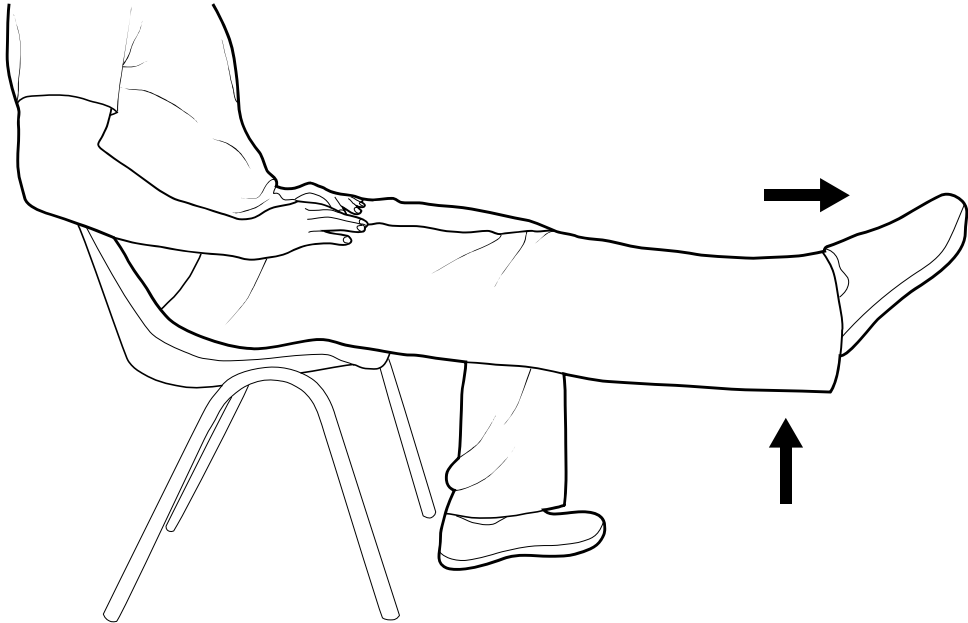
Advice to prevent you falling whilst in hospital

- Use the buzzer to call for help if you need to walk anywhere.
- Sit upright for a few moments on the edge your bed to get your balance and make sure you aren't dizzy before standing up.
- Do some simple leg exercises before getting up from your bed or chair.
- If you do not have your own footwear or they no longer fit, please ask a member of staff for some non-slip socks.
- If you wear glasses or a hearing aid make sure they are working, clean and worn as prescribed.
- Ideally get dressed into your own day time clothes.
- Be aware of any equipment that may be in your way.
- If your bed or chair is too high or low for you to use safely please ask for assistance.
- Make sure you have your walking aid close at hand; ask a member of staff if you need one.
- Make sure that you feel safe and balanced before you start to stand or walk.
- Ensure you keep moving regularly throughout the day, including exercising in bed.

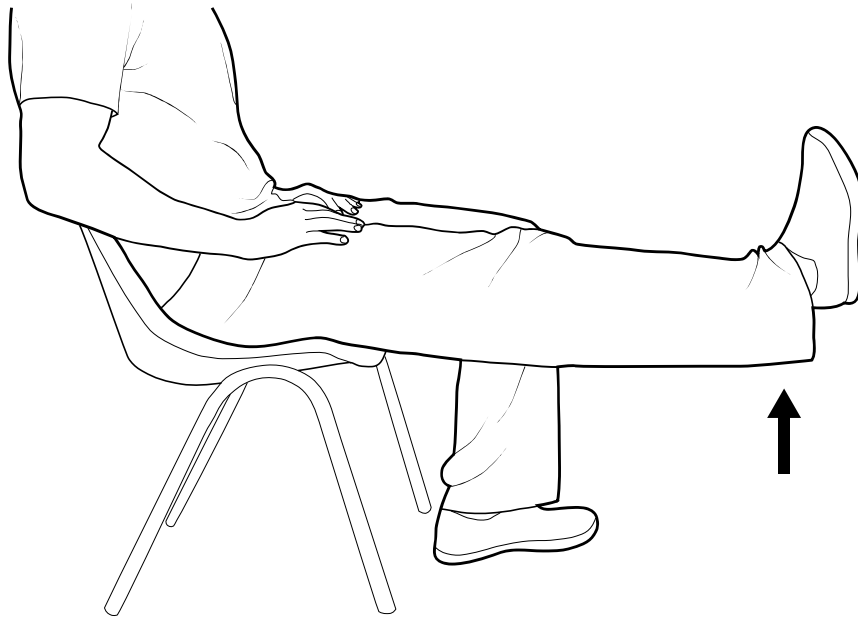
Simple leg exercises that are useful to do before standing



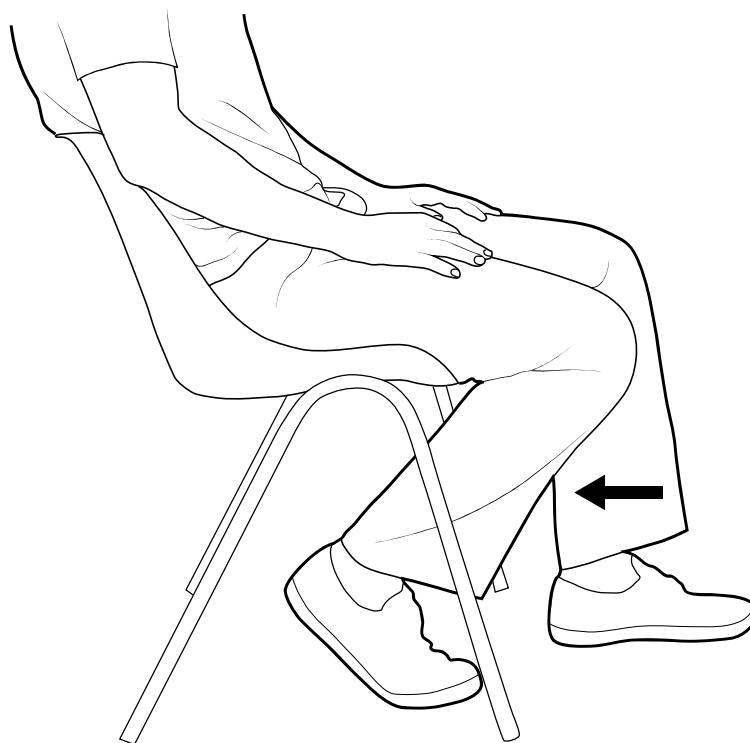
Point your toes and then pull them up towards you several times



Point your toes away from you several times



Straighten your leg out in front of you.
Hold it in the air for a count of three if you are able



Bend your knees alternately



March your knees up and down

Advice for visitors

Please tell the ward staff if you feel your relative or friend:

- Is at risk of falling
- Has fallen in the last year
- Feels dizzy, confused or does not appear to be their normal self
- Has dementia
- Has poor eyesight
- If you see a spillage which could cause a hazard

These can all help us to keep your friend or relative at a lower risk of falling and consequently injuring themselves.

Other things which can help include:

- When you are leaving make sure your relative or friend understands that you are going.
- You return your chair to the end of the bay so that the bed space is clear of obstacles.
- Inform any of the ward staff if the your relative or friend needs anything or is unable to use their call buzzer.
- Take anything home that your relative or friend doesn't need anymore and ensure hearing aids / glasses and walking aids remain with them in hospital.
- Inform the ward staff if you cannot see your relative's or friend's call buzzer.

It has been shown that staying in bed is not always a good way to recover from many illnesses or injuries and may actually make your recovery longer.

As a ward team we encourage you to be out of bed, sitting in your chair, socialising and moving around as soon as you are able.

Staying in bed and not moving around can also lead to other problems such as:

1. It can affect your breathing and make it harder work as well as making you at a greater risk of developing a chest infection.
2. Your skin could break down and become sore.
3. Your muscles will lose strength, so you will become weaker and tire more easily.
4. You will lose your independence with your personal care tasks such as washing and dressing.
5. You might not be able to digest food properly which can cause stomach ache or constipation.
6. You may become confused.
7. You may lose your self-confidence.

It has been proven that getting out of bed and getting mobile as soon as you are well enough can reduce the length of time you stay in hospital and reduce the risk of falling.

On this page please feel free to make notes on anything you think is important or write down any questions you can think of for the ward staff.





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