



Hampshire
County Council



An introduction to falls

- Around one in three people aged 65 and over fall at least once a year. This figure rises to one in two for people over 80.
- In Hampshire, it is now predicted that almost 91,000 people aged 65 and over will experience a fall in 2023.
- In 202/21 the total number of emergency admissions as a result of falls for those aged 65 and over in Hampshire was 6,360.



The good news is...

Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing.

Today we'll have look briefly at some of the risk factors and what we can do to help prevent falls.

If you know someone who has had a fall, please ask them to tell their GP or healthcare professional. It may be a sign of a new or worsening health condition and GPs can carry out some simple balance tests and recommend ways to reduce the risk of a further fall.



Fall Risk Factors – three categories

Personal health or medical risk factors

- Eyesight
- Postural hypotension
/ low blood pressure



Environmental risk factors

- Unsecured rugs or carpets
- Wonky paving stones



Behavioural risk factors

- Rushing about
- Going up a ladder



Personal health, or medical risk factors

- **Eyesight / visual impairment**
- **Taking multiple medications**
- Postural hypotension (low blood pressure)
- Hearing loss
- Foot problems or pain
- A history of falls
- Muscle weakness
- Poor balance
- Arthritis
- Cognitive impairment
- Depression
- Dementia
- Incontinence
- Parkinson's Disease
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Syncope (fainting)



Helping prevent falls

Personal health, or medical risk factors

Eyesight / visual impairment

- Make an appointment for an eye test. If you're aged 60+ you're entitled to a free NHS eye test.
- Wear glasses or contact lenses as prescribed by an optician
- Not all visual problems can be treated. However, some problems, such as cataracts, can be improved.



Taking multiple medications

Certain medicines can impair coordination and cause confusion which can contribute to having a fall. Taking multiple medications can increase the chance of having a fall because of the way in which the different drugs react with each other.

- Have medicines reviewed each year by a GP, especially if taking four or more a day
- Store them somewhere cool with a consistent temperature

Environmental risk factors

In the home:

- Clutter on the floor
- Unsecured rugs or carpet or carpet strips
- Trailing wires
- Pets!
- Wet floors
- Slippery floors
- Poor lighting
- Leaving things on the stairs

Out and about:

- Icy conditions or extreme weather
- Wonky paving stones or uneven surfaces
- Poor street lighting
- Pavement curbs or street clutter





Helping prevent falls

Environmental risk factors

In Hampshire, over 50% of falls that result in a hip fracture happen in the home.

- Ensure sufficient lighting, especially on the stairs
- Keep stairs and steps clutter free
- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs
- Have a nightlight or torch in the bedroom in case you need to get up in the night
- Keep floors clear of trailing wires, fraying carpets and any other trip hazards like unsecured rugs
- Fit a handrail in the bath and use a non-slip mat.



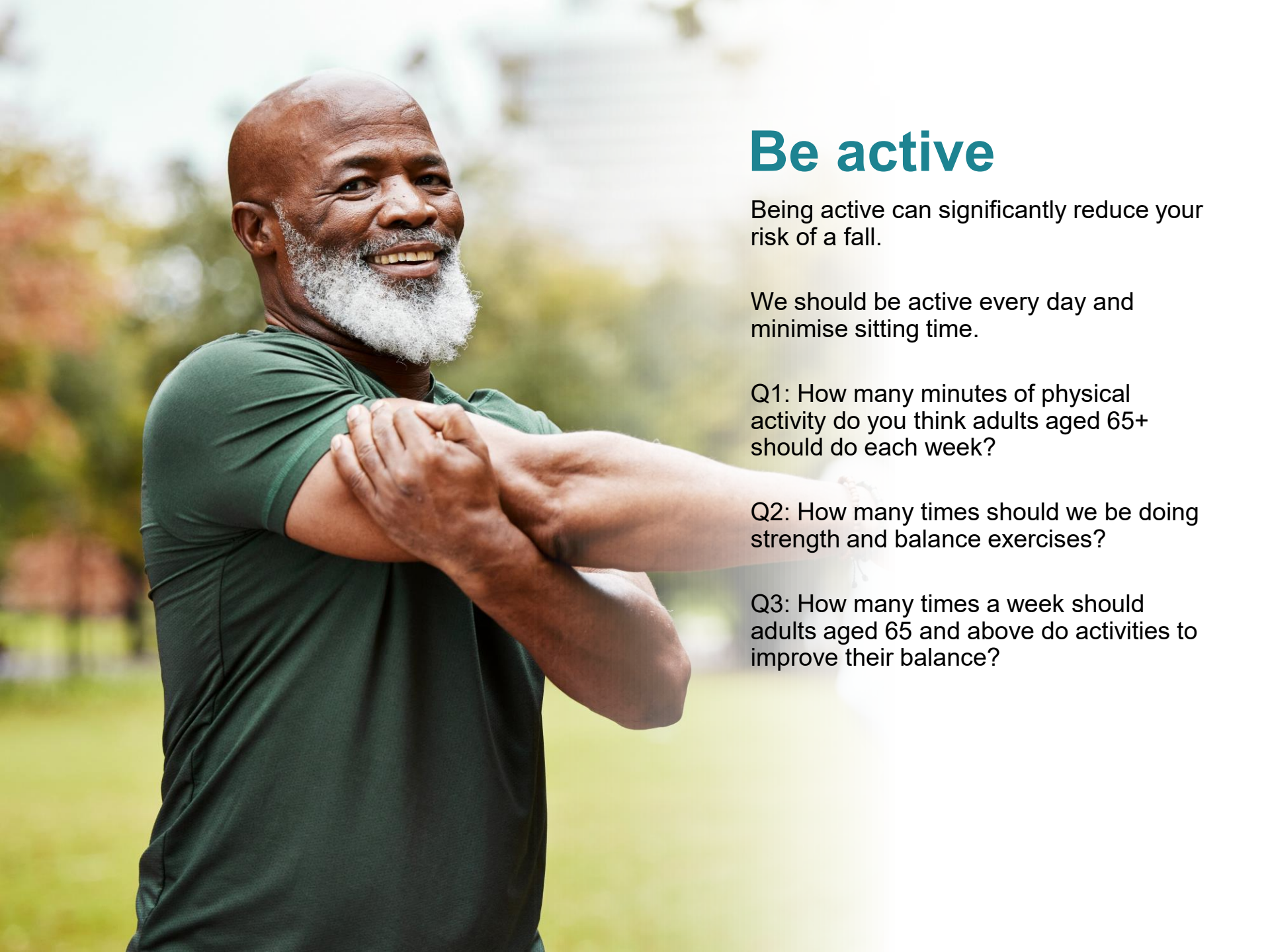
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Behavioural risk factors

- Drinking too much alcohol
- Wearing poorly fitting shoes or 'sloppy' slippers
- Using a ladder without someone to help
- A fear of falling
- Dashing, or rushing about
- Overreaching for things on shelves or on counters





Be active

Being active can significantly reduce your risk of a fall.

We should be active every day and minimise sitting time.

Q1: How many minutes of physical activity do you think adults aged 65+ should do each week?

Q2: How many times should we be doing strength and balance exercises?

Q3: How many times a week should adults aged 65 and above do activities to improve their balance?

Hydration

Eating and drinking well help us maintain a healthy body and strong bones.

A healthy human body is made up of 60% water. If we get dehydrated, particularly as we get older, we can be at particular risk of urine infections and falls.

Q. How much water do you think we need to drink each day?

Inadequate hydration can lead to:

- Constipation
- **Dizziness** (↑ risk of falls)
- **Low blood pressure** (↑ risk of falls)
- **Increased urinary tract infections** (↑ risk of falls)
- **Incontinence** (↑ risk of falls)
- Increased risk of drug interactions and side effects
- Reductions in cognitive ability (more impact if living with dementia)

