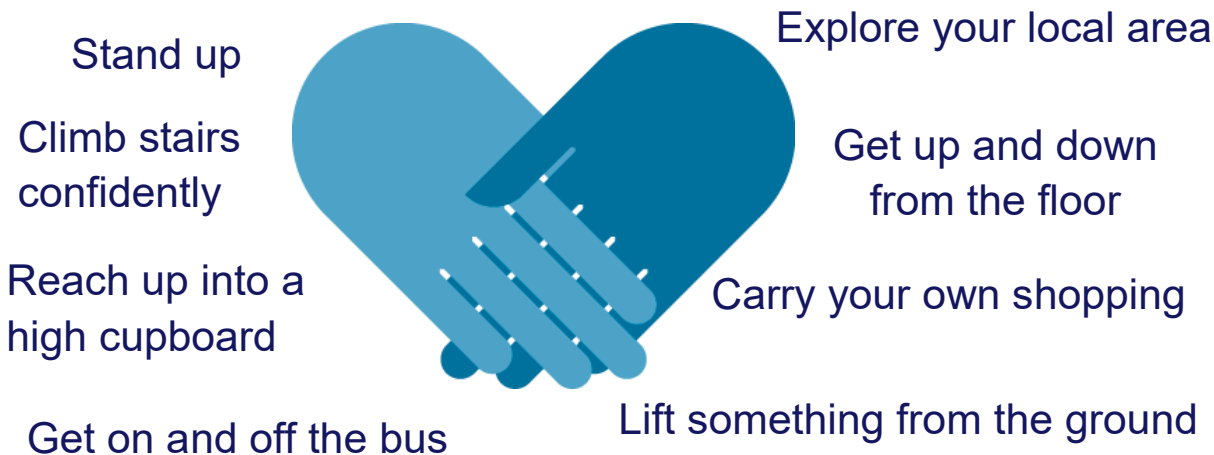


STRENGTH

Improving the strength of your lower body will help you to do many things more easily such as...



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Ways to improve your

STRENGTH

Please use an adequate support where necessary and repeat 10 times each side

- Stand up and sit down from your dining chair with as much control as you can to help increase your thigh and buttock strength.
- Step up and down on the first stair (only if handrails are present) to help increase lower body strength as a whole.
- Lift up onto your tip toes, lower down and then raise your toes from the floor, slowly switching between the two to help increase your lower leg muscle strength.
- Lift your legs out to the side with your toes pointing forwards to help increase your outer thigh strength.



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BALANCE

Improving your balance will help you to do many things more easily such as...

Bend to pick something up from the floor

Hang out your washing

Walk on all terrains

Dance to your favourite song



Step into your trousers, skirt or underwear

Stand on the bus

Pull off your welly boots

Step over a puddle

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Ways to improve your **BALANCE**

Please use an adequate support where necessary and try to hold position for 10 seconds or take 10 steps

- Stand on one leg adjusting your grip on the support to challenge your balance.
- Stand as if stood on a tightrope with one foot in front of the other.
- Step sideways over an imaginary obstacle.
- Step forwards as if you are walking a tightrope.



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FLEXIBILITY

Improving or maintaining flexibility will help you to...

Wear shoes that have laces

Bend down to kiss your
grandchildren

Pull on your socks

Get your coat on
and off more easily

Pull on your welly boots



Wash and style your own hair

Cut your own toenails and
check your own foot health

Dead head your garden
borders and hanging baskets

Play bowls

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Ways to improve your **FLEXIBILITY**

Reach and hold each position for over 30 seconds. The hold should be slightly uncomfortable but not painful. All stretches can be performed seated.

- Lengthen one leg. Place your hands on the opposite knee. Point your toes away from you. Sit up and then lean forward. Feel a stretch on the back of the thigh.
- Get in the same position only this time lift your toes towards you. The stretch should be felt in the back of the lower leg.
- Hold your hands together and push them away with rounded arms, as if you are hugging a big ball. Look at the floor in front of you and feel the stretch across the top of your back.
- Take your hands into the small of your back and lift your chest, feeling your shoulder blades pinch in together. Feel a stretch across your chest.



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EARS

Regular hearing tests will help to reduce the risk of falling.

Changes to your hearing and your vestibular system can affect your body's ability to balance.

Common vestibular issues include dizziness, vertigo and imbalance, all of which can lead to a feeling of unsteadiness and a loss of confidence. Changes to the vestibular system often happen gradually and they are often associated with the older population. Hearing loss often first develops from 40 years old. Going from normal to mild hearing loss triples your chance of falling according to a study of people aged 40 to 69- when people are less likely to guard against falls.

Hearing loss is not often detected in the early stages as the decline can be gradual. Regular hearing tests will help to monitor any changes to hearing. If required, the fitting of hearing aids can help to not only improve your hearing but can also help to regulate your balance.

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EYES



Regular eye tests will help to reduce the risk of falling.

Poor vision or incorrect lens prescription can be disorientating when gauging distances especially on the move.

Regular eye tests will not only help to detect any changes of vision and will ensure that your glasses prescription is up to date, but will also ensure that your eye health is monitored and any eye conditions are detected at an early stage.

Some lenses such as bifocals or varifocals can make objects appear closer that they actually are. This may lead to a misjudgement when moving resulting in trips or a loss of balance. This can be particularly risky when stepping up onto the kerb or when climbing stairs.

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BONES & JOINTS

Good bone health will help with maintaining good posture but will also reduce the risk of fracture should a fall occur. Keeping joints mobilised will help to improve joint health, particularly those with osteo-arthritis.

Bone health should be considered at all ages. Maintaining a good diet, having a healthy body composition, getting outside, taking regular exercise and avoiding smoking and excessive drinking are all key factors for good bone health.

Good bone health is often associated with a good calcium intake. Whilst this is true, it is also very important to include a good mix of vitamins, minerals and all of nutrients that are need to help your bones regenerate strongly.

Getting outside and exposing yourself to sunlight (with appropriate sun protection) will enable you to absorb Vitamin D. Vitamin D is needed for the body to process calcium. Some housebound people experience Vitamin D deficiency and consequently poor bone health. Vitamin D supplements can be taken to assist the body in absorbing calcium.

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BONES & JOINTS

Maintaining a good body composition (increasing your lean tissue (muscles) and avoiding high amounts of body fat) will help to provide protection for your skeleton. Strengthening your muscles will also improve stability in the body and will help to support joint movement which is especially important if you have arthritic joints.

Weight-bearing exercise is key to bone health and is particularly valuable for those who have or who are at risk of osteoporosis. Exercises that have impact (anything that involves standing and moving) would be classed as weight-bearing. Non weight-bearing exercises such as swimming and seated exercises can help improve joint health. A mix of weight bearing and non weight-bearing exercises are recommended.

If you have a health condition such as osteoarthritis or osteoporosis, it is strongly recommended that you seek advice from both your doctor and an exercise professional before you start to exercise. Our Falls Prevention programme and all of our Ageing Well classes are suitable for those with osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

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FOOT HEALTH

It is vital that we keep our feet healthy in order to still be able to get up and move. Keeping moving is key to maintaining stability. Even minor foot conditions such as bunions and fungal infections can make it uncomfortable to wear supportive shoes and can lower your motivation to get out and about. It is therefore important to treat these conditions in the early stages where possible.

It is very important that any changes to the condition of your feet such as foot pain or decreased sensation in your feet are reported to a your GP.

Regular toenail cutting is crucial to maintaining foot health and reducing the risk of falling. It can be difficult to not only reach your toenails but also to actually clip them so you may want to consider asking someone to cut them for you.

Age UK Somerset offer a toenail cutting service in Somerset in clinic settings or via home visits for housebound people. Unfortunately if you take certain medications, you may not qualify for our service but please give us a call on 01823 345610 for more information.

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FOOT HEALTH

Keeping feet and ankles strong and mobile will help you tackle mixed terrains more confidently. If you lose strength and flexibility in your feet, you may find that you stumble or trip more frequently, leading to you loss of confidence and isolation.

Here are some simple exercises to help improve your foot and ankle strength and mobility - repeat 10 times and don't forget to do both feet!

- 
- Ankle circles in both directions followed by spelling out the letters of the alphabet with your toes.
 - Point and flex your foot. Push the toes away from you and then lift them towards you.
 - Lift both sets of toes and do a windscreen wiper action from side to side.
 - Tap both sets of toes on the floor for 5 then take your toes wider but keep your heels together and tap for 5.
 - Scrunch up your toes and then release.
 - Spread your toes apart as much as you can and then release
 - Tilt your foot from side to side, lifting your inner foot then lifting the outer foot.

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POSTURE & MOVEMENT

Movement is key to staying well in later life. Keeping moving with or without the support of a walking aid helps improve your overall health in many ways, including managing arthritic joints, improving mental health and helping with gut function.

Try to avoid sitting for long durations, be mindful of incorporating some gentle movements throughout the day. Walk around during the adverts if you are watching TV, stop for breaks more frequently on a long journey or have periods of walking around if you are in a waiting room. Small measures like these will help increase your daily activity levels and will help you remain mobile and steady on your feet.

Posture is an important factor in increasing stability. Having the weight of your head located directly over your spine will help to prevent back, neck and shoulder pain.

Posture is something that we can easily work to improve. Correcting your posture when sitting or standing will help to strengthen the muscle groups that help to support your body in an elevated position and maintain a 'normal' walking gait. This will help to reduce the risk of falling as the body will be able to remain balanced more easily. Good posture also helps increase lung capacity.

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POSTURE & MOVEMENT

**Posture can be improved when you are sitting and standing.
Here are some key points to help you improve your posture...**

- ✓ Sit or stand tall, as if you have a thread pulling you up from the top of your head.
- ✓ Keep shoulders back and down.
- ✓ Draw in your stomach muscles gently, as if you are wearing a pair of trousers that are a size too small.
- ✓ Still breathe freely.
- ✓ Ensure that your hips are level and are forward facing .
- ✓ Keep feet hip distance apart and with softened knees and have your weight placed evenly between both feet.



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