

Recovering From a Fall

A Special PT with Patty Event

March 1, 2023

An MS Alliance In-person Workshop • 7011 Campus Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920
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Make a Plan. Foresight/practice/posted instructions call all help to create a successful outcome.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: CALLING FOR HELP

You should call for help if you're hurt, as attempting to get up could make your injury worse. You may also need to call for help if you're unable to get up by yourself.

To call for help:

- Use a whistle, your cell phone, a smart speaker such as Alexa.
- Use the phone to call a relative, friend or neighbor. If you're injured, call 9-1-1.
- Try shouting or banging on a wall to attract your neighbor's attention. You may need to roll or crawl to a door or open a window to call for help.

Having a mobile phone on you at all times will allow you to call for help when you need it. Your mobile phone needs to be charged and switched on all the time. A number to call in an emergency can be programmed into the phone. Consider a life alert system if you spend longer periods of time alone, as it is activated with the push of a button and easier than dialing a phone number.

Ensuring that a family member or neighbor has a spare key will allow people to get to you quickly. You can also consider leaving a spare key in a police-approved key safe. This is a secure box with a combination lock that you can keep outside your home. This can be accessed by anyone that you have shared the combination code with.

Checklist for Immediately After a Fall

Check yourself for injuries or new pains. Do a body scan head to toe. Ask yourself if this is a serious injury or just a new ache after a sudden blow? Stay calm and breathe so you will make the best decisions for how to get help or make the best plan of how to get back up to a chair or standing.

Stay warm. Cover yourself with a blanket if you will be alone for a while. Change positions if you can periodically to avoid stiffness or damaging your skin.

If it appears you will be alone for quite a while, stay hydrated.

If/when you have a helper available, keep them calm and give them specific instructions on the best way to help you. You know your own body and your general capabilities. Practice with a helper ahead of time if at all possible. Consider it exercise!



Excellent internet resources for video instructions on how to rise from a fall. Material was developed by OT's and PT's, so you can review multiple times or with caregivers/friends/family members. Everybody could use this information for themselves:

- www.outflourish.com/fall-recovery/ Meredith D. Chandler/OTR/L and Mandy Chamberlain MOTR/L.
- www.bobandbrad.com Very entertaining videos on getting up from a fall as well as many other physical therapy-oriented topics.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+Purjjqxwrhg>

Reprinted on the following pages are handouts from A Matter of Balance, providing useful illustrations for getting up and down safely from the floor.

Follow this procedure to help you get down to the floor and back up more easily.

1. Stand in front of your chair, bend at the waist with knees bent slightly and grasp the edge of your chair, supporting yourself. (Make sure your chair is secure and won't slip, and is heavy enough to support you without tipping over.)



2. Use your arms and the chair to support your weight. Lower one knee slowly and gently to the floor. Do only one knee at a time.



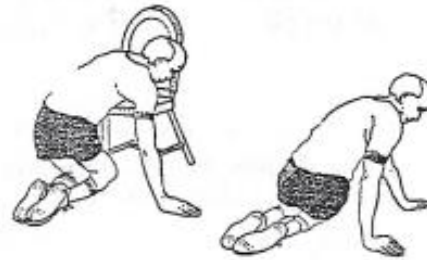
3. After one knee is firmly on the floor, you can then lower your other knee, but continue to hang onto the chair for support.



4. Hang onto the chair with one hand while you lift your other hand off the chair and place it onto the floor at your right side.



5. Support your weight with one arm.
Bring your other hand over near your body so that both hands and arms support you. Lower your hips gently down to the floor near your hand.



6. Support yourself with your arms and hands. Lean back slightly raising one leg straight out in front of you.



7. Then unfold your other leg and straighten it out alongside the first leg. You should be sitting on the floor with both legs in front leaning on your arms.



Getting up again

- In order to get up again, simply get on your hands and knees in front of the chair, position 3.
- Then raise your leg up to position 2.
- Push up with your arms and legs and slowly stand.

Practice

At first, practice steps 1, 2, and 3 several times, getting up and down. Then go on to steps 4,5,6, and 7. Practice the whole procedure several times in order to be familiar with it.