

# Falls Prevention

## The facts on falls

Falls are a major cause of injury and even death for elderly patients, with estimates suggesting that one in three people over the age of 65 fall each year, resulting in ankle, leg and hip fractures and dislocations as well as back and head injuries. Over 96,385 people aged 65 and over were hospitalised for fall-related injuries in 2016.

Foot problems are a main cause of falls in the elderly and can be prevented through proper care and consultation with your my FootDr Podiatrist. Restricted ankle joint range of motion, numbness (neuropathy), foot pain, weakness of the toe flexor and calf muscle are key risk factors for falls in the elderly.



## Contributing factors to falls

### FOOT PAIN

Problems caused by foot pain can contribute to many of the falls statistics e.g. bunions, claw toes, ingrown toenails, arch pain, heel pain, lower limb pain, alignment.

### MUSCLE WEAKNESS IN THE LEGS

As we age our muscles weaken. Older people with weak muscles are more likely to fall than are those who maintain good muscle strength, as well as their flexibility and endurance.

### BALANCE AND GAIT

Foot posture, nerve sensation, balance and gait all have a huge impact on your wellbeing as you age. If you have low arches or your feet roll inwards or outwards, your leg muscles are required to do more work to keep you balanced. Foot posture should be assessed in everybody over the age of 60.

### WEARING UNSAFE FOOTWEAR

Poor footwear choices can increase the chance of falling. Backless shoes and slippers, high-heeled shoes, and shoes with smooth leather soles are examples of unsafe footwear that could cause a fall.

### FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR FEET

Your footwear choices can greatly reduce falls risks. Try and avoid shoes such as high heels, thongs or open-toed sandals and opt for shoes with a flat, sturdy sole that offer more stability and support. Your footwear should have secure fastenings to prevent your feet from slipping and falling out. Shoes with good grip are recommended when out and to avoid slips and falls.

Get your feet measured properly as your feet may have changed a lot since your last fitting. You may need shoes with a wider toe box to accommodate toe deformities or bunions.

Plus, wider shoes will ease the pressure on toes on joints and will not only take the pressure off of those areas to lessen the chance of swelling, but will also help to relieve pain through less chance of friction from tight, rubbing shoes.

## Podiatrist's Role

Fall prevention is possible through proper care of your feet and regular consultation with a podiatrist who will assess your risk of a fall and treat any conditions in your feet to reduce your overall risk. If any problems are present, your my FootDr podiatrist may recommend more frequent visits.

### BIOMECHANICAL ASSESSMENT

A biomechanical assessment will be undertaken to establish if your feet are functioning in their optimal alignment when standing, walking and running.

### CUSTOM-MADE FOOT ORTHOTICS

Orthotics are prescription devices designed to support your feet in their ideal position. Orthotics should be worn for most of the time you are on your feet.

### FOOTWEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Podiatrist can recommend safe footwear and ensure your shoes are properly fitted to your feet.

### What makes a safe shoe



Book an appointment with our podiatrists today

Call 1800 FOOTDR  
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