

If You Should Fall

How you react after a fall can cause more injuries than the fall itself if you're not careful. These simple suggestions can help you get back up safely if you should fall.

Before you attempt to get up...

Take a few deep breathes and take an inventory of your body to be sure you haven't been seriously hurt. Relax for a minute to get over the shock of falling. Don't try to get up until you feel better. Getting up too quickly or the wrong way could make an injury worse.

If you think you are injured...

Do not attempt to get up. Ask someone to call 911 for you right away. If you are alone and able, use your cell phone to call for help. Or, if you don't have a phone with you and you can't get up, crawl to a telephone. If all else fails, shout for help.

If you feel you are not hurt...

Stay in control. Well-meaning bystanders may rush to your side to help—and may rush to get you upright. Take a moment to catch your breath and compose yourself. It is OK to stay on the ground for as long as you need to, there is no hurry to get up.

- **Let others help you:** Calmly tell those around you how you intend to get up and how they can assist you. Maintaining composure keeps you in charge.
- **Bring some humor to the situation:** Humor relaxes you and those around you and makes it easier to recover yourself.
- **Say thank you:** Express gratitude to anyone who has helped. Graciousness goes a long way.
- **Let your doctor know you've fallen:** It's important to talk to your doctor about your fall so they can work with you to understand the possible causes and minimize the risk of future falls.

Be Prepared Before a Fall Happens

Don't wait until you fall to figure out how to get up. Work with a physical therapist to learn the best ways for you to get up and off the floor should a fall happen.

Making a plan in advance for what you would do if you had a fall or other accident at home can also contribute to your peace of mind. Have the phone numbers of neighbors and/or relatives handy—carry them, as well as emergency numbers (local fire and/or police) in your wallet, place them near your phone, program them in to your cell phone.

If you fall often consider a personal response system. There are many personal emergency response systems that are controlled with a personal help button on a wristband, waist clip or pendant. A number of companies offer these devices and monitoring service for a monitoring fee. Having a system like this in place can offer peace of mind if you are frequently home alone. (However, you have to remember to wear the device!)

Contact the National MS Society at 1-800-344-4867 for referrals to emergency response system companies.

Fall Recovery 1

From your position on the floor, roll yourself onto your strong side and place your hands on the floor. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

Continue to roll and push yourself up with your upper body to a kneeling position. (Figures 2 & 3)



Figure 2



Figure 3

Fall Recovery 2

Using your arms, push yourself up to the side sitting position in front of a chair or bed. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

Place a hand on the seat of the chair or bed and pull yourself up into a kneeling position with the upper body resting on your forearm on the seat of the chair, bed or flat surface. (Figure 2)



Figure 2



Shift weight to one knee so that you may bring the opposite knee up to standing the foot on the floor. You are now half kneeling. (Figure 3)

Figure 3

Lean forward onto hands, pushing down through the foot on the floor. Press body weight up on the one leg until you are able to bring opposite leg into position. (Figure 4)

Turn and sit on the seat, bed or flat surface, or bring your leg under you and continue to stand up. (Figure 5)



Figure 4



Figure 5