

Move More Live More



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Welcome

This booklet has been developed as part of Age NI's **Move More Live More** programme, funded by Innovate UK, and aimed at supporting **healthy ageing**.

Move More Live More brings together expert advice for a **healthy later life**, with simple tips and information to help you to **invest in your health and wellbeing**.

The ageing process can naturally lead to some slowing down. At Age NI, we know that **falls**, or even the fear of a fall, can lead to changes in lifestyle, confidence and even the loss of independence. This booklet offers the tools to help keep you **stronger for longer**.

By following some of the exercises and activities to look after your mind and body, you could soon notice a difference. This guide is for every body! Read on to find out how it is **never too late to start** and how **any physical activity has great benefits!**

If you haven't done any exercise for a while, it can be hard to know where to start, so read our section on **Goal Setting** and set yourself a personal goal to **keep motivated**.

The booklet shows simple tried-and-tested **strength and balance exercises**; some can be done seated and some standing, and no equipment is needed. Whatever your starting point, have a go, and find ways to work them into your day. You will soon notice how they help you **feel stronger** and have **more energy!**

A **full body MOT** can start with the checks included here, from your **feet** to your **eyes and ears** and there's advice on keeping your **brain sharp and minding your mood**.

Our guide to **eating and drinking** will help to **nourish and fuel a healthy body**, and our experts share important advice around medication. You can also read about the power of **breathing**, the importance of **sleep**, and ways to **relax**.

Finally, we know that **feeling safe and secure** is a priority for our wellbeing. This guide includes tips on **home safety, fall-proofing your home, how to avoid scams and staying safe online**.

The **Five Steps to Wellbeing** are a great place to start. You will find them explained overleaf and you'll see them reinforced throughout the booklet. There are also **checklists** for you to jot down and track your own goals and progress.

Read on to learn how you can **Move More and Live More...**

A note on QR Codes



Where you see a box like this, you can use a smartphone or tablet with internet access, to **scan the image with the device's camera**, and it will open a website link with more information.

Introduction



Age NI's mission is to 'help people to enjoy later life' so we are committed to helping people live well for longer.

Whether you're enjoying your later life or going through tough times, we're here to help you make the best of your life. We know that every life stage brings new challenges, opportunities and things to learn.

This booklet offers information designed to help older people to feel good.

It will focus on how to look after our body to stay physically active, how to improve our mood and keep our mind sharp, and how to feel safe and secure.

The aim of this booklet is to support you to Move More and Live More for a strong, healthy and fulfilled life.

It will explore ways to improve your activity levels, strength, balance and overall health and wellbeing to keep you fit and independent.

Let's start with Five Steps to Wellbeing.

Five Steps to Wellbeing

There are five simple steps that we can take to help keep our mind and body well. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your “five a day” for wellbeing.

Connect



Connect with other people: family, friends and neighbours. Social relationships are

important to support our wellbeing. Spend time developing and nurturing them. Building connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be Active



Exercising makes you feel good.

Find an activity you enjoy, to suit your level of mobility and fitness. Being physically active promotes emotional wellbeing. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week.

Keep Learning



Try something new, rediscover a hobby or sign up for a course. Fix a bike, grow

your own veg, learn how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you'll enjoy. Learning new things is fun and will boost confidence.

Take Notice



Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell

or even taste? Observe new or unusual things in your everyday life, which you may not have noticed, and think about how they make you feel.

Give



Do something nice for a friend or stranger.

Thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, join a community group. Seeing yourself linked to a community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with others.

Facts about Falls

Falls are responsible for huge numbers of A&E visits and hospital admissions among older people. They can result in serious injuries and long-term complications.

They rob many older people of their health, confidence and independence – and in turn cost the NHS millions of pounds a year.

There are lots of things we can do to prevent falls. First, let's look at the facts around falls.

Myth: Only frail people fall

One in three people aged over 65 – plenty of them in good health – fall each year. The risk of falling increases as we age: half of all people over 80 will fall at least once a year.

Myth: Falling is an inevitable part of growing old

Not necessarily. Experts believe the vast majority of falls could be prevented with some fairly modest changes to our lifestyle.

However, medically speaking, falls can be a warning sign that something isn't quite right. The good news is that it is often something quite treatable.



Am I at risk of falling?

Everyone is more at risk of a fall as they age. Clearly, we can't change our biological age, but by understanding what puts us at risk, we can take preventative action.

If you've fallen before, you're at the top of the risk list for another one, so it's even more vital to take the steps outlined in this booklet. If you haven't fallen, there's no time like today to start investing in keeping well in later life.

How do I know my risk?

Go through the **checklist on the next page**: you might be surprised by how many boxes you tick. Don't be alarmed: this booklet is aimed at improving your awareness, understanding and knowledge of the things you can do to reduce your risk of falling.

- I have had a fall but not seen anyone about it.
- My GP hasn't reviewed my medication in the past year.
- I often need to get up in the night to go to the toilet.
- I am probably not as active as doctors recommend (30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week).
- I sometimes feel dizzy or light-headed when I stand up or walk.
- I wear bifocal or varifocal glasses.
- I haven't had an eye test in the past 12 months.
- I sometimes feel weak when I get up from a chair or the bed.
- A bit of clutter has built up at home over the years.
- I probably don't drink enough fluids (1.6 litres/3 pints a day for women; 2 litres/3.5 pints a day for men).
- My slippers have that "lived-in" look.
- Taking care of my feet is quite difficult these days.
- I have a long-term condition such as Parkinson's, heart disease / stroke, arthritis, COPD, diabetes, dementia.
- I save electricity by turning off unnecessary lights.
- My alcohol intake is probably more than GPs' recommended limit (2-3 units a day for women, 3-4 for men).
- I don't get out as much as I'd like because I worry about tripping, I feel unsteady.
- If I had a fall I would probably be too embarrassed to tell anyone.
- My pets or grandchildren running around worry me sometimes; they make me feel wobbly!
- I am not always that warm at home.



Don't ignore a fall

If you have a fall, a faint or a slip, always tell family or a health care professional about it. There are staff and local services available to help you.

See also our guide to 'Getting up from a fall,' at the end of this booklet.

My Life My Goals

Setting goals to get more out of life

If you'd like to invest in your health by trying something different or new, it can be daunting. As we age, our confidence might take a dip for any number of reasons. Setting a personal goal helps to give a purpose and motivation to get started and keep going.

What are your goals for moving more?

1. Imagine you were to focus all of your energy on moving more – what one thing would you want to do for yourself?
2. 6 months from now, what would you like to be different about your current situation? What would you like to be the same?

The first step is to **decide on your goal:** thinking about where we're going allows us to plan out how we're going to get there. When we **break the big goal down into small steps**, we can soon start to make progress.

Short-term and long-term goals

Write down your "big" goal and put it somewhere you will see it every day. You can now use the information in this booklet to create the short-term steps to get you there.

A goal which may be within reach might be around walking: walk a little further; walk more often, or walk for a longer time.

How to set goals

Be specific

People who set specific goals do better than people who say, 'I'll try my best' or "I'll try to be more active". Instead, a specific goal would be, 'this week I'll walk for 15 minutes at lunchtime and another 15 minutes after dinner'. Specific goals tend to be effective because they are measurable.

Goals should also be attainable

Set goals that you can realistically achieve bearing in mind your own starting point.

Goal setting builds confidence

If you reach a goal you have set, you will have increased confidence that you can progress to meet the next goal.

Note your achievements so you can give yourself credit!

Action plan

Set a plan of action to increase physical activity which includes specifics: **when**, **how often**, and for **how long** and it may also include the **where** – eg. in the park, at a local leisure centre, a trip to the shops.

A good short-term goal for walking might be to walk for three 10 minute bouts on each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and then gradually increase the number of minutes and the number of days a week over several months.

Motivational Coach - Gerry Kelly



When setting a goal, expert motivational coach, Gerry Kelly, suggests we aim for a specific point in the future: an event, an occasion or a milestone: a big birthday, a special trip, the arrival of a new baby. Imagine how you would like that moment to look, how it will feel, how others will see you.

Your goal will be in the present tense, for example:

I am..dancing with my grandson at his wedding... eating dinner at my favourite restaurant in Spain... walking along the beach with...

Gerry's top tips:

- Energy flows where attention goes – focus on what you want.
- Imagine your goal in the present tense: "I am..."
- Make your goal positive.
- Make it for YOU, not for someone else.
- Positivity: give yourself encouragement, celebrate the little wins.



Goal-setting checklist

Build up gradually, start off slowly, yet never lose sight of the goal. Use this goal-setting checklist to write down your goals and a plan.

My long-term goal I plan to achieve by:

When I reach my goal I am...

When I reach my goal I feel...

My short-term goal that I plan to achieve next week: (when, where, how often, how long?)

Celebrating the little wins or steps towards my goal:

Move More, Live More



Why moving more helps us to live more

Staying active is a powerful way to keep us living well for longer. Regular exercise and movement can help reduce the impact of several diseases, for example osteoporosis, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Moving our body can also reduce arthritis-related pain, improve sleep, prevent falls and fractures, and improve low mood and memory.

Taking regular exercise is one of the best things you can do in later life to remain independent.

Preventing Falls

The slowing-down process of later life affects our balance and makes our muscles weaker. This increases the risk of falling.

Falls are not inevitable and there is much that can be done to reduce the chance of a fall, even if you have already had one.

Both balance and muscle strength will be improved simply by taking some of the actions described in this booklet.

What does regular exercise mean as we get older?

The good news is that any exercise is good for you!

You do not need to go to a gym and you don't need any fancy equipment. There are things you can do as part of your everyday routine, such as chair-based exercises or walking to the shops.

Simply Move More

The first and most important step is to break up periods of inactivity, such as sitting or lying down throughout the day with different movement. If you haven't been very active, aim to **stand more and sit less** for extended periods: you could do this by reducing the time you spend watching TV, taking regular walk breaks around the garden or street, or swapping a bus or car journey for walking part of the way.

Aerobic exercise

Aerobic activity should be sufficient to get your heart rate up a little, make you breathe faster and feel warmer. You will need to begin this slowly and build up gradually if you haven't done anything vigorous for a while. Your aim should be to **build up to about 30 minutes of activity on three occasions a week.**

Examples of aerobic activity:

- Brisk Walking
- Ballroom Dancing
- Climbing Stairs
- Swimming

Strength and Balance

You should also aim to do activity to **improve muscle strength at least three days a week.**

Day to day activities which keep your muscles strong include:

- Carrying or moving loads such as groceries.
- Gardening jobs such as mowing the lawn, digging, collecting grass and leaves.
- Activities involving stepping and jumping, such as dancing.

How to Move More

The exercises on the next pages will help our muscle strength, help our balance and bring other wellbeing benefits, so that we can keep moving more to live and age well. Revisit the earlier tips on setting goals and personal motivation, and remember that any movement is better than none. **Small changes and regularly activity will make a difference to how you feel.**



Mary Peters:



“Movement is life; it is important to keep active ... gentle exercises will help you feel good”

Prepare to Exercise Safely

- Prepare your exercise space by clearing away unnecessary clutter.
- Keep something sturdy and solid nearby for support (*for example a kitchen work surface*).
- Have a glass of water ready to sip as you exercise.
- Wear well fitting and supportive shoe, and loose clothing.
- If you are exercising on your own, keep a telephone nearby in case you need it.
- Aim to practise these movements regularly throughout the week, maybe splitting them up and doing them a few at a time during the day, after breakfast or before lunch, whilst boiling the kettle or speaking on the telephone.

If you experience any of the following symptoms when exercising, stop and contact your GP:

- Discomfort in your chest
- Excessive shortness of breath - you should still be able to hold a conversation whilst exercising
- Dizziness
- Excessive pain

Warm Up Exercises

It's always good to 'warm up' your muscles and joints and to 'cool down' after any exercise. There are four warm up exercises.

Complete them all if doing the exercises in one session. If spreading the exercises over the day, do the seated march first to warm up. You can also do these warm up moves throughout the day to help mobilise the joints for a length of time.

Tip!
Contact your local leisure centre or community centre to find group activities.

The 'Seated March'

Warms up muscles and prepares for movement



What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- March with control. Build to a rhythm that feels comfortable.
- Continue for 1-2 minutes.

Shoulder Circles

Warms up muscles and prepares for movement



What to do

- Stand (or sit) tall with arms at sides.
- Lift both shoulders up to ears, draw them back then press them down.
- Repeat slowly five times and feel the shoulder joints loosen.

Ankle Loosener

Loosens ankles, keeps us stable, improves heel to toe walking action



What to do

- Sit tall at the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair.
- Place the heel of one foot on the floor then lift it and put the toes down on the same spot.
- Repeat five times on each leg.

Spine Twists

Loosens spine, helps looking over shoulders, turning in bed



What to do

- Sit very tall with feet hip width apart.
- Place your right hand on left knee and hold the chair back with the left hand.
- Twist the upper body and head slowly to the right, back to the middle, and the left round to the left.
- Repeat four more times slowly each way.

Seated Exercises

Make sure that the chair you use is sturdy and stable, so it doesn't move around when you're getting in and out of it.

Arm Swings

Helps with stamina and endurance



What to do

- Sit tall away from the chair back.
- Place both feet flat on the floor.
- Bend elbows and swing arms from the shoulder.
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable.
- Continue for 30 seconds.

More challenging option

Increase pace and time to 1-2 mins.

Wrist Strengthenener

Improves grip strength, helps opening jars



What to do

- Fold or roll a towel into a tube shape.
- Sit tall then squeeze the towel tightly with both hands, hold for a slow count of five then release.
- Repeat this exercise 6-8 times.

More challenging option

Squeeze then twist your towel before holding for 10 seconds.

Knee Strengthenener

Strengthens the knee for walking and bending



What to do

- Sit back in the chair, back supported and feet under knees.
- Brush one foot across the floor then lift the ankle slowly and straighten (do not lock) the knee.
- Lower the foot with control.
- Aim to lift for a count of three and lower for a count five each time.
- Repeat 10 times then swap legs.

More challenging options

Sit away from the back of the chair so more of your leg is off the chair when you lift. Keep the back strong while you lift the leg.

Pelvic Floor Strengthenener

Helps reduce 'leaking' when coughing/laughing



What to do

- Tighten the muscles as if you were trying to stop passing urine and wind at the same time and hold.
- Try to hold for 10 seconds.
- Rest for 4 seconds, then repeat.
- Perform this 10 times.

Avoid

Squeezing legs together, tightening buttocks or holding breath.

More challenging options

10 quick contractions by drawing up the pelvic floor.

Standing Exercises

Working the big muscles of our thighs and legs helps keep us mobile and strong.

Sit to Stand

Improves lower limb strength and stability



What to do

- Sit tall near the front of the chair.
- Place feet slightly behind knees.
- Lean slightly forwards.
- Stand up using hands on the chair for support if needed. Progress to no hands over time.
- Step back until legs touch the chair, then stand tall, bend knees and slowly lower bottom back to the chair.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging option

Do the exercise extra slow and hover for a few seconds just before sitting.

Heel Raises

Strengthen muscles and improves balance



What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, chair or even the sink!
- Raise heels taking your weight over the big and second toe, hold for a second.
- Lower heels to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging option

Do the exercise slowly and hold for a second before putting the heel down.

Marching

Helps maintain bone density at hip and spine



What to do

- Stand to the side of the chair holding on with one hand.
- Stand tall. March on the spot swinging the free arm.
- Keep marching for 30 seconds.
- Turn slowly around then repeat using the other arm.
- Repeat three times.

More challenging options

If balance is good then bring in both arms and march with more effort.

Toe Raises

Strengthen muscles that are important for stepping and balance



What to do

- Stand tall holding a sturdy table, the sink, or with your back to a wall.
- Raise toes taking weight back onto heels and without sticking bottom out.
- Hold for a second.
- Lower toes to the floor with control.
- Repeat 10 times.

More challenging options

Do the exercise slowly and hold for a second just before put the toe down.

Cool Down Stretches

Finish by marching at a relaxed pace for 1-2 minutes. Then try to perform all of the following stretches. They will help with posture, walking and stability.

Chest Stretch

Help improve posture, makes reaching backwards easier



What to do

- Sit tall away from the back of the chair.
- Reach behind with both arms and grasp the chair back.
- Press your chest upwards and forwards until you feel the stretch across your chest.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.

Back of Thigh Stretch

Helps with putting on shoes and socks, lengthens stride



What to do

- Sit at the very front of the chair.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Place both hands on the other leg then sit really tall.
- Lean forwards with a straight back and feel the stretch in the back of the thigh.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Relax and repeat on the other leg.

Calf Stretch

Helps ensure toes are lifted when walking and for getting shoes and socks on easier



What to do

- Sit forwards in the chair and hold the sides.
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor.
- Pull your toes up towards the ceiling.
- Feel the stretch in the calf.
- Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other leg.

Age NI has teamed up with Lady Mary Peters to promote the importance of Strength and Balance as we age:

www.ageni.org/movewithmary



Scan QR code to watch our Move with Mary video series.

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

Graphics from The Healthy Ageing Research Group, linked to Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing, based at the University of Manchester.

Look After Your Body

Both balance and strength will be improved simply by taking some of the actions in this section to look after our body and physical health.

Look after your feet

Your feet have been a constant fellow traveller throughout your life, but they may be showing signs of strain. Healthy feet are essential for safe walking and there are lots of things you can do to keep them healthy.

Painful and uncomfortable feet aren't a natural part of growing old or something to put up with.

Wash your feet often

Wash your feet daily to help prevent any infections. If you leave dirt on the skin, it can become irritated and infected. Dry them well, especially between the toes to help prevent Athlete's foot.

If you have some hard skin, apply moisturising foot cream (not body lotion).

Toenails

It can get harder to cut toenails as you get older, but keeping them short will help keep you mobile. When cutting your nails, trim them straight across, never at an angle or down the edge as this may cause an ingrown nail. You may need help with this from your chiropodist or a toenail cutting service.



Keeping warm

Try to keep your feet warm. Warm socks can help. Avoid anything too tight which can restrict your circulation or cramp your toes. Wearing fleece-lined boots or shoes or even an extra pair of socks will keep you warm but make sure your shoes aren't too tight as a result.

Bed socks are also a good idea when the weather is particularly cold. If your feet are cold, don't try and warm them up by putting them close to a fire or on a hot radiator as this risks chilblains.

It's important not to let foot problems go unchecked. Speak to your GP or pharmacist or a chiropodist.

"I tripped outside when I was wearing slip-on shoes because my feet had become uncomfortable. I now understand how important it is to look after my feet and toenails, I'm able to wear sturdier shoes and feel much steadier."

Sarah, aged 75 Belfast

Choosing the best footwear

Poorly-fitting shoes or slippers can easily trip you up and cause a fall. If your shoes fit well they protect and support your feet and may improve your balance and stability.

Wear slippers that have a good grip and that fasten and stay on properly, rather than slipping off.

Look for shoes with uppers made of soft leather or a stretchy man-made fabric which is also breathable. A lace-up or Velcro fastening shoe will give more support than a slip-on and can be adjusted to your foot shape.

If your feet swell during the day, it's a good idea to put your shoes on as soon as you wake up, before your feet have had a chance to swell.



Stand slowly to stay steady

If you ever feel light-headed when you stand up, this is due to a sudden drop in blood pressure and it is known as postural hypotension. It is very common and can also be caused by some medications. The key thing is to be aware of it and not to rush to stand up, to avoid fainting or falling.

If you know you experience this, always rise from lying down or from a seated position slowly and gradually, allowing time to become steady before beginning to walk.

When getting out of bed (particularly during the night to visit the toilet) sit on the edge of the bed first for a moment, place your feet firmly on the floor, and when rising to stand, steady yourself before moving off.

Take care of your eyes

Eyesight naturally changes as we age. It's easy to neglect your eyes but having a regular eye test will not only tell if you need new glasses, it will also check the health of the eye.

An eye test can pick up eye conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts, as well as general health problems such as diabetes and high blood pressure, before you becomes aware of them.

Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses.

"I like to get my regular checks done because I want to make sure everything is healthy and working well to allow me to keep going. The checks give me confidence and stop me worrying unnecessarily."

Mabel, aged 68 Craigavon

Look After Your Body

Get your hearing tested

Losing your hearing can be a normal part of the ageing process, but because it happens gradually you may not notice any change.

You may realise you need to have the TV on louder, or find you can't always follow conversations, especially in a group or in a noisy public place. Having trouble hearing can make it hard to understand and follow a doctor's advice, to respond to warnings and to hear doorbells and alarms. This can be frustrating, embarrassing and even dangerous.

Don't delay in booking a hearing test (*you could even book one with your eye test.*)

It is important to identify hearing loss early, as treatment is more likely to be effective the earlier problems are diagnosed. It may be as simple as ear wax, which is very easy to treat.

Bladder and bowel health

Natural changes can take place in our bladder and bowels when we age and sometimes medication can affect those changes too (**see page 21**). Having a healthy bladder and bowels will help us to stay strong and keep being active.

A healthy bladder

People of all ages can experience bladder control problems, particularly over the age of 60, yet many people keep it a secret for years.

Bladder problems are not an inevitable part of getting older, or something you have to put up with. Start by talking to your GP. Bladder problems are common, so there's no need to feel embarrassed. Your doctor will assess your symptoms, identify the cause, and discuss what treatments or exercises may help.

There are things you can try that may help improve your symptoms too:

- Drink normally, as cutting down on liquids will usually make urinary incontinence worse, not better.
- If you notice that tea or coffee make your symptoms worse, cut down or try decaffeinated versions.
- Check whether any medicines you're taking could be affecting your bladder.

A healthy bowel

Changes in bowel habit can be caused by a range of factors including bacterial infection, diet (*insufficient fibre*), dehydration, some medicines, not being able to move around much, and some medical conditions.

The important thing is not to ignore changes, and to seek advice. Constipation or changes in bowel habits that continue for more than four weeks, or diarrhoea that lasts for more than a few days, should always be reported to your GP. **Report bleeding to your GP immediately.**

Talk about your medication

Dizzy Spells or faints can be related to too much medication and should be discussed with your GP or pharmacist.

You may be taking several different medicines, especially if you have a condition such as diabetes or asthma.

It's important that your medicines and the doses are reviewed regularly.

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will do this for you. They may recommend alternative medicines or lower doses, or sometimes suggest the medicine is stopped altogether.

Medicines also include over the counter medication that you might purchase yourself eg. headache tablets.

Did you know that your community pharmacist can help you with queries you might have about your medicines? They are experts on medicines, and often have extended opening hours, and no appointment is necessary.

Know all the medicines you are taking, why you are taking them, and when to take them. When anything new is prescribed, ask about the possible side effects it could cause. **Don't simply stop taking a prescribed medicine if you are worried about side effects.**

If you think a medicine is causing side effects (*eg dizziness, drowsiness, loss of appetite, blurred vision, nausea or constipation*), get advice from your GP, practice nurse or pharmacist.

Community Pharmacist Aine's McNulty Tips



- Know what medication you are on and why.
- Check with your Pharmacist or GP if you are experiencing any side-effects.
- Ask your Community Pharmacist for advice on medication, minor ailments and disposing of medication you no longer need.
- Have all medication checked at least once a year.

Screening and vaccinations

Attend screening appointments when you are called, and protect yourself by getting vaccinations when offered. Getting some routine tests done at the doctors to check your blood pressure and cholesterol levels can give great peace of mind. Think of it like a regular health MOT to spot any problems in the early stages, when they are easier to treat.

Eating and Drinking

Eating and Drinking

Eating well is a key step to help nourish our body to keep healthy and stronger for longer. What we eat and drink becomes even more important as we get older and staying well-hydrated is essential for how the body functions.

Think of it as putting the right fuel in, not just for energy to do the things we enjoy, but as the building blocks of a strong, resilient and healthy body.

At each meal time try to have:

- Foods rich in starchy carbs and fibre
- Foods rich in protein
- Plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Foods containing calcium for healthy bones

Here are some top tips:



Base meals around starchy food

Starchy foods, like rice or pasta, are a good source of energy. Wholegrain and high-fibre versions are even better, as they help prevent constipation, too.



Drink about six to eight glasses of fluids each day

This doesn't have to be just water. Tea, coffee and low-sugar or sugar-free squash are fine, too. When it's hot, drink a little more to make sure you stay hydrated. Having a glass of water within reach during the daytime will remind you to keep up your fluid intake.



Eat fish at least twice a week

Having one portion of white fish (like cod or shellfish) and another of oily fish (like salmon or mackerel) each week is ideal. Oily fish is rich in vitamin D and a type of fat, Omega-3, that helps reduce the risk of heart disease. Grilling, poaching or baking fish is healthier than frying it. Tinned sardines, tuna and salmon are just a good.



Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day

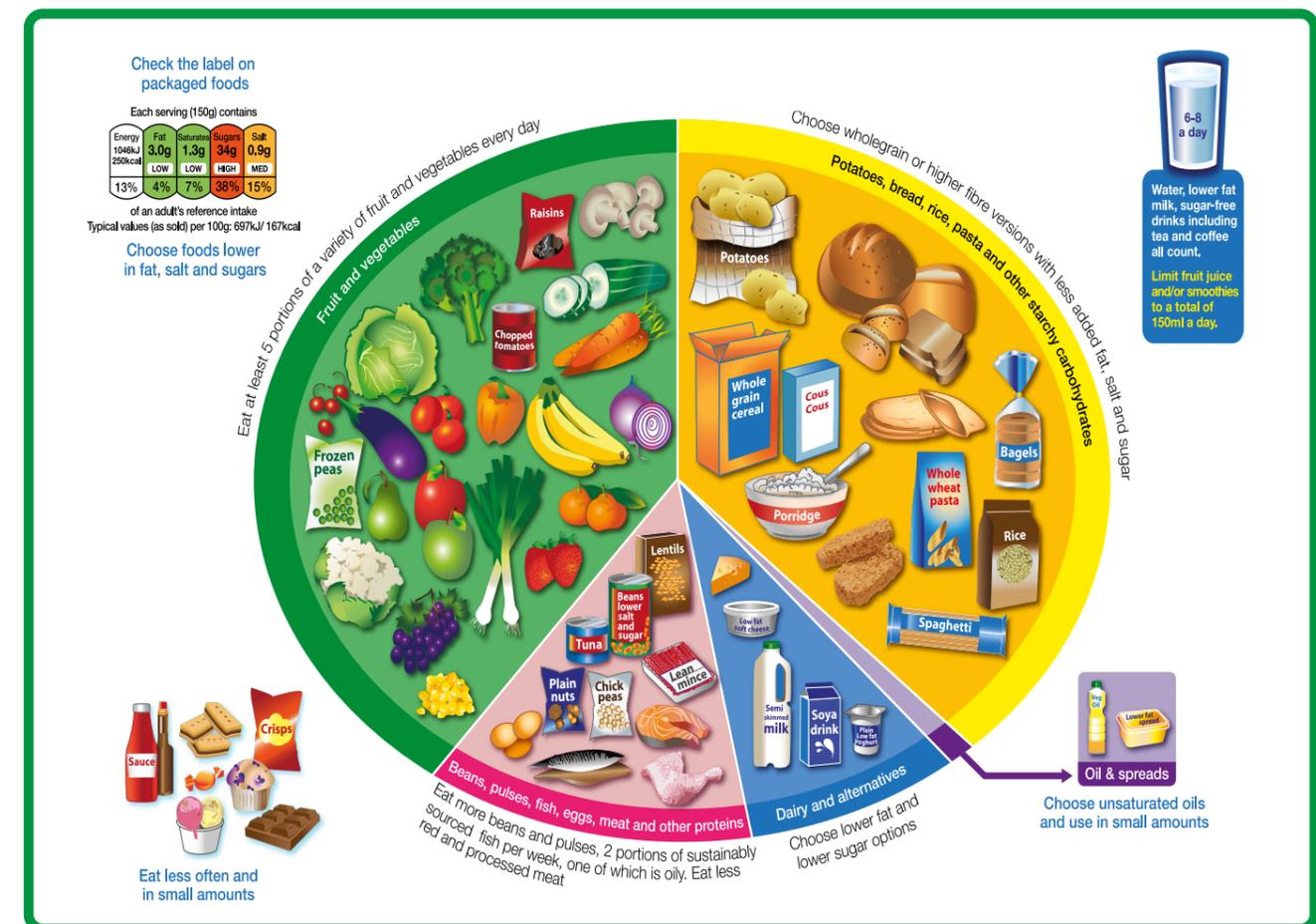
Eating plenty of fruit and veg reduces your risk of developing heart disease and certain cancers, like bowel cancer. Frozen, canned or dried fruits and fruit juices all count. Don't be put off if you don't always reach your 'five a day' – two or three portions is better than none. Aim to eat more green leafy veg each day, and try to eat more berries (frozen are much cheaper than fresh and just as good).



Eat different sources of protein

You could try alternatives to meat, such as beans, lentils or soya-based meat substitutes. Dairy products such as milk and cheese contain protein, too. They're also a good source of calcium, which helps to keep your bones strong. If you eat meat, limit portion sizes of red meat or poultry, and choose lean cuts of meat or mince.

The Eatwell Guide



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland © Crown copyright 2016



Cut down on foods that are high in salt, fat and sugar

Eating too much salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure and stroke. Look for lower-salt versions of foods where you can. Foods that are high in saturated fat, such as cakes, sausages and cheese, increase cholesterol levels in the blood and raise your risk of heart disease and stroke. Try to see these as a treat rather than as something you'd have day-to-day.



Variety is the spice of life

Include a good range of foods in your diet to help you get all the nutrients you need and to help you to maintain a healthy weight. The Eatwell Guide shows how to get a healthy balance over the course of a day or a week.

If you have special dietary or medical needs, you may wish to speak with your GP or dietitian first.

Eating and Drinking



Supplements

Eating and drinking foods that are packed full of vitamins and minerals will keep the brain and body fit and healthy.

As we age, many of us no longer absorb nutrients from food as efficiently as we did when we were younger. So, even if we eat a very good diet, our body may have inadequate levels of certain nutrients.

Consider supplementing your diet with **fish oil** and **vitamins B12** and **D**. Fish oils contain the essential ‘omega-3’ fatty acids which may have similar beneficial effects on the brain to B12, in terms of memory loss and dementia. An intake of between one and two grams per day of omega-3 from fish oil or algae capsules could be beneficial.

Vitamin D is formed by the action of UV light on the skin, but most of us do not get enough sun when we age. **It is important to take supplements of vitamin D to protect your bones, muscles and brain.**



Keeping a weight that's right for you

As we get older, our weight can change. If you've noticed you've gained some unwanted weight, you might decide to eat a bit less and move a bit more.

Weight loss is not an inevitable part of getting older.

If you've noticed yourself losing weight, it's important to eat more. Malnutrition happens when your diet does not contain the right amount of nutrients to keep you healthy: try to eat foods and drinks that are high in calories and protein ‘little and often’. Any unexpected change in your weight can also be a sign there's something else going on. **If you're worried about a change in your weight, talk to a health care professional such as your doctor or practice nurse.**



Healthy teeth and gums

Look after your teeth and gums so that you can eat and enjoy your food and reduce the risk of gum disease. Gum disease can be linked to diabetes, strokes, heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis. **Visit your dentist regularly for a dental check-up.**

For recipes and more information check out Age NI's Eatwell with Jane:

www.ageni.org/goodvibrations



Scan here for Age NI's Eat Well with Jane video series



Think Well, Feel Better



Mental health

Feeling well isn't just about looking after yourself physically – it's about looking after yourself mentally, too. Our mental health and physical health are linked. One of the benefits of being more active is that it produces feelgood hormones which can improve our mood and energy levels.

As we get older, changing circumstances can affect our mood. For example, when you retire, it can be hard to adjust to a lack of routine. But more time can be a great opportunity to do things for yourself – whether you've always fancied doing a course but never had the time, or you want to spend more time in the garden. It's important to make time for things you enjoy and create new routines.



Mind your brain

As we age, we can become aware of changes in our thinking skills. While most health and wellbeing advice is focused on physical health – our heart, lungs, bones and muscles – it is important to know that it's just as beneficial for our brain health too.

Staying physically active, eating a nutritious diet and maintaining a healthy weight, having regular check-ups, stopping smoking and staying well hydrated, all help to add up to a healthy brain.

Take five to feel good

At the start of this booklet, we shared the Take Five Steps to wellbeing and, along with staying active, many of these can aid mental health and boost our mood.



Keep learning

Take up activities or hobbies you haven't done before: this challenges our thinking power in new ways. If you do activities in a group (even online), social interaction with others will further boost the feelgood chemicals in our brain too.

Learning a new language, playing or learning to play a musical instrument, or rekindling an old hobby, are also linked with better thinking skills in later life. **It's never too late to start.**



Connect with others

As human beings, we are programmed as “pack animals” to be with others: a sense of community and spending time with others can help you feel more connected and less anxious.

Spending time with family or friends can remind you of happy memories, while meeting new people gives you the chance to share different experiences, thoughts and ideas.

It's not unusual for social networks to shrink as we age, but there are things we can do to create new ways to connect with others.

Think Well, Feel Better

Consider joining a local club or volunteering in your community. Think about what you like doing, or what you've always wanted to try. If you can't do some of the things you used to, why not go for something totally new?

Connecting with others online is an option, too. You could try video calling friends or family, or chatting on social media (*Facebook or Twitter*) or online forums.

Consider having a pet; caring for a cat or dog can help give structure to the day, can be a catalyst to social interaction and offers a focus outside of yourself.

If you have no one around, try telephone friendship services, community groups or faith organisations who may have information on local services.

Take notice

Sometimes, we can get caught up in our own thoughts, problems or challenges and it can be hard to find perspective. Taking Notice is a technique to stop, pause and take a moment to look around, finding focus elsewhere.

Being mindful

Mindfulness is a practice of refocusing our attention on the here and now, not worrying about the past or what is yet to come.

It is proven to improve our thinking skills and our overall health and wellbeing.

Benefits include:

- Reduction in pain
- Reduction in anxiety and depression
- Improvement in sleep
- Reduction in inflammation
- Improvement in decision making and concentration

There are many ways to practice mindfulness including meditation, breathwork, being in nature, yoga and just spending time quietly each day giving thanks for what you have. Gratitude has also been shown to improve our mental health and wellbeing.

Simply taking note every day of things for which we are grateful can bring perspective and contentment.

Today I am grateful for:

If you are interested in learning more about mindfulness and meditation, watch Age NI's video series, by local mindfulness expert, Frank Liddy: www.ageni.org/goodvibrations



Scan here for Age NI's Focus with Frank video series



Invest in Rest



Why do we need to invest in rest?

The transition into later life, and life events during this time can be difficult to cope with; starting retirement, loneliness, changes in our health, caring responsibilities, or financial worries are a few examples. These changes can create stress in our minds and bodies, making it harder to relax and rest. Relaxing and resting are both important for our physical and mental health.

"As a carer for my husband and worried about the future, I didn't realise how the stress was affecting my sleep. I felt so tired during the day. With some help I can relax better now and that lets me rest even if I'm not asleep."

Janet, aged 72 Coleraine

Sleep

Alongside exercise and nutrition, good sleep is one of the most important ingredients for our health and wellbeing. Sleep is important to our brain health, our mood and ability to cope with everyday life. Sleep patterns change naturally as we age, becoming less deep, and we might wake up more often during the night or earlier in the morning.

A good night's sleep

While we should aim for seven to eight hours of sleep per day, the quality of our sleep is just as important as the quantity; we call these factors "sleep hygiene" and they can help us to sleep well.

Sleep Tips

Dr Jonathan Bloomfield



- Get out in the fresh air during the day.
- Move More during the day to keep rest and sleep cycles on track.
- Minimise any napping, and never longer than 20 mins if you have to at all.
- Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake and quit smoking.
- Don't eat too late in the evening.
- Keep a regular routine for going to bed & for waking up, 7 days a week.
- Have a peaceful, quiet space to sleep and aim for complete darkness.
- Start winding down 90 minutes before you aim to go to sleep.
- Disconnect from devices like phones, ipads, laptops before going to bed.
- Practice breathing exercises to help you relax to get to sleep.

Invest in Rest

Stress less

A key factor which can affect our sleep and ability to relax is stress.

Stress is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. It usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control.

A small amount of stress from time to time can help us to complete tasks and feel more energised. But stress can become a problem when it lasts for a long time or is very intense. In some cases, stress can affect our physical and mental health.

Breathing exercises

A surprisingly simple and effective tool we can all use is our breath.

Practicing how we breathe can calm our heart rate and help us to relax and reduce stressful thoughts and feelings.

Focusing on our breath, the depth and length of each breath in and out, and the rhythm of our breathing, can have a transformative effect on how we feel.

It can take us out of a state of anxiety and into rest and repair and can help us to sleep better.

We can practice breathwork through meditation, yoga, mindfulness, stretching and gentle exercises.

Breathing for Relaxation Tips Patricia Martin



- Sitting in your chair, connect your feet to the floor beneath
- Feel the chair's support, relax your buttocks into the chair
- Gently rest your palms on your laps and close your eyes
- Breathe gently, at your own pace, feeling the breath enter the nostrils
- Gently breathe in and out, relaxing your body as you do
- Feel your body relaxing and enjoy this lightness and time for you

Try some gentle relaxing beginner yoga with Age NI's yoga teacher, Aoife here:



Scan QR code to try:
'Get Up and Go Morning Practice with Aoife'



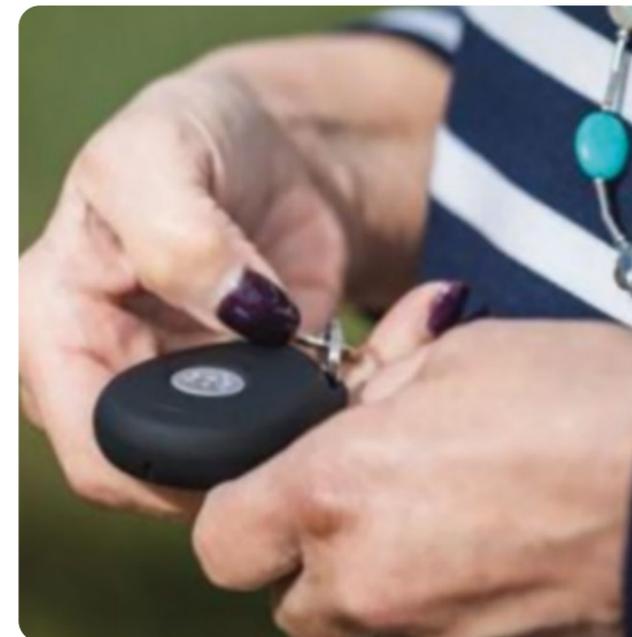
Scan QR code to try:
'Restorative Evening Class with Aoife'

Safe and Secure

We all want to feel safe, whether we're in our own home or going about our day-to-day lives.

As we get older, we can begin to feel more vulnerable. However, there are plenty of things we can do to feel safer and put our mind at ease.

Peace of mind with a personal alarm



The assurance of a personal alarm gives back confidence, offers freedom and is proven to help users live independently in their own home for longer.

If you're worried about a fall, a personal alarm can provide peace of mind to keep you moving. Worn on a pendant or wristband, a button alarm allows you to call for help if you're unwell, or have a fall and can't reach a telephone.

"I don't ever want to be in a position where I couldn't contact someone in an emergency. I feel fit and independent right now, but the day might come when I need the reassurance that my personal alarm gives me."

Mary, Dunmurry

Pressing or activating the button will alert a 24-hour response centre. Within seconds a reassuring voice will let you know help is on the way.

Age NI Personal Alarms are provided by a carefully selected specialist partner, Taking Care, using tried, tested and trusted technology, and recommended by consumer experts, Which? Proceeds from sales support the charitable work of Age NI.



Scan to find out more or visit:
www.ageni.org/personalarms

Safe and Secure

Scams

Criminals are always on the lookout for new ways to exploit people of all ages. Scams are a way of cheating people out of their money and it's easy to get caught out.

Any of us can fall victim to a scam. They can be very distressing, and the impact is often emotional as well as financial.

Scammers may try to approach you on your doorstep, by post over the phone or online. They'll often pretend to be someone they're not.

As scams are getting more sophisticated and difficult to spot, it's important to know what to look for and what to do if you suspect a scam.

- Be wise to **cold callers at your door** – you don't have to open the door to anyone you don't know: **Stop, Lock, Chain and Check**. Don't worry about keeping someone waiting while you check – if they're who they say they are, they won't mind. If you're being pressured or feel unsafe, contact friends, family or the police.
- **Calls saying they are your bank or the police, asking for any financial information**, such as your PIN number are scams – these organisations will never ask you for this.

- Be wary of **text or Whatsapp messages from unfamiliar numbers** (even if they greet you as, for example, "mum" or "grandpa") or messages about payment of postage for a parcel – these messages are aimed at taking your money or bank details.
- Ignore **unsolicited mail** such as letters, emails or phone calls offering a brilliant investment or saying you've won a lottery.

Golden Rules

- ✓ **Be suspicious.**
- ✓ **Don't be embarrassed to hang up, say no, or ask someone to leave.**
- ✓ **Do not agree to offers or deals immediately.**
- ✓ **Never hand over or send money to anyone you don't know or trust, in the UK or abroad.**
- ✓ **Never give banking or personal details to anyone you don't know or trust.**
- ✓ **Trust your instincts – if it sounds too good to be true, no matter how genuine it looks, it's probably a scam! Do not respond.**



Online and email scams

Things like email and online shopping can make our lives a lot easier, but they also create opportunities for fraud. Digital scams are becoming increasingly common and sophisticated.

Here are some things to watch out for:

- Links directing to a fake website, eg your bank or utility.
- Emails from abroad asking for money.
- Emails with attachments – these can contain a virus which infects your computer.
- Tax Refund emails saying they are from HMRC – a common scam.
- Invoice emails – these can be hacked to appear to come from companies you trust.

Stay Safe Online

- ✓ **Create a strong password** to prevent hacking.
- ✓ **Don't open emails or attachments** from someone you don't know.
- ✓ **Leave the links.** Don't click email links to your bank or utility company – look them up directly.
- ✓ **Do NOT reply.** Delete and don't reply, even to say "no."
- ✓ **Double check.** Any unexpected request for money: always look up their number and call them to double check.
- ✓ **Stay virus free.** Make sure your computer has anti-virus software to protect it.

Stay on top of scams with up to date information and guidance on these websites:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni
or **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you spot a scam or have been scammed, report it and get help.

Contact **ActionFraud** on **0300 123 2040**.
Contact the Police if the suspect is known or still in the area.

Safe and Secure



Staying Safe at Home

Feeling safe in your own home can bring great peace of mind. Keep up to date with these **home safety checks** every year, and create a regular night time routine to help you feel safe.

- **Test** smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries.
- Have your boiler/gas appliances **checked** annually to make sure they're all working safely.
- If you have an open fire, have your **chimney swept** annually.
- Keep windows and doors **locked** and bolted (where possible) while you're out or overnight.
- When you lock up at night, keep the **keys to** hand (but out of sight) so that you can get out easily if you need to.
- Leave some **lights on** when you go out at night or set a timer switch, if you have one.

Fall-proofing your home

Many slips, trips and falls happen in or around the home. Keeping an eye out for potential hazards can make your home a safer place. Although some of these points may seem obvious, it's easy to overlook them.

Top Tips Physiotherapist Cathy McKeown



Ask yourself these questions:

- **Do you have good lighting, especially on the stairs?**
- **Are stairs and steps clutter free?**
- **Do you have – or need - handrails on both sides of the stairs?**
- **Do you have a nightlight in the bedroom or a torch by the bed in case you need to get up in the night?**
- **Are your floors clear of trailing wires, wrinkled or fraying carpets, or anything else that you might trip or slip on?**
- **Do you have – or need - a handrail in the bath and do you have a non-slip bath mat?**
- **Do you always use a step ladder to reach high places? Always ask someone to help you if you're using a ladder, never stand on a chair.**
- **Do you keep your garden paths clear and free from moss or wet leaves?**

Financial Security

Money worries can be a big source of stress and worry in later life, especially if your personal or health circumstances change, and you are on a fixed pension income.

One of Age NI's most important services is providing expert advice to older people, and supporting them to access all of the financial payments and benefits to which they are entitled.

If you are over pension age, you could be entitled to benefits you haven't been able to claim before.

These can help with basic day to day needs, or give you a bit of freedom to do the things you enjoy.

Last year, Age NI helped thousands of older people to put more money in their pockets, by identifying well over £1million in unclaimed benefits. However you use the money, it's yours and you are entitled to it.

This service is available free of charge, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm by calling Age NI's Advice Line on 0808 808 7575.

Why not get in touch today to find out if you're missing out?

Alternatively, there is a calculator on the Age NI website which can help you to find out what you're entitled to.

Visit www.ageni.org/moremoney

Brenda Kearns, Head of Age NI Advice Line



“Even if you don't think you are entitled, you might be pleasantly surprised. Even a small entitlement for something like Pension Credit may not seem worthwhile, but it can act as a gateway, opening up other payments, such as cost of living or winter fuel payments. It's worth getting a check. The average successful claim supported through the Age NI adviceline team amounts to £2500 per year. Some open up much greater sums.”

Keysafe

If you need to leave a key for a cleaner or carer, or for access to your home in the event of an emergency, such as a fall, consider installing a key safe.

A key safe means a spare key can be left in a locked box fixed to the outside wall of the house and accessed by a combination code. **No more leaving a key under a plant pot or the doormat!**

Age NI offers a trusted model, the Supra police-preferred key safe, and can arrange secure installation.

Visit www.ageni.org/keysafes for information and ordering.

What to do if you fall

If you should fall, lie still for a minute, stay calm and check for injuries. If you are unhurt and think you can get up, follow the steps pictured here (right) and rest between each one if you need to.

Even if you are unhurt, make sure that you tell a healthcare professional, family member or carer that you have fallen.



If you can't get on to all fours, bottom-shuffle or roll to a low surface like the bottom stair or sofa. Sit with your back to it, put your arms behind you on to the surface and push up with your hands and feet, lifting your bottom onto the surface. If using the stairs, go up to the next step before standing up.

Getting up from a fall



1. Roll onto your side, and then push up onto your elbows.



2. Use your arms to push yourself onto your hands and knees.



3. Crawl towards a very stable piece of furniture (a sturdy chair or bed) and hold for support.



4. Slide or raise the foot of your stronger leg forwards so it's flat on the floor.



5. Lean forwards and push up using your arms and front leg, slowly rising to a standing position.



6. Turn around and sit down. Sit for a minute or two and catch your breath.



If you fall and can't get up

If you know you can't get up, or feel pain in your hips or back if you move, then try to call for help by using your phone or personal alarm button, or by banging on radiators or walls.

Make sure you have the number for a neighbour or nearby family member saved in your telephone speed-dial. If you need urgent medical help call 999.

In the meantime...

Try to keep warm by covering yourself with whatever is close by and try and keep moving your limbs and roll from side to side if you are able, to help you to keep warm and maintain circulation.

Put a cushion under your head or use a rolled up item of clothing. Keep your fluids up if you can reach a drink.

Useful Contacts

Age Sector Networks

There are groups in every part of Northern Ireland ready to help through the Age Sector Network. **Get in touch with your local group.**

**Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon:
ABC Seniors Network**
07734 806763

**Ards & North Down: AGENDA
- Age North Down & Ards**
028 9127 1968

Belfast: G6 / Engage With Age
028 9073 5696

**Causeway Coast & Glens: COAST -
Causeway Older Active Strategic Team**
028 7776 7860

**Lisburn & Castlereagh: Lisburn
& Castlereagh Age Friendly**
028 9244 7327

Mid & East Antrim Age Partnership
028 2565 8604

Mid Ulster: Mid Ulster Seniors Network
07814 196935

**Newry, Mourne & Down:
Southern Age Well Network**
028 3026 6024

**Down Seniors Forum: County
Down Rural Community Network**
028 4461 2311

Derry City & Strabane: ALLY Foyle
028 7186 0123

**Antrim and Newtownabbey:
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum**
028 9083 8848

**Fermanagh & Omagh:
South West Age Partnership**
028 8225 1824

Health Trust Falls Services

Each Trust area has a local self-referral falls prevention service, offering a range of services and strength & balance classes. **Get in touch with your local service.**

Belfast Trust
028 95 047 656

South Eastern Trust
028 92 633 705

Western Trust
028 71 610 763

Northern Trust
028 94 424 644

Southern Trust
028 37 564 909

Age NI Advice Service

If you, or an older person you know needs advice, information or practical support on a wide range of issues including welfare benefits, community care, housing and health, contact the Age NI Advice Service to speak to a specialist advisor in confidence. Call us today to make sure you are receiving all the help and support available to you.

Freephone **0808 808 7575**

Available **Monday - Friday 9am-5pm**

Inspire Wellbeing

A free service for people who need support and information about mental health issues or concerns. **For more information and resources to look after your mental health, visit the Inspire Wellbeing Hub: www.communitywellbeing.info**

Freephone: **0808 189 0036**

Webchat: **www.inspirewellbeing.org**

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