

What to do if Someone Falls

Having an unexpected fall can be a very scary experience, not only for the person who fell, but also for the caregiver or family. Falling is not always an emergency. Knowing how to respond to a fall will help avoid panic and allow for better decision-making.

- **Step One:** Check for Injury
 - After a fall, do not move the person until it is determined that the fall did not cause any serious injury that needs immediate medical attention.
 - Check their head, neck, and spine movements. For people with previous head or brain injuries, notify a healthcare provider right away.
 - Check to see if they are alert and ask questions to make sure responses are accurate. For example, ask a few simple questions they should know, such as “What is your full name?” or “What is your address?”
 - Make sure they can move their whole body and look for obvious broken bones or joint dislocations.
 - Make sure there is no heavy bleeding.
 - **If serious injury is noted or suspected, do not attempt to move the person**, because this could cause more harm. Instead, call 911 for emergency medical assistance.
 - If there is no sign of serious injury, make a plan for getting up safely from the floor.

- **Step Two:** Getting Up
 - How to help someone get up from the floor depends on how much assistance the person usually needs for transfers. Highly functioning people will often be able to get up without much help by using their environment. Someone who is more dependent on others for movement may need to be lifted off the floor with either a mechanical lift or with a 2-person lift method.
 - **Using the Environment** – If it is safe to try to get up, check the surroundings for safety and to decide what can be used to help with a safe transfer.
 - Using a solid surface to pull to or push from can help make moving from the floor easier. Solid surfaces commonly found in the home include a table, bed, sofa, or coffee table. You could even use a locked wheelchair for support.
 - Avoid grabbing onto things that could tip over or break free and possibly cause another fall. For example, tables that only have a center base, towel bars in the bathroom, rolling or unsteady chairs.
 - Steps for Getting Up
 1. Move into position next to the solid surface support.
 2. Get onto your hands and knees next to the surface.
 3. Place hands up onto surface and move knees round to be fully facing surface.
 4. Step one foot forward so you are in a half-kneeling position.
 5. Push down with arms and forward leg to get up onto feet.
 - Ask for help if you do not feel that you can safely get yourself or someone else up on your own, even if you have to wait.



- **Lifting Off the Floor with equipment**

- If someone needs a great amount of help to get up from the floor, a mechanical lift should be used. This will decrease the risk of injury to everyone involved.
- Instructions for using a Hoyer lift for floor transfers can be found [HERE](#), or to watch a [VIDEO](#).
- If a mechanical lift is not available, a 2-person (or more) lift technique can be used.

- **For a 2-Person Lift:**

- Plan for how the person on the floor is going to be moved. Make sure the path is clear for everyone between where the person is now and where they will be moved.
 - Position the person on floor into partially reclined position with arms crossed across chest, leaning back up against one assisting person. From behind the person on the floor, one assistant wraps their arms around the person's sides and grasps onto the opposite forearms in a "bear hug" position.
 - The second assistant wraps their arms underneath the person's knees, keeping knees and hips bent.
 - In a coordinated effort, the assistants lift the person to a firm surface. Communication is key for a safe and successful lift with the least amount of effort or risk of injury. (Use a countdown such as *1...2...3...lift* for an easier and more coordinated effort).
 - Please visit this site to watch a [VIDEO](#) for a 2 person lift off the floor.

