

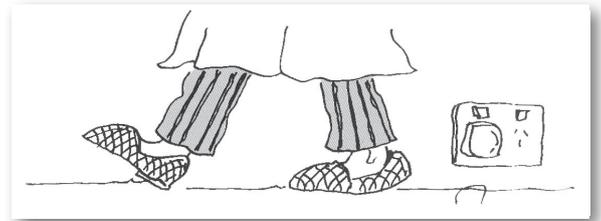
# FALLS

## Falls Are Preventable

### Balance and footwear

How good is your balance? Do you have problems when you stand up, walk, turn around, climb stairs or sit down? Have you noticed that your walking style has changed, perhaps a tendency to shuffle?

There are many changes to our bodies as we get older, and having effective balance helps us to live independently.



#### Your balance can be affected by:

- Medication** Ask your doctor if any of your medications could be causing this.
- Inner ear problems** Even something as simple as wax in your ear can affect your balance, so have your ears checked regularly.
- Sudden movements** Gentle exercise may be able to help with this problem – ask your doctor.
- Colds and sinus** Can throw you off balance.
- Footwear** The wrong footwear can make you unsteady (see overleaf).

If you are concerned in any way about your balance, talk to your doctor. You might be referred to a physiotherapist for a balance test or your doctor may refer you into an exercise program, such as those on [www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au](http://www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au).

To improve your balance and strength, it is important to do specific exercises every second day. For exercises that can be done in your home, go to [www.healthpromotion.com.au/be-physically-active](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au/be-physically-active) and download a copy of the exercise sheet *Home-based exercises to improve strength and balance*. Or for a hard copy, call the Health Promotion Service on the number below.



**Health**  
Central Coast  
Local Health District

For more information on how to avoid a fall go to [www.healthpromotion.com.au](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au) or contact the Health Promotion Service on 4320 9700.

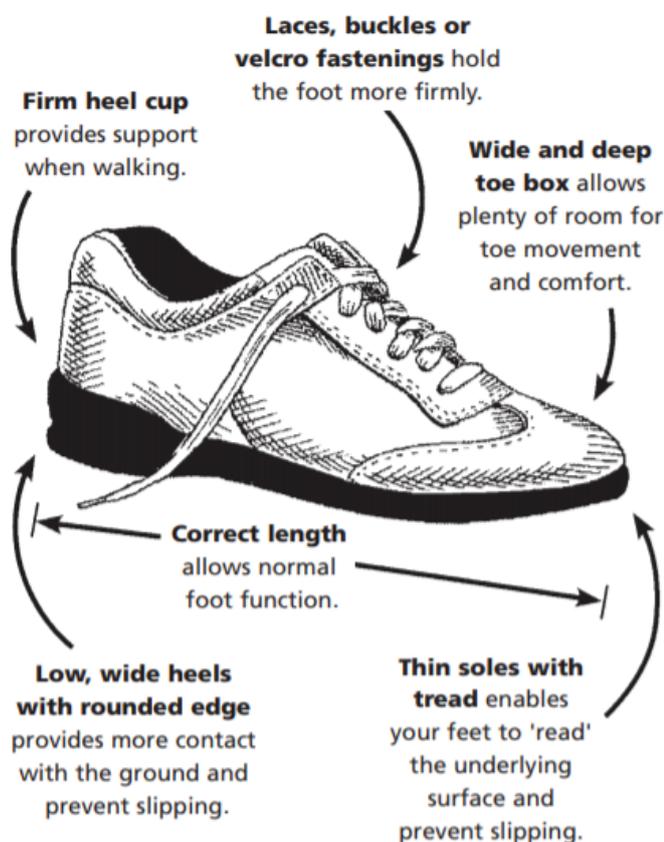
# Look after your feet

As our feet grow older, they can change shape and lose some feeling and flexibility. This changes the way we walk and affects balance. Some shoes and slippers can also make you more likely to slip, trip or stumble, leading to a fall. Painful and uncomfortable feet is something you shouldn't put up with.

Here are some tips to help you look after your feet.

- See your podiatrist or doctor if you have foot pain or foot problems.
- If you are diabetic, take special care of your feet and check regularly for any redness.
- Dry your feet well, particularly between the toes.
- Visit your podiatrist regularly to review your feet, cut nails and treat any corns.
- Foot and ankle strengthening exercises can help with blood flow to your feet and balance, which can help reduce risk of falling. To download a copy of the *Prevent Falls with Stronger Feet* brochure, visit [www.healthpromotion.com.au/balance-and-footwear](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au/balance-and-footwear) or call the number below to receive a hard copy.

## Shoes should have...



## Shopping tips

- Try both shoes on and buy for fit, not size.
- Shoes should fit properly when you buy them. They should not need to be stretched or broken in.
- Wear your usual socks and orthotics when trying shoes.
- Ask your podiatrist about specialist shoe stores if you have trouble finding suitable shoes.
- A long-handed shoe horn may help in putting on shoes.