

AKE 2022



Stay Up!

Information about fall prevention for you and your loved ones

AKE 2022

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Alueellinen kaatumisten ehkäisyverkosto (AKE) - The Regional Fall Prevention Network (RFPN)

From Finnish Pysytään pystyssä –guide translated by Tarja Tervo-Heikkinen. Proofreading by RFPN members.

Reduce the risk of falls

- Act today!



The contents of this guide are based on the latest evidence-based information available and provide guidelines for the prevention of falls in adults.

Guide has been compiled in 2014 and updated in 04/2022.

These things you can actually influence:

- ♦ Train your balance and muscular strength regularly.
- ♦ Maintain your mobility and functional ability.
- ♦ Take care of your health and good self-care of any illness.
- ♦ Use the medications prescribed for you as agreed.
- ♦ Ensure regular monitoring of your medication.
- ♦ Take adequate and healthy nutrition and drink daily.
- ♦ Wear eyeglasses and a hearing aid if you need them.
- ♦ Learn the proper use of assistive and safety devices.
- ♦ Take note and remove hazards from your home environment.
- ♦ Tell your nurse or doctor if you have problems with balance, dizziness, or if you have a fall.

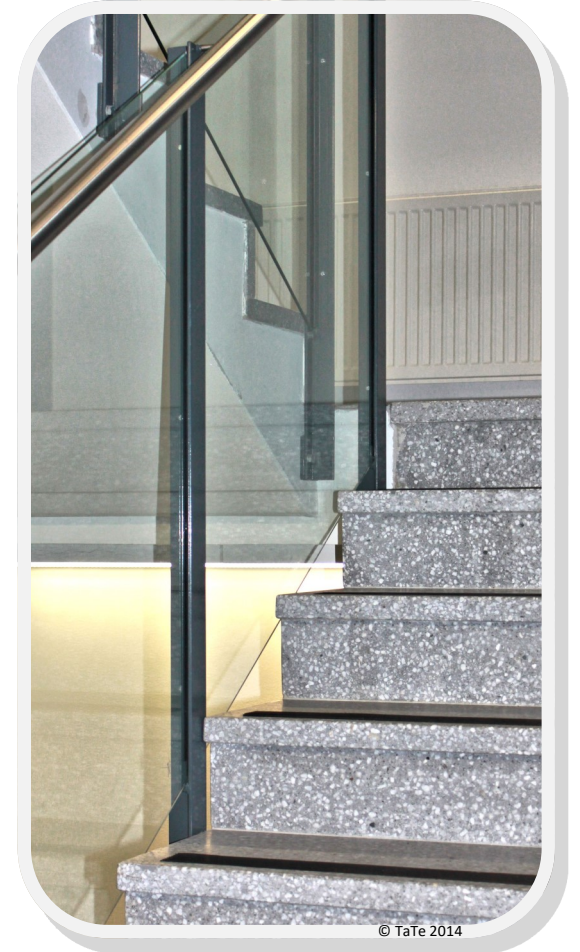
A functional and safe home environment

Look around your home. Unimpeded environment increases security. Here are some tips.

- ♦ Avoid crowding the rooms.
- ♦ Keep corridors free of bulk.
- ♦ Consider removing or lowering thresholds.
- ♦ Remove carpets from access routes in possible.
- ♦ Non-slip pads can be placed under rugs. The rug corners will not curl when you use corner angles.
- ♦ A floor that is dry, unwaxed, and clean is the safest. Dusty floors are slippery.

Handrails provide the best support for going up and down stairs. The handrail should be of appropriate diameter and placed at the right height so you get a good grip.

Non-slip stair treads are suitable for indoor and outdoor use. They can be installed on existing stairs.



You can put a basket for the mail below the mail drop.

It's a good idea to have a bench or chair near the front door where you can safely put and take off your shoes.

Non-slip socks or appropriate indoor footwear help you to stay up, even if the floor is a bit slippery.

Outdoor mobility

Follow the same safety principles as indoors.

- ♦ Observe the condition of the routes you use.
- ♦ Whether the thoroughfare are unobstructed.
- ♦ If possible, ensure adequate lighting and gritting.
- ♦ If necessary, contact the service company.
- ♦ Choose footwear according to weather and road conditions.
- ♦ As the weather changes, always check the condition of mobility aids (ice pick for walking stick etc.).
- ♦ Always select sturdy footwear.
- ♦ Use antislip grips or studded shoes in slippery conditions e.g. in winter.

Please note that the studs can be slippery inside!

Make sure you have a CE marking on your shoes.

Lighting and vision

As we age, visual acuity, the ability to distinguish between different colours and shades depth of vision deteriorate. Besides vision, adequate lighting is a basic requirement for safe mobility. General lighting should therefore be uniform and non-glare.

Night lights help you see where you are going even in low light conditions. You can use a timer or motion sensors to set the lights.

Clear colour differences make it easier to perceive different surfaces, such as walls, floors, and furniture.

Bifocals may cause problems when going up and down stairs and assessing height differences. Have your eyes checked regularly and get new glasses when necessary. Keep your glasses clean and in a place where they are easy to find.

Bathroom and toilet

Water and detergents make floors slippery. Using materials such as roughened tiles improves security in the bathroom and toilet. Non-slip mats on the floor or in the tub work in the same way. There are also coating for wet floors which make the surface non-slip (available e.g. from hardware stores).

Low rubber thresholds and different types of grab rails increase safety. They are easy to install in older buildings as well.

A sturdy shower chair of the right size facilitates taking a shower. Keep detergents within reach, for example in a basket mounted on the wall.

Handrails and low steps make it easier to climb up on the sauna bench. A sturdy guard should be in place by the heater to prevent accidents. If possible, you should never go to the sauna alone.

Various types of grab rails available for the toilet and bathroom.

Photo: Tanja Moilanen

Other spaces in the home

Make sure that the household appliances, implements and food items you need are readily accessible. Try to avoid using the uppermost shelves. You may experience a sudden dizzy spell as you climb up.

Get rid of unnecessary furniture and slippery rugs around the bed. Having a bed that is the right height makes getting in and out of bed safer.



Prevent falls with good nutrition

Good muscle strength is the key to optimal muscle function and balance. Muscles need energy and protein for their optimal function! Low protein intake is associated with muscle wasting and increases the risk of infections.

Meat, poultry, fish, dairy products and vegetable protein preparation and pulses (peas, beans, peanuts, soybean) are good sources of protein.

If you are losing weight unintentionally your energy intake is too low! Weigh yourself at least once a month. Increase portion size or the number of meals if needed. Regular meals help you get enough energy and keep your blood glucose at optimal levels.

A total of five meals/snacks per day is suitable for most people. Pictured on right (top) is the **plate model**, which is an example of a healthy meal for everybody. Beneath it is a **plate model for an ageing person**. We recommend this model if you have lost weight or if you are able to eat only small portions at a time.

Plate model. One half of the plate is filled with lettuce and vegetables, one quarter with fish, meat, vegetable protein preparation or legible and one quarter with potatoes, rice or pasta.

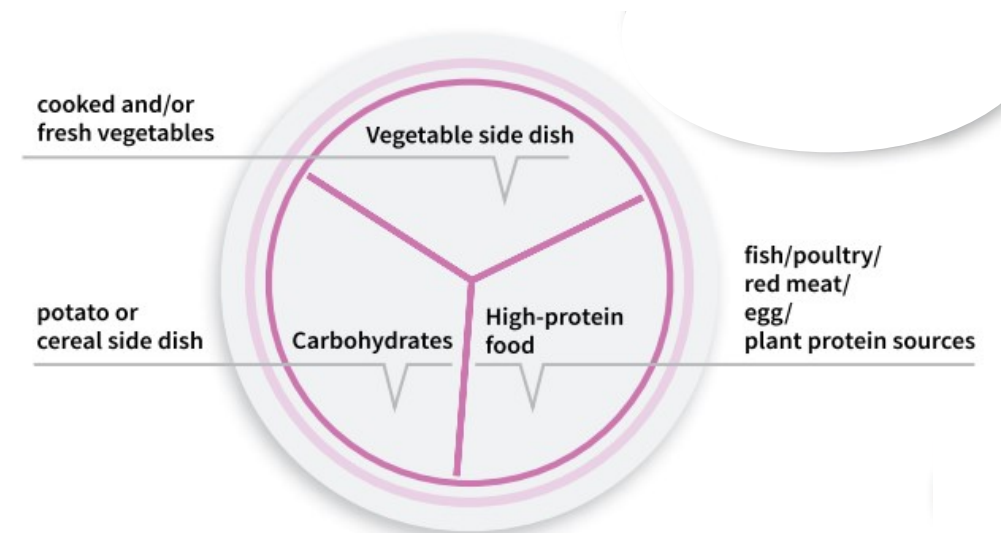
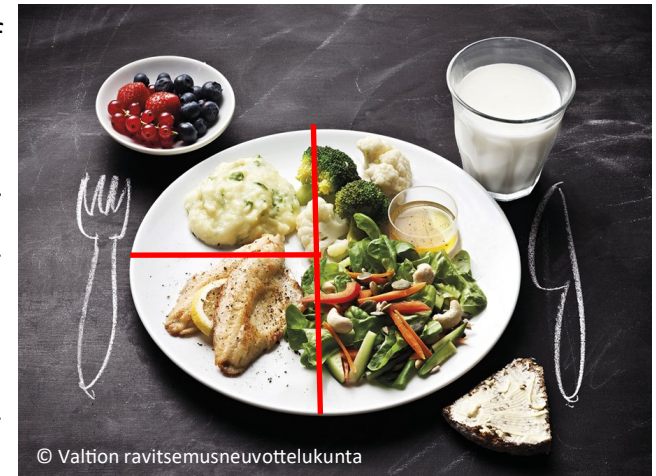


Plate model for an ageing person.

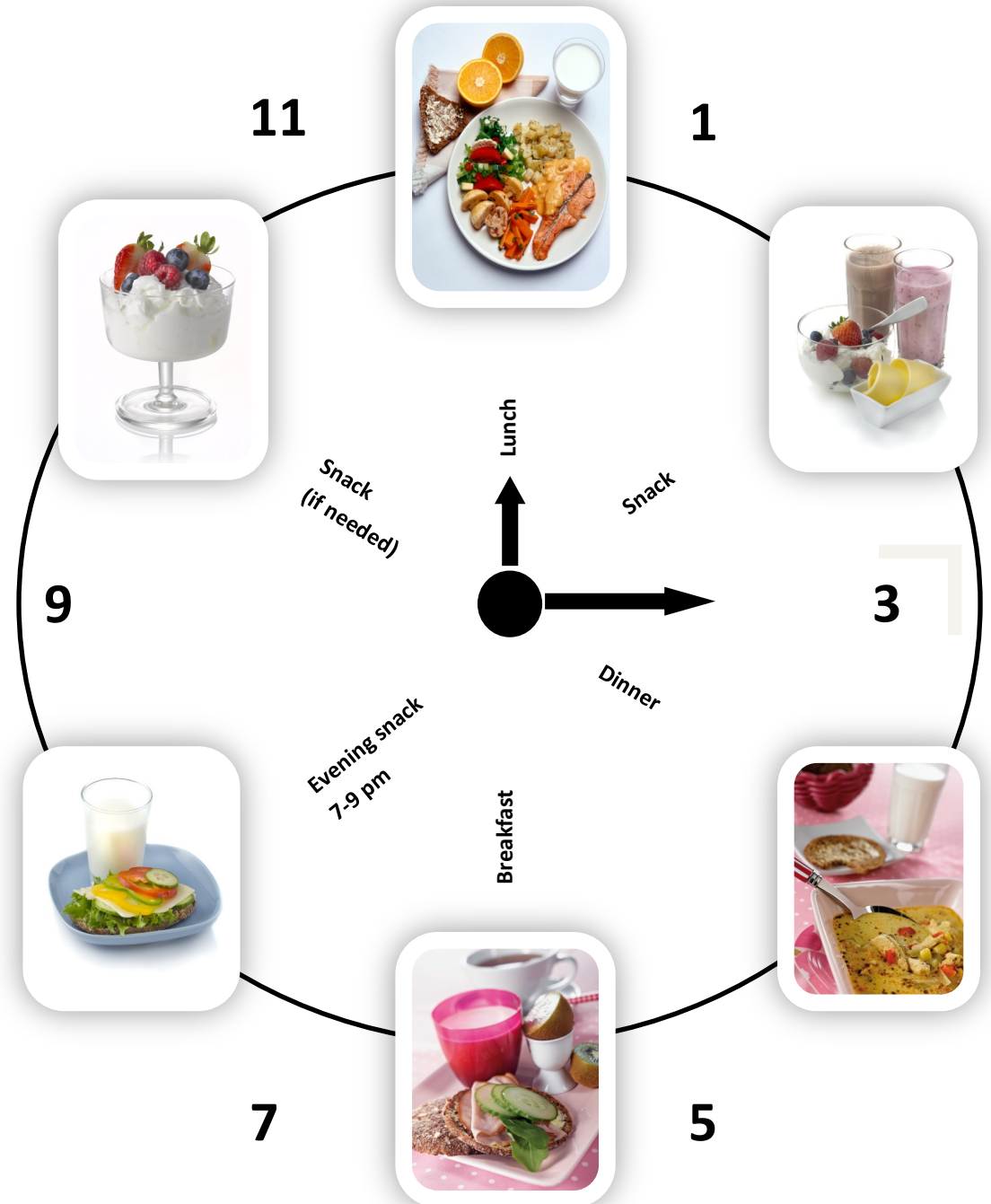
Vitality in later years: food recommendation for older adults

<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-517-9>

Eat daily

- 4-5 times (meals + snacks)
- 1-2 warm meals. Drink a glass of milk, sour milk, soy milk etc. and eat 1-2 slices of whole grain bread.
- Yoghurt or other sour milk/soy products, and cheese or whole meat cold cut with bread as part of breakfast.
- Altogether six (6) portions of whole grain products, e.g. a bowl of porridge and 3-4 slices of bread.
- If you have lost weight unintentionally add small snacks in between your meals. Increase also the amount of fat: use more margarine (60-80 %) on bread, with porridge, rice, pasta and cooked vegetables.
- You can use also oil e.g. in porridge. Or more oil based salad dressing in salad.

Adapt the meal pattern to your own daily activities. Avoid overnight fasting for 11 hours.



Stay hydrated

The sensations of thirst becomes weaker with increasing age. The percentage of water in the body falls and dehydration develops faster than in younger people. Dehydration lowers the blood pressure, which can in turn cause falls. An adequate fluid intake prevents constipation as well.

Drink an extra glass of water every time you take your medicines and with meals and snacks. Increase the amount of fluids when the temperature outside gets warmer and every time you go to the sauna or exercise more. Drink fluids regularly – don't wait until you're thirsty! When you become thirsty your body is already slightly dehydrated.

Milk products - a good source of calcium!

You get the recommended amount of calcium if you have 3-4 glasses (5-6 dl) of milk, sour milk, yoghurt etc. and 2-3 slices of cheese. If dairy products or calcium-enriched soy, oat or rice-based products are not a part of your diet, a calcium supplement is recommended.

Vitamin D and calcium - for strong bones!

Vitamin D improves bone endurance and muscle function. Adequate intake of both decreases falls and bone fractures.

A daily vitamin D supplement of 20 µg is recommended for persons 75 years and over. A smaller amount (10 µg) could be enough if you use D-enriched milk products, margarine and fish 2-3 times a week.

If you consume less than recommended amounts of vitamin D-enriched milk products, margarine and fish, a vitamin D supplement of 10 µg/day is recommended from October to March. If you have had individual recommendation from doctor you should follow it.

Drink 5-8 glasses of different types of fluids on a daily basis.

Always include water in your daily fluid intake.



Physical activity / exercise

Physical activity gives you the energy you need to cope with activities of daily living. It also gives you positive experiences, keeps your mind sharp and refreshes the body. It is important that you find a suitable form of exercise that you can practice on a daily basis.

Weekly physical activity recommendation for people age 65 years and older. The recommendation emphasizes the significance of endurance and muscles strength fitness, and balance and flexibility-related exercise, all of which support mobility and prevention of falls.

Light physical activity should be practised as often as possible. Carry out light movement in everyday life, such as home chores, outdoor activities and shopping.

You need movement and sleep in a suitable relationship. Whenever you can, it is worth avoiding sitting and otherwise being in place. Movement activates your muscles and maintains your ability to move.

You need to have a restorative sleep in everyday life. Adequate sleep and activity brings positive health effects. Even a slight increase in regular movement will improve your ability to function, prevent falls and related injuries. In addition, physical activity prevents and treats many diseases, as well as rehabilitates after illness



Movement brings alertness to everyday life

Move in everyday life as much as possible and versatile. Strive to exercise muscle strength, balance and supple at least twice a week.

Brisk exercise with an increase in heart rate recommended for 2 hours 30 minutes a week. When increasing the power of movement from brisk to strenuous, movement is recommended for 1 hour 15 minutes a week. With this you will achieve the same health benefits as with brisk movement.

A few minutes of movement moments at a time will be useful.

Balance and muscle-strength training

You can incorporate training in your daily activities, such as doing the dishes, dusting or going up and down stairs.

You should start doing the exercises based on your own fitness level. The recommended number of repetitions is 10-20. Do three sets of repetitions with a short rest between sets. You can also use small ankle weights.

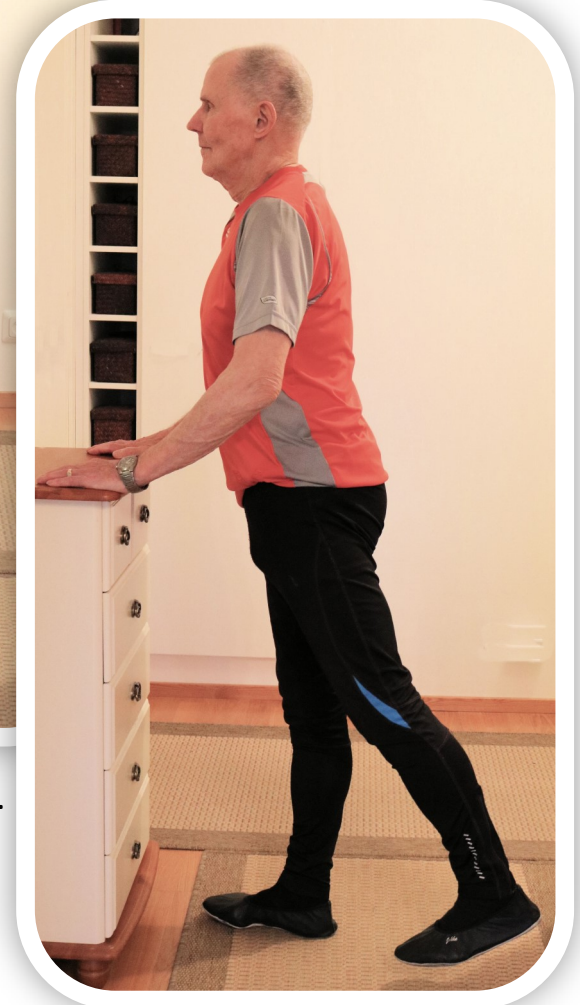


Raise one leg straight behind you.
Repeat, alternating both legs.

Stand with your back straight, if necessary, take support.

Alternately, raise your right and left knee.

Photos© Anne Lopenen





Sit on a chair, lean forward and stand up.

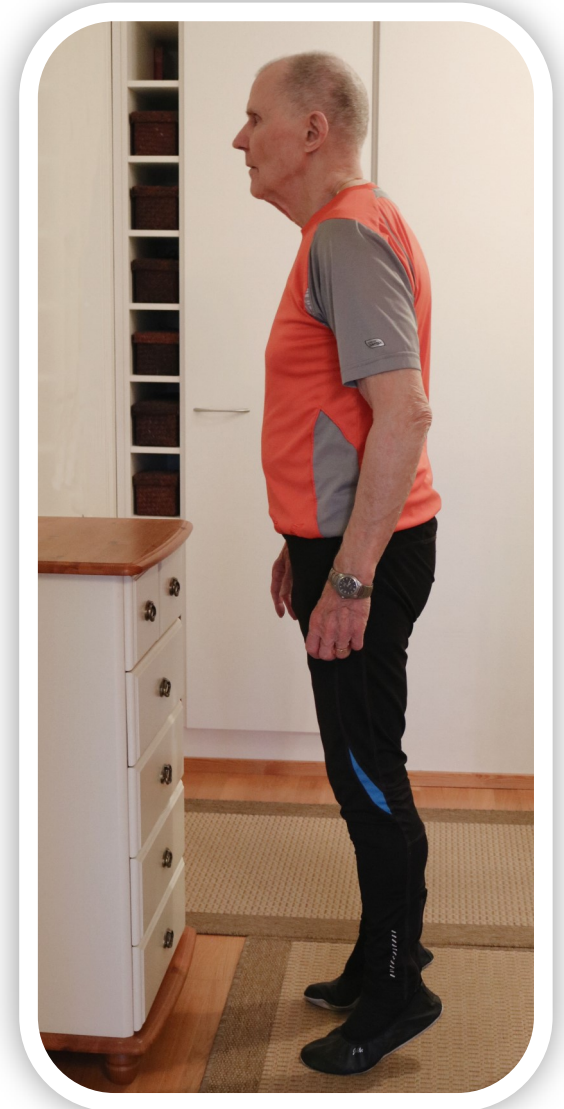
If necessary, use your hands for gentle support.
Stand with your back straight for a moment and sit down again.

Photos© Anne Lopenen

Assistive devices

Use appropriate assistive devices to help you with mobility. Consult your local healthcare centre on assistive devices and home modifications.

Stand with your back straight, if necessary, take support e.g. from the table. Get up on your toes and then down on your heels.



Drugs and the risk of falling

Many diseases, symptoms and drugs increase the risk of falls. Appropriate treatment of the disease or symptom is the best way to reduce the risk of falls.

To reduce the risk of fall associated with drug treatment, do the following:

1. Report any symptoms or sensations to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Symptoms due to medication that predispose to falls include dizziness or feeling faint when you stand up, general fatigue, drowsiness, tremor, muscle rigidity or feeling shaky.
2. Insist that your medications are reviewed at least once a year and always if there are changes in your health or medication.
3. Always talk to your doctor about changes in your medication. Do not change your medication by your self.
4. Insufficient intake of fluids together with diuretics or antihypertensive drugs increases the risk of falls.
5. Often, the risk of falls is elevated at the start of new drug therapy for a few days.

Tiresome, dizzying, visual impairment and rapidly lowering blood pressure drugs predispose to falls.

6. Know your medications: name, dose, intake time and indication.
7. Ask for a medication card from the health centre, hospital or pharmacy. Check and fill in the details or fill in a separate card e.g. at [Lääkekortti.fi - Front page \(laakekortti.fi\)](https://laakekortti.fi). It is important to record all the medicines you are using on the card for treatment monitoring, planning, and detection of drug interactions. Also drugs prescribed by a private doctor, OTC drugs, herbals, and natural remedies.
8. Use medications as prescribed.



Use a pill dispenser to help you with your medication. Always keep an updated medication card with you.

Smoking and fall prevention

The risk of falls is increased by poor general condition. Besides lack of physical activity, smoking may be the reason behind poor general condition. The smoking person's body does not have the stress of transporting oxygen to the muscles and when the muscles do not receive the oxygen they need, endurance and performance impaired.



The heart of a smoker has to work more, causing heart rate to rise as well. Smoking increases the risks of cerebrovascular disorders and osteoporosis, which is why the risk of falls and fractures increases if you are the smoker. Support for smoking cessation can be obtained from healthcare professionals or services on the internet.

Alcohol and fall prevention

Our body functions change as we age, even if our health is otherwise good. The effects of alcohol become more pronounced, because the body's water content decreases and metabolism slows down. This means greater harm and interactions. Elimination of one portion of alcohol from the body takes two hours.

Alcohol consumption can become harmful even if the amount of alcohol used remains unchanged. Aging enhances the intoxicating effects of alcohol.

The risk of falls or other accidents is increased by just one dose of alcohol (bottle of beer or cider 33cl, a glass of mild wine 12 cl). Three doses increase the risk of accidents significantly.

Alcohol weakens balance, alertness and reactions. Similar effects are caused by some drugs, and especially by alcohol and drugs together even if they are taken at a different time.

More information from internet

- ♦ <http://www.turvallinenkoti.net> (only in Finnish)
- ♦ <http://www.kotitapaturma.fi/en/>
- ♦ <https://www.thl.fi/en/web/injury-prevention>
- ♦ <http://www.ikainstituutti.fi/in+english/>
- ♦ <https://laakekortti.fi/Frontpage.aspx?l=en>
- ♦ <http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi/en/> AND
- ♦ [Weekly Physical Activity recommendation](#)
- ♦ [Vitality in later years : food recommendation for older adults](#)
<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-517-9>
- ♦ <http://www.ikateknologiakeskus.fi/> (only in Finnish)

Current Care Guidelines and Physical Activity Recommendation

- ♦ <http://www.kaypahoito.fi/web/english/home>
Current Care Guidelines are written in Finnish and a few are published in English. Abstracts in English can be found in the majority of the guidelines. For example Hip fracture, Osteoporosis, and Tobacco and nicotine dependency, prevention and treatment.

Internet links have been verified in 30.3.2022.

References

- ♦ **Epilepsialiitto.** Turvallinen asuminen ja epilepsia.
- ♦ **Muistiliitto.** 2010. Kiinni arjessa.
- ♦ **Pajala S.** 2012. Iäkkäiden kaatumisten ehkäisy. Terveiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, opas 16.
- ♦ **STM.** 2005. Arkea helpottavat välineet, opas ikäihmisille. Oppaita 25.
- ♦ **Verma I & Hätönen J.** 2011. Ikäihmiset, asuminen ja teknologia. Käkäte-raportteja 2/2011.
- ♦ **Fimea.** [Meds75+](#)

Pictures of this booklet:

- ♦ **Maito ja Terveys,** <http://maitojaterveys.fi>,
- ♦ **UKK-instituutti,** <http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi>,
- ♦ **Valtion ravitsemusneuvottelukunta (VRN),**
- ♦ **Pixabay.com**
- ♦ **Tanja Moilanen**
- ♦ **Anne Lopenen**
- ♦ **TaTe** (Tarja Tervo-Heikkinen)
- ♦ **KUH-photographs**

The Regional Fall Prevention Network (AKE) 2023

Stay Up! -guide has made by RFPNetwork member organizations. Several experts from various fields have participated in this guide. Nursing Research Foundation has supported the guide.

RFPNetwork member organizations in 2023 www.pshyvinvointialue.fi/rfpnetwork

- ♦ **Attendo** <http://www.attendo.fi/>
- ♦ **Etelä-Savon hyvinvointialue, Eloisa** <https://www.etelasavonha.fi/>
- ♦ **Itä-Savon sairaanhoitopiirin kuntayhtymä, SOSTERI** <https://www.sosteri.fi/>
- ♦ **Itä-Suomen yliopisto** <http://www.uef.fi/fi/>
- ♦ **Jyväskylän kaupunki** <http://www.jyvaskyla.fi>
- ♦ **Keski-Suomen hyvinvointialue** <http://www.hyvaks.fi/>
- ♦ **KoKoA -Koulutetut Kokemusasiantuntijat ry** <http://www.kokemusasiantuntijat.fi>
- ♦ **Kuopion kaupunki** <https://www.kuopio.fi/>
- ♦ **Niuvanniemen sairaala** <https://niuva.fi>
- ♦ **Pohjois-Savon hyvinvointialue** <https://www.pshyvinvointialue.fi/>
- ♦ **Savon ammattiopisto** <https://www.sakky.fi/fi>
- ♦ **Savonia-ammattikorkeakoulu** <http://savonia.fi/>
- ♦ **Sisä-Savon terveydenhuollon kuntayhtymä ja Suonenjoen kaupunki** <https://www.sisasavontk.fi>
- ♦ **Siilinjärven kunta** <http://www.siilinjarvi.fi/>
- ♦ **Siun SOTE** <http://www.siunsote.fi/>

Reduce fall one event at a time