

DECONDITIONING

YOUR GUIDE TO STAYING WELL AT HOME AND PREVENTING FALLS & PRESSURE ULCERS



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board

WHAT IS DECONDITIONING?

Deconditioning is the decline in physical and mental functioning due to inactivity or bed rest. It may affect many systems in the body.

- Deconditioning may happen when you are recovering at home as you may be in bed or resting for a lot of the time. This inactivity may cause reduced muscle strength and physical function, increased risk of falls, pressure damage and loss of motivation. This may mean a longer recovery period and may lead to infections, losing weight, reduced mobility and even sarcopenia. Some people may become more dependent and need more care, and equipment.
- Sarcopenia is a muscle disease leading to loss of muscle mass, strength and physical function. It can make you more likely to fall, become less physically able and develop pressure sores. Getting older is the biggest cause of sarcopenia, but having multiple medical conditions, not eating and drinking well and being less active at home can also cause it. The great news is that sarcopenia is preventable, treatable and reversible!
- Following the advice in this leaflet can help to reduce your risk.

In Wales, there is a beautiful word: “Cwtch.” Literally, it means a hug, but in the Welsh language, it also conveys a sense of safety, warmth, and protection. It’s a cherished word, but in our hospitals, the instinct to “cwtch” our patients, especially our older, more vulnerable ones can sometimes come with unintended consequences. The result can be deconditioning.

RISKS & FACTS



WHEN YOU ARE UNWELL, FOLLOWING YOUR USUAL ROUTINES CAN BE DIFFICULT, BUT TRY AND FOLLOW THE BELOW EASY STEPS TO HELP AID YOUR RECOVERY

EAT - SLEEP - MOVE - REPEAT

EATING A WELL BALANCED, VARIED DIET CAN HELP KEEP YOUR SKIN AND BONES IN GOOD CONDITION AND LESS LIKELY TO GET DAMAGED.

WE ALL NEED TO **SLEEP** WELL TO GET BETTER AND STAY HEALTHY.

STAYING ACTIVE AND **MOVING** WHEN AND WHERE YOU CAN IS IMPORTANT TO PREVENT DECONDITIONING, REDUCE FALLS AND PRESSURE ULCERS.

BEING AWARE OF THE ABOVE AND **REPEATING** THESE DAILY WILL HELP YOU TO STAY HEALTHY AND AID YOUR RECOVERY.

As we get older, we become more vulnerable. If a person over 80 years of age spends 10 days in bed, they may have 10 years of muscle ageing. Just 24 hours in bed may reduce muscle power by 2.5%. 7 days may reduce muscle power by 5-10% (NHS, 2017). However, by learning more about risk and prevention in this leaflet, our risk of deconditioning can be reduced.

Do you ever feel unsteady or worry about falling?

Falls can happen at any age, but as we get older, they're more likely to cause harm. Some small changes can be made to reduce your risk.

Check your home

Keeping an eye out for potential trip hazards can make your house a safer place:

- Remove rugs and mats from the house.
- Remove trailing wires and clutter.
- Avoid glass furniture which is harder to see.
- Ensure you have good lighting. Maybe install a nightlight near the bed or motion-activated lights to help you make your way to the bathroom.
- Check that beds, chairs, and toilet seats aren't too high/low.
- Consider wearing a call for help/alarm pendant.
- Contact Care & Repair for advice on adapting your home.



www.careandrepair.org.uk

Managing your medications

- Certain medications can make you feel faint or dizzy and affect your balance. If you have any concerns or struggle to take your prescribed medicines, talk to your GP surgery or Pharmacist.
- Try not to miss your medication review.

Taking care of your eyes and ears

Our eyesight and hearing changes as we age and can lead to a loss of balance. Visit your optician to book a sight test. It's free if you're aged 60 and over! Many Opticians also offer hearing tests.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP REDUCE RISKS?



Staying active

As we get older our strength and balance can reduce. Exercises to improve muscle strength can decrease your risk of falling over. Try the exercises on page 10 of this booklet or you can:

- Contact Age Cymru to find out what exercise classes are available in your area

 www.agecymru.wales

- Visit Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Public & Patient pages for tips on how to improve your strength and balance

 www.csp.org.uk

Personal Care

Going to the toilet frequently, particularly during the night or rushing to go, can increase your risk of falling over. If you notice any changes or are worried about the ability to look after yourself, contact your GP surgery, they'll be able to do a full assessment and give advice.

Foot health & footwear

- Wear shoes and slippers that fit well, don't slip off, have a back, good grip, and secure fastening.
- Check your feet for sore areas, and for any changes in colour or condition. Contact your GP surgery if you have any concerns.
- You can contact **NHS 111 Wales** to find a registered Podiatrist or contact Age Cymru (see above) for information on toenail cutting services.

Family, friends and carers can help by

- Regularly discussing falls risks with you.
- Conduct home safety checks.
- Assist with medication management.
- Support & attend appointments or local exercise groups with you

WHAT ARE PRESSURE ULCERS?



Pressure ulcers are commonly known as pressure sores or bed sores. They most often affect people who are confined to bed or chair. Pressure ulcers can be superficial or deep and vary in appearance. The skin may be intact, appear as a graze or a deep opening in the skin. They usually occur over bony areas of the body, e.g. base of the spine, buttocks, heels, hips etc.

HOW ARE THEY CAUSED?

- Pressure – due to sitting or lying in one position for too long.
- Shearing (Dragging/Sliding) – caused by the body sliding down the bed or chair.
- Friction – caused by skin rubbing on the bed or chair.
- Continuous use of devices such as oxygen masks.

A pressure ulcer can take as little as one or two hours to form. There are many reasons why you may be at risk of getting a pressure ulcer:

- You have poor posture, have difficulty moving about, are elderly or weak, or have a serious illness or life threatening illness.
- If you are incontinent or you have trouble keeping your skin dry, your skin has lost the sense of feeling, for example because you are diabetic or have had a stroke, you have heart problems or poor circulation and most commonly if you are in bed most of the time or spend long periods in a chair.



WHERE CAN THEY OCCUR?

Pressure ulcers most often develop on skin that covers bony areas of the body such as, heels, ankles, hips, buttocks, tailbones, or areas where devices are used (such as braces, collars, masks, tubes, etc).

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

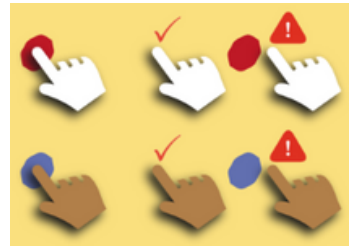
- Unusual changes in skin colour or texture
- Swelling
- Some bony prominences might seem cooler or warmer to touch than the other
- Tenderness over bony prominences
- Leaking fluid if there is a wound present

If you notice any red, purple, or blue areas on your skin, or have any parts of your body that are tender or sore to touch, be sure to tell your GP, care giver or healthcare professional.

On darkly pigmented skin there may not be visible blanching, the colour may differ from the surrounding skin. The area may be painful, firm or soft. You can try a skin test to check:

Press a finger on a discoloured area of skin, then release.

- If the skin remains discoloured after the finger is released, damage may have occurred. This may soon worsen if the cause is not removed or reduced.
- If, after changing position and relieving pressure for 20 minutes, an area of redness remains, even if it still blanches this may indicate early skin damage.



TOP TIPS TO PREVENT FALLS, PRESSURE DAMAGE AND DECONDITIONING



Eat:

- Eat a varied and balanced diet.
- If you can, eat your meals sat in the chair.
- Clear your table, open a window if able, and wash your hands.
- Ask visitors to bring snacks if they are willing.
- There may be support available in your local community.

 www.gov.uk/meals-home (meals on wheels)

Sleep:

- Maintain your sleep routine as best as you can.
- Avoid electronics and stimulants like caffeine before bed.
- Try meditation or music before sleeping.
- Use ear plugs.
- Turn off the bedside light.
- Move regularly in the daytime and eat a healthy diet.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about any sleep issues.

Move:

- Share your daily routine with your friends, family or carer.
- If you are able, wash in the bathroom and get dressed.
- If able to, stand and walk around your home or to the toilet.
- Do chair or bed movements (see examples on page 10).
- Keep your brain active by reading, talking to others, listening to music and doing puzzles.

NUTRITION



Eat well and stay hydrated

It's important to make sure you're eating well and drinking enough fluids to provide you with energy. Eating a well balanced, varied diet can help you get all of the nutrients your body needs to stay strong and steady on your feet. Dehydration can make you feel dizzy, lightheaded and sometimes confused. Avoid consuming alcohol, as it may interfere with your medication and impair your balance and cognitive abilities.

Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day. You may need more if you are unwell or the weather is warm

If you have a poor appetite or notice you are losing weight without trying, e.g. notice your clothes getting looser, talk to your GP surgery where they can support you or refer you to a Dietitian if needed. You can also use this self-screening tool to check if you need some extra support.

 www.malnutritionselfscreening.org/self-screening.html

For more information about eating a well-balanced diet to help prevent falls visit:

 www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/preventing-falls

Eat calcium rich foods for more information visit:

 www.bda.uk.com/calcium

Look after your bones

Stronger bones could make any injury you have much less serious, ensure you get enough vitamin D - It's difficult to get enough from diet and sunlight alone so consider taking a **10 micrograms** supplement. Use a risk checker to find out more:

 www.theros.org.uk/risk-checker



EXERCISES

Staying active

As we get older our strength and balance can reduce. Exercises to improve muscle strength can decrease your risk of falling over.

Chest Stretch



Hip Marching



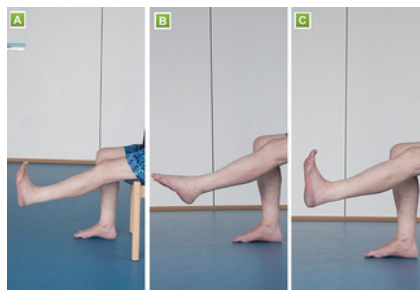
Leg Raise



Chair squat



Ankle Stretch



Upper Body stretch



Visit the NHS website for more exercises and information

 www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/

USEFUL INFORMATION

Looking after your skin

- Use warm water and soap substitute to wash your skin, eg. **Hydromol®** (widely available from pharmacies and online)
- Gently pat the skin dry, do not rub
- Try and make small position changes every 2 hours and take the weight off your bottom every 15 minutes when you are seated
- Check your skin once a day looking for any changes to appearance or texture

DO NOT

- Use soap or shower gel as these can change the natural pH of the skin
- Use baby or wet wipes or creams such as Sudocrem®, Metanium®, Drapolene® or Conotrane®
- Place absorbent square pads on the bed especially if using an airflow mattress as they can affect the way the mattress works

Remember you're not alone

You can always reach out to your GP surgery and our District Nursing team are here to help

☎ 01443 444069

Walking Wiser

If you use a walking aid, get it checked regularly

- You and your walking aid may be suitable for a falls 'MOT' from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Falls Prevention Team

✉ CTM.DontFallFort@wales.nhs.uk

☎ 01443 715013

**DON'T
FALL
FOR IT!**
CWM TAF MORGANNWG
FALLS PREVENTION SERVICE



Strength



And Balance



Falls History



Environment

NOTES & CHECKLISTS

GP Name and Contact

Medication Review Date

Next Appointment

Other Useful Info.....

Weekly Checklist:

- ✓ Home safety check
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Drink water
- ✓ Healthy meals
- ✓ Foot check
- ✓ Eyes & Ears check
- ✓ Medication review
- ✓ Walking

This leaflet is available to view online here:

Kindly supported by



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