



ADVICE

## Falls Prevention Tips Number Two

# A guide to safe footwear

- Do you have the most suitable shoes or slippers?
- Do they fit well?
- Do they grip the floor properly?

## **Do your shoes or slippers fit properly?**

- ▶ Make sure your feet do not slide about too much: there should be room at the front (about 1cm or 1/2 inch) for movement of your toes
- ▶ Your foot should be held well back into the shoe
- ▶ Laces should be firmly tied: If tying laces is difficult, buy footwear fastened with Velcro.
- ▶ Footwear should be light and supportive

## **What type of heel is the safest?**

- ▶ Wear flat shoes or shoes with a built in heel
- ▶ Avoid wearing high heeled shoes
- ▶ Avoid wearing trainers unless advised to do so for health reasons

## **What is the safest type of sole?**

- ▶ Always buy non-slip soles and avoid smooth, leather soles. A cheaper synthetic sole with a stud pattern for example, will be safer than a smooth, leather one.

- ▶ Look for thin soles and avoid soft-soled shoes as they can affect your balance
- ▶ Flexible soles are better on uneven ground than a hard, smooth shoe.

## **What should you look for inside your shoes or slippers?**

- ▶ Should be seam-free and smooth
- ▶ Soft uppers are more comfortable

## **Is there anything else to consider?**

- ▶ Replace worn shoes and slippers
- ▶ Avoid walking barefoot or in socks or tights
- ▶ Keep soles clean by removing any slippery substances such as grease, food, dust and dirt, that you might have picked up on your travels.
- ▶ Avoid wearing clothes that trail on the floor

## Further information

For more information about how to avoid a fall, go to: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) and search Staying Steady.

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can enquire in confidence on 01525 864405 or [enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk).

Leaflets available in this series:

1. A guide to what to do if you have a fall
2. A guide to safe footwear
3. A guide to safe transfers on/off chairs and bed
4. A guide to the safe use of walking aids
5. A guide to the safe use of wheelchairs
6. A guide to reducing the risk of falls due to medication
7. A guide to diet and nutrition
8. A guide to keeping warm

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