

## 5. Talk to others

- Develop a support network. Confide in family or good friends
- Don't be afraid to say what you feel.

### A simple breathing exercise

If you're sitting or standing, place both feet flat on the ground. Whatever position you're in, place your feet roughly hip-width apart.

- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from one to five. You may not be able to reach five at first.
- Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from one to five again, if you find this helpful.
- Keep doing this for three to five minutes.

Use this breathing method before you get tense, or when you are in a stressful situation (such as after a fall or near miss).

### Summary

Fear of falling can stop us from enjoying life to the full. The cycle of fear can be broken and you can feel more confident.

**If you need more information please contact your Community Occupational Therapist. Contact details for these services are available at [www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/occupational-therapy-services/community-occupational-therapy](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/occupational-therapy-services/community-occupational-therapy)**

You can also contact the Falls Prevention Team for information and advice regarding falls prevention on 02894424644.

# Fear of Falling?

## How you can be more confident.



A guide on the effects of anxiety and how to manage fear of falling

(Adapted from CLCH, NHS)

## Anxiety and fear of falling

Anxiety and fear of falling is very common after experiencing a fall. Anxiety is the reaction of the body and mind to an expected danger. It is characterised by physical symptoms such as sweating and feelings of stress.

An ongoing, lasting fear of falling can cause problems. It can create **worry** and lead people to stop doing their normal activities and stay indoors more. If a person restricts their activities and can lead to a loss of confidence.

This can result in a cycle, like the one below. **The good news is that it is possible to break this fear of falling cycle.**

### What strategies can help?

#### 1. Staying active

- Stay active and make use of supports that you have available.
- Set yourself small goals to help restore confidence.
- If you can, get out of the house as well as remaining active in your own home.
- Continue with your favourite hobby or take up a new one.
- Getting involved with local community clubs or groups.

#### 2. Positive thinking

- Think about the times you have not fallen.
- Think about your progress.
- Tell yourself how well you are doing.
- Try to think positively..
- Enjoy the present.

#### 3. Look after yourself

- Eat healthily, get enough sleep and exercise regularly.
- Learn to pace yourself.

#### 4. Try relaxation exercises

- Learn and use relaxation techniques. Relaxation helps to reduce muscle tension. It is a learned skill; you need to practice it over time to get better.
- Activities you enjoy.

