

## What happens if you do have a fall?

Sometimes falls can still happen. As an amputee, getting up after a fall can be more challenging.

You may need to learn some new skills and techniques which will help you.

Remember when you have a fall it will most likely give you a fright. Instead of trying to get up in a hurry:

- take a moment to catch your breath
- think about how you can get up safely and
- what you need to do.

Plan your recovery in your mind before you actually try to do it.



**If you think you have hurt yourself or if you are unable to get off the floor, call for help. It may be a good idea to wear a medical alarm or keep your mobile phone close by.**

Speak to your Physiotherapist about what to do if you were to fall. They can give you instructions and teach you how to get up safely.

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[www.tiny.cc/NZALS](http://www.tiny.cc/NZALS)

# NZALS

New Zealand Artificial Limb Service  
Peke Waihangā, Aotearoa



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## FACT SHEET

# How to prevent falls following an amputation

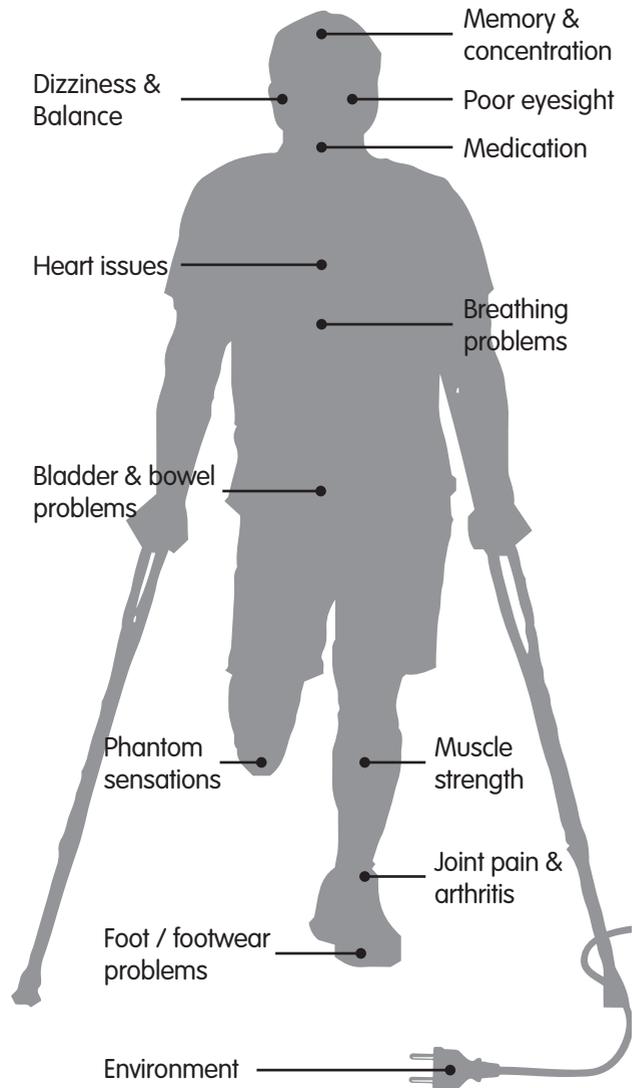


## What can cause falls?

In the early stages following amputation, your brain is still adjusting to the fact that you don't have a limb.

As you learn to move again, falls can happen.

Some causes are below:



## Examples of what can contribute to falls

**Medication:** Some can cause dizziness or light-headedness. If you are concerned about this, speak to your GP.

**Memory:** Forgetting to put the brakes on your wheelchair.

**Balance:** Losing your balance when you are reaching forward or leaning down.

**Phantom sensations:** Feeling that the leg is still there.

**Environment:** Cluttered spaces, leads or mats on the floor.

**Muscle strength:** It is important to build up your strength and do your exercises as given to you by your physiotherapist.

**Bladder & bowel problems:** Rushing for the toilet can lead to falls. Where possible, give yourself time.

## Who can help you to prevent falls?

The rehabilitation team (Physiotherapists; Occupational Therapists; Nurses; Prosthetists) help you to develop skills which will try to prevent falls.

If you are unsure whether you can safely manage to do something, or you are less confident with your balance, seek help from your rehabilitation team.



## How can I prevent falls at home?

There are some things that you can do to reduce the risk of falling at home.

You can have an assessment to determine if you need any equipment to help you at home. This may include handrails, ramps or grip bars.

If you feel you might need an assessment, please speak to a member of the rehabilitation team.

You can also:

- Remove mats or rugs from the floor
- Make sure there are no cords or leads in areas where you may walk
- Wipe up any spills immediately and watch for slippery floors
- Rearrange furniture so you have enough room to move around
- Leave a light on at night
- Use a pickup stick to reach items from the floor OR items which are above your head.
- Wear a rigid removable dressing if you have been advised to, as they also have a protective function.

A lot of falls happen when people wake in the night and forget they have had an amputation.

To help prevent falls at night:

- Take your time to wake up properly
- Sit on the edge of the bed until you have got your balance
- Turn lights on
- If possible leave your wheelchair beside your bed

If you would like to read further about **Preventing Falls**, please visit our website [www.nzals.co.nz](http://www.nzals.co.nz)

