

Frailty Prevention and Management

What is Frailty?

Frailty is a state of reduced health and function, and may lead to longer hospital stays or poor recovery when you are ill. It is more common among older people.

Why does frailty matter to me?

Being aware of frailty helps you and healthcare professionals to address issues that may affect your quality of life.



Sit-to-stand test, one of the assessments for frailty

Are you experiencing these symptoms of frailty?

- I have unintentional weight loss.
- I feel increased weakness generally.
- I have been walking slower than before.
- I have been participating in less physical activities.
- I am feeling more exhausted than before.



How can we prevent and manage frailty?

Physical well-being

- Identify and treat potentially **reversible** medical conditions.
- Address **sight or hearing** problems.
- Take in adequate **nutrition** and **be physically active**.
- Reduce unnecessary **medications** after discussing with your doctor.

Psychological well-being

- Look out for **low mood** and treat it appropriately.
- Seek help and address **memory difficulties** appropriately.

Social well-being

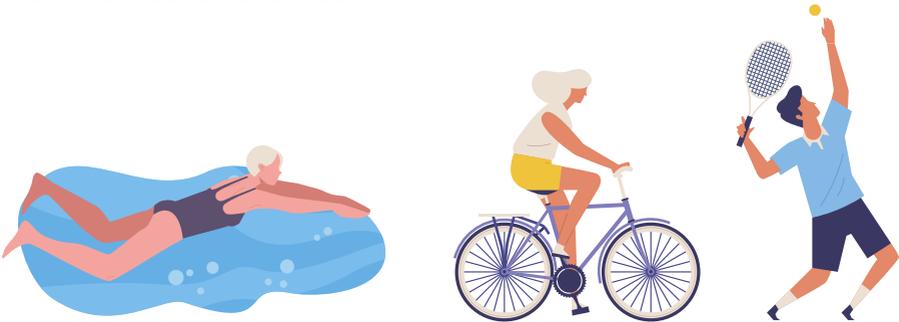
- Stay engaged and connected in **social activities**.



Physical activity

Exercise regularly and engage in physical activities to maintain your strength, balance and stamina.

Aim for **150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week** (5 times a week for 30 minutes each) consisting of both aerobic and resistance exercises.



“**Moderate-intensity**” means you are able to talk but not sing during the physical activity. You should be perspiring.



Begin with 10 minutes of exercise 2-3 times a week, then gradually progress in frequency and intensity.

These are some exercises that you can do at home, using a steady chair.

Sit to stand: Strengthens your hip and front thigh muscles to help you feel more steady and confident when getting up from a chair or bed.

- Sit on a chair with your hands across your chest and keep your feet shoulder width apart.
- Get up from sitting then slowly sit down.
- If you need support, lean forward over the knees and stand up tall.
- Perform 10 repetitions for 2-3 sets.



Heel raises: Strengthens your calf muscles and helps with activities such as walking and reaching up into high cupboards.

- Stand with/without hand support.
- Stand upright with feet apart at shoulder width.
- Raise up your heels, then slowly lower yourself back down.
- Hold raised position for 3-5 seconds if possible.
- Perform 10 repetitions for 2-3 sets.



Hip abduction: Strengthens your hip and thigh muscles to help with strength and balance.

- Stand with your hand(s) holding onto the back of a chair.
- Lift one leg sideways, while keeping your trunk upright throughout the whole movement.
- Hold lifted position for 3-5 seconds if possible.
- Perform 10 repetitions for 2-3 sets.
- Repeat for the other leg.



Stepping: Improves your balance which may help to prevent falls.

- Stand at the bottom of a step/staircase.
- Place your right foot onto the step, then lower it back to the starting position.
- Repeat with your left leg, and continue the same alternating steps with both legs.
- Perform 10 repetitions for 2-3 sets.
- Hold onto the handrail for support if required.



You can also follow the video demonstration of 7 easy exercises on the HealthHub website. The video is available in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil.

7 easy exercises to an active lifestyle



[healthhub.sg/programmes/
71/healthy-ageing-exercise](https://healthhub.sg/programmes/71/healthy-ageing-exercise)



The exercise and social programmes below are offered in the community, which you can join to keep yourself physically active outside your home.

Gym Tonic

An effective and proven strength training programme that uses specialised gym equipment to progressively train muscle strength and resistance.



gymtonic.sg

Active Ageing Centres/ Day Care/ Day Rehabilitation Centres/ Senior Activity Centres

These centres offer structured programmes that help to maintain the physical and social well-being of seniors.



aic.sg



Share a Pot

A community-based project where seniors meet at centres within their own community to exercise and enjoy a bowl of nutritious soup together.



shareapot.sg

Wellness Kampung

A community space where seniors befriend, do morning exercises, and improve nutrition together.



[slc.org.sg/our-services/
community-based/
wellness-kampung](http://slc.org.sg/our-services/community-based/wellness-kampung)



Nutrition

Protein-rich foods help to maintain muscle strength. Foods high in **calcium and vitamin D** help to preserve **bone mass**, which will reduce the risk of falls and fractures.

Are you at risk of malnutrition?

- I have been losing weight without trying.
- I am underweight.
- I have been eating less than half of what I usually eat for 5 days or more.
- I have difficulties chewing or swallowing.



Protein intake

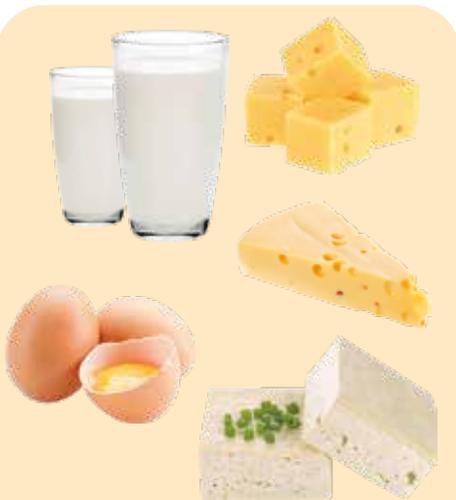
What are the sources of protein in our diet?



Mushrooms and Nuts



Meat and Seafood



Milk and Eggs



Vegetables

How much protein do I need per day?

Aim for 2-3 servings of protein per day to maintain muscle mass and strength (together with exercise). Please follow your doctor or dietitian's advice on the amount of protein to take if you have any renal (kidney) conditions or have been advised otherwise.

1 serving of protein is equivalent to:



1 palm size of meat (90g)



2 glasses of milk (500ml)



1 block of soft tofu (300g)
or ½ block of tau kwa (150g)



3 eggs



$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of beans,
lentils or peas (120g)

Calcium Intake and Vitamin D

How do I get enough calcium?

1 star ★ is equivalent to 100mg of calcium. Aim for 1000mg of calcium or 10 stars per day. You can consider calcium supplements if you are unable to meet this amount from diet alone. Always speak to your doctor or dietitian before starting calcium supplements as they may cause side effects like constipation.

Food	Serving Size	Calcium content (mg)
Dairy products		
High-calcium milk powder	4 scoops (25g)	★★★★★
Low-fat milk	1 glass (250ml)	★★★★
Full-cream milk	1 glass (250ml)	★★★
Low-fat yoghurt	1 carton (150g)	★★★½
Low-fat cheese	1 slice (20g)	★★

Food	Serving Size	Calcium content (mg)
Non-dairy foods		
Canned sardine (with bones)	1 fish (80g)	★ ★ ★
Dried ikan bilis (with bones)	1.5 tbsp (30g)	★ ★
Silken tofu	1 package (150g)	★
Tau kwa	1 small cake (90g)	★ †
Dhal (raw)	2.5 tbsp (30g)	†
Baked beans, canned	1 can (210g)	★
Kai lan, cooked	1 mug (100g)	★ ★
Spinach, cooked	1 mug (100g)	★ †
Chye sim, cooked	1 mug (100g)	★ †
Broccoli, cooked	1 mug (100g)	†

Food	Serving Size	Calcium content (mg)
Calcium-fortified products		
High-calcium soybean milk	1 glass (250ml)	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Enriched bread	2 slices (60g)	★
Calcium-fortified orange juice	1 serving (250ml)	★ ★ ★ †

Getting enough vitamin D

The best source of vitamin D is the sun. Try to expose your arms and legs to sunlight for about 5 to 30 minutes, 2 to 3 times per week. The best time to do so is usually between 10am and 3pm. If you are unable to get adequate sun exposure, you can include some vitamin D-rich foods:



Eggs



Liver meat



Cereal



Oily fish such as salmon, cod fish or mackerel

Certain brands of milk, soy milk, ready-to-eat cereal and margarine are also fortified with vitamin D.

If you are taking a calcium supplement or multi-vitamin, choose one that contains vitamin D.

If you feel that you are still struggling to increase your nutritional intake or you are still losing weight, please speak to your doctor.