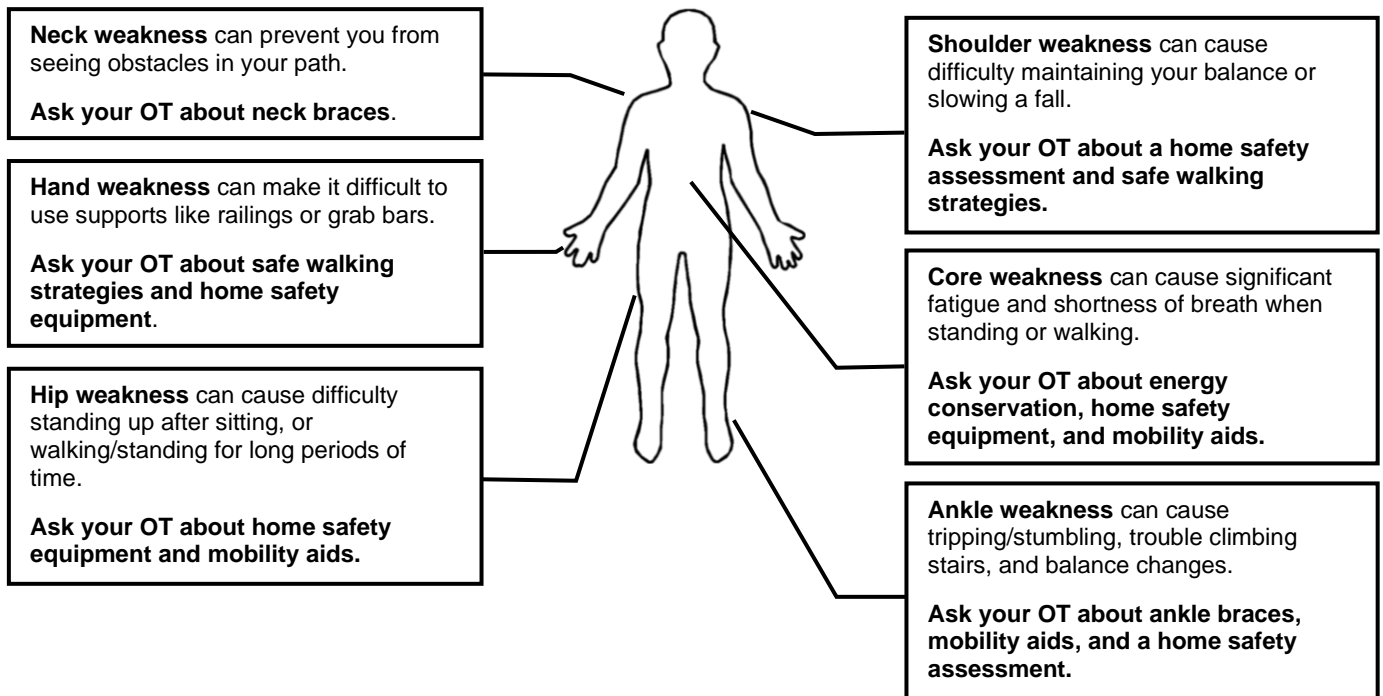


Fall Prevention

A diagnosis of ALS increases your risk of falls at home and in the community. Falls are a serious health risk that can result in injury, hospitalization, and loss of independence. This handout lists some strategies that can help to prevent falls, and enable you to continue to confidently participate in meaningful daily activities.

Why am I at Risk for Falls?



Fall Prevention Strategies

1. Go slow and take your time – especially after sitting or lying down for a long time.
2. Do not multitask while walking – focus on making each step deliberate.
3. Use caution when reaching up or down, turning, and carrying items.
4. Use armrests or another stable surface for support when standing up or sitting down.
5. Regularly use any mobility aids that have been recommended for you.
6. Carry a cell phone, call bell, or fall alert sensor with you at all times.
7. Use caution on uneven ground such as grass, sidewalks, sand, snow, and ice.
8. Monitor your energy levels, and take breaks when needed.

What Should I Do if I Fall?

1. If you are injured, have hit your head, or cannot get up safely, call **911 for assistance**. If possible, cover yourself with a blanket to stay warm while waiting.
2. If you feel well enough to return to standing, call out and ask someone else for assistance. Please see the link below for **step-by-step instructions** <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/help-someone-get-up-fall-prevention.aspx>
3. If no one else is around to assist you, and you feel well enough to attempt standing on your own, you may choose to follow the step-by-step instructions below <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/get-up-by-yourself-fall-prevention.aspx>

If you experience a fall, advise your occupational therapist or physiotherapist so they can strategize with you about ways from experiencing anything similar in the future.

How Do I Prevent Falls at Home?

Your best option for preventing falls at home is to request a visit from a homecare occupational therapist or physiotherapist (the ALS Clinic can make this referral). The OT or PT will do a home visit and make recommendations specific to your home. In general:

1. Remove area rugs and clutter from the floor.
2. Install grab bars in your shower.
3. Keep your home well-lit and use nightlights between the bedroom and bathroom.
4. If you have a mobility aid such as a cane or walker, keep it within reach at all times.
5. Wear supportive shoes or slippers (not flip flops or socks) when walking.

How Do I Prevent Falls on the Stairs?

Stairs are one of the most dangerous walking environments we use on a daily basis. These strategies will help to decrease your risk at home or in the community:

1. Always hold onto the railing, and consider adding a second railing if required.
 2. Go up or down stairs one step at a time. Lead with your stronger side on the way up, and the weaker side on the way down.
 3. Limit carrying items on the stairs as much as possible.
 4. Take breaks if required, and try to limit stair climbing throughout the day.
 5. If stairs become very fatiguing or cause you anxiety, talk to your OT to see if a stair glide or other assistive device may be beneficial for you.
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