

In A Nutshell  
July 2020  
Falling

Studies have shown that approximately half of middle-aged and older individuals with MS experience at least one fall over a six-month period. Various physical symptoms place people with MS at risk of falling.

MS symptoms that may put a person with MS at risk of falling:

1. Muscle weakness
2. Spasticity
3. Loss of balance
4. Dizziness or vertigo
5. Sensory deficits like numbness
6. Tremor
7. Fatigue
8. Heat tolerance
9. Vision problems
10. Difficulty focusing on walking
11. Bowel or bladder dysfunction
12. Medication side effects
13. Fear of falling or overconfidence
14. Physical barriers or hazards

How to manage your risk of falling:

You should identify problem areas in your home (see Just for Fun)

Evaluate the reasons for falling (see above 14 points) and discuss with your healthcare provider. Use a mobility device that fits correctly. Have a plan for when you do fall. Evaluate the appropriateness of your clothing items and whether they might cause a fall. Ask if physical therapy might help avoid a fall.

Just For Fun

Go to this link for a checklist of ways to avoid falling in your home. It starts at slide 11 and goes through slide 18. This could be a good project while we are all staying at home.

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Brochure-Minimizing-Your-Risk-of-Falls.pdf>