

Future proofing for later life

Are you concerned that as you get older, you may not be able to manage your day to day activities?

This advice sheet will help you to plan for old age by focusing on what you can do to stay active and remain safe in your own home

Taking care of yourself

- **Listen to your body** – Aches, pains and stiffness are not an inevitable part of getting older. They may be a symptom of illness or a health condition, which can be improved through treatment. If you notice changes in your health go to your GP. Regularly check your hearing and vision, as well as your teeth and gum health too.
- **Stay active** – Activities (occupations) stimulate the body, mind and senses; you feel connected with other people; whilst also contributing to society (such as volunteering or providing support to others). All these factors support health, wellbeing and longevity.
- **Stay independent** – consider what support you have around you and what you might need. Equipment such as a walking aid or handy reach may make life easier and allow you to do the activities that are important to you. You may also want to consider getting some assistance with the activities that have to be done but are of little interest, so you can save your energy for activities that are far more pleasurable.

What you can do at home

- **Remove hazards** – check that there are clear pathways in all rooms, halls and stairways. Reduce the risk of having a fall by removing or securing loose rugs, using non-slip polish on hard floors and using a non-slip mat in the bathroom.
- **Lighting** – make sure rooms are well lit, especially the hallway and stairs as eyesight tends to deteriorate as we get older.
- **Room set up** – think about how you use each room – are they set up to meet your needs for when you moved in or are they set up for how you use the rooms now? For example, is the kitchen organised so that the equipment you commonly use is within easy reach?
- **Seating** – if you are having difficulties getting on and off certain chairs or seats, such as the toilet, it may be you need more height, the seat to be more firm or an armrest or rail to push/pull yourself up.

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Occupational therapists are experts in 'occupations'.

Occupations refer to everything that people do in the course of their everyday life.

To arrange a private consultation with an independent occupational therapist, who will charge you a fee, please visit

www.cotss-ip.org.uk

How occupational therapy can help

Occupational therapists always work with a person and their families to understand their priorities and what is important to them; the occupational therapist works in partnership to achieve personal goals. Occupational therapists use an approach that considers the person, their environment and daily occupations (activities). Whilst looking at the interaction between these three elements they consider what is working well, as well as the needs and actions to improve daily life. For people whose health problems limit their ability to carry out normal activities of daily living, an occupational therapist can advise on strategies and techniques to overcome these limitations and advise on adaptations and equipment that can help people to remain at home.

Arranging to see an occupational therapist

You can call the help desk of your local authority adult social services team to request advice and an assessment. There are occupational therapists working in health teams that provide help and advice on managing specific health conditions, like arthritis or dementia, and broader services like reablement teams. You can also talk to your GP about seeing an occupational therapist.

www.COT.co.uk

