



American Stroke Association
A division of the American Heart Association.

Together to End Stroke®

The Fear of Falling Cycle

Breaking the Pattern That Increases Fall Risk After Stroke

What is Fear of Falling After Stroke?

Fear of falling is common after stroke. It's your brain's way of trying to protect you. But when the fear is too strong, it can make falls more likely.

This fear can happen for people who've never fallen.

Repetitious fear of falling can turn into a sneaky cycle and lead to activity avoidance. This can make you less steady and more likely to fall.



SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE IN THE CYCLE •



Physical Signs:

- » You feel less steady than before.
- » Getting up from a chair feels harder.
- » You get tired more easily.



Activity Changes:

- » You've stopped doing things you used to enjoy.
- » You avoid going places or doing activities "just in case."



Emotional Signs:

- » You worry about falling during safe activities.
- » You feel less confident about your balance.
- » You depend on others for things you could do yourself.

BREAKING THE CYCLE •

If you're having any of these signs, talk with your health care team about things that can help:

- » Ask them to assess your risk and fear of falling.
- » Ask about community exercise programs with balance training for survivors of stroke.
- » Talk with them about cognitive behavioral therapy, a type of counseling. Combining cognitive behavioral therapy and balance training may reduce fear of falling.
- » Ask for information about home changes that reduce falls.

Remember:

Breaking the fear of falling cycle takes time. But with the right support, you can build confidence and stay active safely.

Additional Resources

- » [Home Safety Checklist](#)
- » [Bathroom Setup](#)

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