

Advice to help you recover and support your independence after injury

This leaflet gives advice and tips on managing at home following an admission to hospital for an injury. Some advice in this leaflet may require the support of your family and friends to initially set up.

If appropriate, you will have been seen by our Therapy Team on the ward, who have discussed or made arrangements to prepare you to go home safely. Once you are at home, there are some other ways in which you can help yourself to make life easier and to support you to engage in everyday tasks. For example, getting yourself washed and dressed or making a meal. Please note, some points may not be relevant to you and your injury.

Preparing your home

- Think about re-arranging items in your kitchen, especially those you use most often – could they be moved to make them easier to reach or pick up?
- Apply the same principles to other areas of your home – e.g. your bathroom. Could you move things which you keep low down or high up down to waist level, to limit bending and reaching? Your therapist can advise the best height, based on your injury.
- Are you at risk of falls and trips? Put away non-fitted rugs or unnecessary items until you are fully recovered. Move any chairs or table legs that stick out.
- Will changing which side of the bed you sleep on make it easier to get in and out of bed?
- Use extra cushions and pillows to prop yourself up in bed, if required.
- Raise the heights of chair seats with additional cushions and pillows to make standing up easier.
- Use night lights to help you see your way to the bathroom during the night.

Washing and dressing

- Can you sit down to wash and dress until you feel more confident or have better balance?
- Consider buying or borrowing long handled items, such as sponges, brushes, shoe-horns or long handled grabbers?
- Select loose fitting clothing. Elasticated waists are easier than buttons and zips.
- Dress and undress the affected limb first.
- Choose slip-on shoes or those with Velcro straps rather than those with laces (but avoid loose fitting slippers or sliders as they can cause further trips and falls).
- If your injury requires you to wear a brace or sling, your nurse or therapists will show you how to wear and look after these.

Kitchen tasks

- Sit at a table to prepare meals, e.g. chopping, mixing, and peeling.
- For the first few days, consider eating ready meals to reduce the need to prepare food.
- Buy pre-chopped or frozen ingredients. You can freeze milk and bread if you have space in your freezer, to stock up for a while.
- It may be easier to fill the kettle using a jug. Boil just the amount of water that you need so the jug or kettle is not too heavy.

Cleaning and shopping

- Consider ordering shopping online and getting it delivered? Friends or family may be able to help with this if you don't have online access.
- Alternatively, ask someone to buy some essentials for you when they do their own shopping.
- You may find it difficult to carry items, especially up and down the stairs, so try to plan ahead as you may also need a friend or family member to do this for you.
- Try spreading cleaning and household tasks out over the week, rather than leaving it all for one day. You may not be ready for heavy housework and may experience fatigue. Again, ask friends or family for support.

General advice

- Give yourself plenty of time to complete tasks and try not to rush.
- Avoid carrying and lifting heavy items as this could affect your balance or cause further injury.
- Keep walkways and stairs well lit and clutter free.
- If you have any concerns about returning home and coping, please speak to your occupational therapist on the ward.

Contacting us

The advice given in this leaflet is general – your doctor, nurse and therapists will give you specific advice based upon your individual injury.

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Occupational Therapy Department: **0118 322 7560**

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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