

The RoSPA HOME SAFETY Journal

New RoSPA campaign
pages 04-07

Safer by design
page 11

Building Safer Communities
page 12

Falls prevention
page 13

Poster launch
page 09



Stay Steady



Community Strength and Balance Classes

Department of Health guidelines recommend all adults should complete 150 minutes of physical activity in a week. Older adults at risk of falling should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength, balance and coordination at least twice a week.



"I feel stronger and am able to walk better"
"Exercising in a class is great! We can encourage each other"



"It is useful to have some exercises that you can do to help yourself"

An exercise programme for MEN and WOMEN to develop strength and balance. This course could be for you if you are...
• 55 or more • Concerned about balance or mobility • Feeling unsteady on your feet.
Classes can be tailored for individuals. Booking is essential.

For more information contact Falls Coordinator
HSC Quality
RoSPA
In association with



accidents don't have to happen



**Our homes
should be
where we feel
the safest...**

WHEN IN REALITY, MOST ACCIDENTS OCCUR IN THE HOME. I CHOSE TO KICKSTART A CAREER IN HOME SAFETY BUT NEEDED TO GAIN THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. THANKS TO ROSPA'S HOME SAFETY TRAINING COURSES I NOW FEEL CONFIDENT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'M CONFIDENT FAMILIES ARE SAFER.

Every year in the UK more than 6,000 people die in accidents in the home...

But many of these accidents are preventable. RoSPA is one of the few national voices speaking out on this issue. RoSPA campaigns for change and provides a range of City & Guilds accredited Home Safety Training Courses aimed at anyone working with families, children and older people.

**www.rospa.com
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ROSPA

**accidents don't
have to happen**



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- Safety Express
- Care on the Road
- The RoSPA Leisure & Education Journal.

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**CPD
MEMBER**
The CPD Certification Service

Some of the articles and guidance in this edition could make a contribution to readers' personal CPD requirements.

Welcome

We live in difficult times and are all spending more time in our homes as they become places of work and education as well the venue for virtually all of our leisure activity. For some families this means a crowded house with little room to move or find that quiet time alone, while for others it can mean complete social isolation and loneliness. We are all having to find new ways of coping with these unprecedented restrictions on our lives.

One thing we can all do is take steps to make sure that we all stay safe and accident free at home. In this edition of The RoSPA Home Safety Journal you will find lots of tips on how to do this and links to further information across the RoSPA website. We know that homes are the places where we want to feel at our safest but home is where many accidents happen and millions of people end up needing treatment in hospital as a result. Staying accident free and avoiding A&E is one way that everyone can help the NHS, as well as avoiding the pain and distress caused by accidental injuries that all too often could have been easily prevented.

On pages 04-07 you will find tips for staying safe at all ages, keeping active and healthy at home and making sure that your new home working environment is as safe as it can be.

There are also tips on safe gardening. It may seem a great time to do all those gardening and DIY jobs that you've been putting off, but hospitals do see a rise in these type of injuries at this time of year, so once again it's a time to be ever more vigilant. Trampolines have also been involved in many accidents requiring hospital treatment, so if you do plan to use one to keep the children entertained do read our advice on page 06.

Meanwhile, although our working arrangements may be different, RoSPA is still actively working to promote safety and reduce accidents: read about a joint project in Northern Ireland to promote active later life (page 09), RoSPA's partnership with the Northern Ireland Fire Service (page 08), how our colleagues in Scotland are keeping in touch with partners online (page 12) and the development of new webinars (page 10).

Finally, for a frontline view of the damage home accidents cause, read the interview on page 11 with RoSPA Trustee, Dr Julian Redhead, medical director at Imperial College NHS Trust, who has some valuable insights.

I hope that you all stay safe and well during this challenging time.

Ashley Martin
Public health adviser



Family Safety Week is the launch pad for new campaign

This year's RoSPA Family Safety Week coincided with the Government's announcement that we should stay at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19. RoSPA therefore used the annual event to launch a new campaign aimed at keeping people accident and injury free and out of hospital, in order to help ease pressure on the country's frontline health workers during the coronavirus outbreak.

Accident Free, Avoid A&E asks us all to "Prevent accidents, Protect your family, Help the NHS" by learning about and preventing the common causes of serious accidental injury. The campaign features tried-and-tested advice, information and practical resources to help keep everyone accident free, however young or old they are and whatever they are doing.



With social distancing measures in force, people of all ages are spending more time at home than ever before – but more accidents happen

in the home than anywhere else. The campaign therefore has a wealth of information and resources to help make our homes safer.

Safety for older people at this time

More than one million vulnerable and older people have been asked to self-



isolate for at least 12 weeks by the UK Government, with over-70s also being asked to stay at home as much as possible. Regular visits from friends and family are not happening and it's really important to ensure that older people have access to good accident prevention advice during this time.

The older we get the more susceptible we are to accidents, and particularly falls. The main tips to avoid falls at home are:

- Avoid leaving items on the stairs – they can become a tripping hazard
- Wear well-fitting shoes and slippers
- Remove loose rugs, or use tape to stick down corners
- Landings, stairs and hallways should be well lit
- Ensure stairs are maintained – damaged or worn carpet should be repaired or removed if possible.

See www.rospa.com/AccidentFree to view safety videos and additional information about avoiding falls and general advice on accident prevention for older people.





Things that must be done when setting up an office at home

Millions of working people will now be getting used to their new “office” environments in their own homes. The UK has an unrivalled workplace health and safety record, but an employer’s responsibilities also extend to everyone working from home.

As an employee setting up at home for the first time, you need to make sure you have performed a DSE assessment on your workspace, to avoid long-latency issues such as musculoskeletal disorders (like a bad back) and eyesight damage, and you need to check for trip hazards, such as trailing cables.

As an employer, you need to understand your responsibilities to your employees who are now working remotely. There is also the issue of mental health and feelings of isolation, and the need for employers to facilitate keeping in touch.

RoSPA members can access policies and



practical resources to manage homeworkers at the Health and Safety Knowledge Centre (www.rospa.com/health-and-safety-membership/health-and-safety-legislation/

[Homeworkers-resources](#)).

Errol Taylor, RoSPA chief executive, said: “While our amazing frontline healthcare staff are fighting this virus, we need to make sure we’re all doing everything we can to ease pressure on them in all other areas, particularly in A&E. We know that more accidents happen in the home than anywhere else – but that’s where everyone is going to be spending the majority of their time for the foreseeable future.

“So with Accident Free, Avoid A&E, we are providing information, guidance and resources to help everyone, whatever their age and whatever their current circumstances, stay out of emergency departments. If you are working from home with young children, we have advice on how to keep them safe; if you are an older person who is self-isolating, or have an older relative you are worried about, then we have lots of resources to prevent accidental falls.

“The message is simple: Prevent accidents, protect your family, help the NHS.”

Advice for keeping people of all ages safe at home, as well as on the road and in their new homeworking offices, is available on the new campaign webpage www.rospa.com/AccidentFree

Keeping kids safe at home

You may currently have young children at home 24/7, getting bored and looking for things to do. For some of that time you may also be working. You may find your attention is being pulled in many different directions while trying to maintain good supervision of your little ones, which is always the best way to prevent accidents.

Follow RoSPA’s tips and use the resources to help prevent the most common types of injury. Take a look at www.rospa.com/Resources/Information-hubs/Keeping-Kids-Safe for lots of advice on keeping under-5s safe at home. For example, there is information on steps to take to avoid the likelihood of burns and scalds, choking, falls and fires. In addition, all aspects of days at home with children are covered, including staying safe at meal times, bedtime, playtime and bath time. Also on the site are downloadable resources such as colouring sheets to keep kids entertained.



Stay accident free - don't bounce from a trampoline into A&E

While keen gardeners use their outdoor space to cultivate flowers, fruit and vegetables, others use their garden as a playground. Trampolines are increasingly popular, providing a relatively inexpensive source of enjoyment as well as aerobic activity.

People of all ages love the feeling of flying through the air and mastering skills, ranging from basic jumps and landing safely to advanced acrobatics including complicated somersaults. The downside is that hospital A&E departments are having to deal with significant numbers of trampolining injuries – so RoSPA's Accident Free, Avoid A&E campaign highlights key safety points if you use a garden trampoline.

- Trampolining isn't suitable for children under the age of six because they're not sufficiently physically developed to control their bouncing
- Trampolining injuries can occur to all parts of the body, including the neck, arms, legs, face and head. Head and neck injuries are the most serious injuries associated with trampolines. The most common injuries are caused by awkward landings and include sprains or fractures to the wrist, forearm, elbow and collarbone
- Adult supervision is no guarantee of safety. More than half of all trampoline accidents occur while under supervision. However, a trained "spotter" can greatly reduce this risk
- Never combine alcohol with trampolining! Children have been hurt while bouncing with adults who have been drinking
- Whatever your ability level, when the coronavirus pandemic is over join a local trampolining club to learn new skills, ranging from the basics of landing safely to advanced moves such as somersaults.

There are bound to be the odd bumps and sprains. Our advice for parents has been developed in conjunction with manufacturers, doctors and families, with the aim to help you



enjoy your trampolining while avoiding severe and life-changing injuries.

Before you buy

- Choose a model with safety pads, and check that the pads cover the springs, hooks and frame. The colour of the pads should contrast with the frame
- Consider models with safety netting as part of the design, or buy this at the same time. The safety netting should prevent the bouncers from hitting rigid components like springs or the frame. They should also prevent bouncing off the trampoline
- New trampolines should meet the European Standard EN71-14:2014 "Safety of toys – Trampolines for domestic use".

Where to put it

Ideally, place the trampoline on energy absorbing ground, such as a soft and springy lawn, or bark wood chip, sand or other cushioning material. If you do not have a net, look to have a safe zone of 2.5metres, clear of toys etc on the ground and objects such as trees, washing lines, poles, glass frames and other hard items. Never place the trampoline

on hard surfaces such as concrete, tarmac or hard packed mud without absorbent safety matting.

Checking and keeping it safe

Ensure trampolines are tied down before use. Be sure to check the padding and nets are in place and that the spring and fixed-metal parts are covered. On windy days and during the winter, it can be best to pack down the trampoline. Some trampolines have ladders. Where possible remove them to limit unsupervised access by smaller children, when the trampoline is not in use.

Rules for use

- Take turns, one at a time! Sixty per cent of injuries occur when more than one person is on the trampoline. The person weighing less is five times more likely to be injured
- Don't allow somersault or risky complicated moves – unless trained and highly skilled
- Never allow a bouncing exit
- Trampolines are not suitable for children under six years of age. All children should be supervised when on the trampoline.



Follow our tips and cultivate a safe space in your garden

Many people are taking advantage of their enforced time at home to do some gardening. However, there is the temptation to take short cuts and the risk of forgetting that the garden can be a very dangerous place. So follow RoSPA's advice and avoid the perils that may await.

Electrocution: Lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, strimmers, rotovators – any tool with an electrical cable needs to be handled with extra care. Always keep the cable well away from blades – if you do not have a fellow gardener to hold the cable for you as you work, always use the safety attachments that accompany the tool to keep the wire in place, away from danger. A Residual Current Device (RCD) should always be used as it will switch off electricity automatically if there is a fault.

Poisoning: Store chemicals safely out of sight, and out of reach of children, preferably in a secure cabinet. Never transfer the chemicals to alternative containers as this could cause confusion. When using chemicals such as weed killers follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Nature can also be harmful – some plants are harmful if eaten and others can cause reactions if brought into contact with the skin.



Learn to recognise harmful plants, which include ivy, lily-of-the-valley, yew, giant hogweed, horse chestnut, laburnum and foxglove, discourage children from playing with or eating harmful plants, wear protective gloves and after touching plants in the garden always wash your hands. If in doubt, seek medical advice.

Fatal falls: Check that your ladder is in good condition before using it and get a member

of your household to hold it steady while you climb to prune, pick or trim. Ensure that the ladder is at a safe angle and will not slip. Falls can occur at ground level so make sure paths are level, stable and free from moss and, where necessary, safety rails are provided.

Drowning: Most horticulture experts recommend a pond to attract beneficial wildlife but water in the garden brings added responsibility. If you have small children it may be safer to forgo the pleasures of a pond or water feature but if you cannot live without one reduce the risk by securely fencing the area or placing a solid grille over the water, and always supervise youngsters in the garden.

Burns: Avoid uncontrollable fires by always siting bonfires and barbecues well away from fences, sheds and trees. Children should be supervised at all times. For more advice on barbecue safety see: www.rospa.com/Home-Safety/Advice/General/Barbecue-Safety.aspx

Cuts and stabbings: Sharp garden tools like forks, spades, secateurs and saws are essential for successful gardening. To stay safe know your limitations and only use tools you are confident with. Wear appropriate safety gear such as gloves, goggles and work boots. Never mow the lawn wearing sandals, for example. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and keep children away from sharp objects.

Home safety advice checklist

- Avoid trips, slips and falls by ensuring halls and stairways are always well lit and free from clutter
- Change light bulbs safely, without the risk of falling, by using a stable step-stool. Avoid using old chairs to climb on
- Stay safe from fire by testing smoke alarms monthly and be sure all the family know how to escape in the event of a fire
- Avoid burns and scalds, particularly to children, by always using the cooker's back ring or hotplate first and position panhandles so that they can't be pulled over and by keeping hot drinks out of reach of children
- Reduce the risk of electrical fires and electrocution by never using appliances with cracked plugs or worn cables. Avoid overloading electric sockets with too many appliances
- Avoid fire risks by using guards with all fires and heaters and keep clothing, furniture and curtains away from all heat sources, including candles
- To minimise the risk of falls from windows, install and use restrictor catches on all upstairs windows and place furniture away from windows
- Reduce trips, slips and falls by always quickly cleaning up spills.



RoSPA teams up with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service to help prevent blaze tragedies

RoSPA has signed a partnership agreement with the **Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS)** which aims to:

- Provide additional fire safety advice to people at risk for the mutual benefit of both organisations
- Reduce fire deaths and fires in the homes of people at risk
- Improve partnership working for the benefit of both organisations.

NIFRS identified that a significant number of people who had tragically lost their lives in accidental fires in dwellings within Northern Ireland could have been deemed to be at risk from fire for a number of reasons, such

as age, mobility, illness or impairment. The terminology “people at risk” was therefore introduced and is defined as:

- Aged 50 or older
- Have a disability or impaired mobility or
- Are referred to NIFRS by a partnership agency.

Free home fire safety checks are currently targeted by NIFRS to people at risk. Visits are carried out by firefighters who are based at local fire stations. They provide detailed home safety advice and ensure the home is fitted with a working smoke alarm.

RoSPA in Northern Ireland works closely

with NIFRS regarding content of training packages in terms of information and statistics. The training packages are delivered to home safety officers, health visitors, social workers and others who are in contact with people at risk. In addition, both organisations work in collaboration with various bodies such as health and social care trusts, local councils and the Public Health Agency to deliver on the objectives of the **Northern Ireland Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2015-2025**.

Pictured above: Pauline Herbison, RoSPA public health officer, Northern Ireland, with station commander Adrian Sloan, community risk management, community protection, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Eye-catching poster emphasises the importance of exercise

By **Pauline Herbison**
RoSPA public health officer,
Northern Ireland

The Health Survey for Northern Ireland 2017/18 found that 23 per cent of respondents aged 55 and over reported having had a fall in or around their home in the previous two years.

In addition to removing hazards that could cause a trip, engaging in regular physical activity to develop and maintain strength and balance is also particularly important as we get older. Exercises designed to improve muscle strength can reduce the risk of a fall by improving posture, coordination and balance.

With this in mind, RoSPA in Northern Ireland worked with **Southern Health and Social Care Trust** employees from a physiotherapy and falls coordinator background to produce an eye-catching poster that can be used to advertise strength and balance classes. The poster, launched in January, is available for use throughout Northern Ireland to aid consistency in the delivery of falls prevention services. RoSPA has also adapted the poster for use in social media posts.

The Department of Health guidelines are included on the poster. They recommend that all adults should complete 150 minutes of physical activity in a week. Older adults at risk of falling should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength, balance and coordination at least twice a week.

This initiative is a further development of the Stay Steady campaign in Northern Ireland. Launched in 2019, the main focus was the production of a video to raise awareness of the measures that can be taken at home to prevent falls. It can be viewed on RoSPA's website [here](#) or at the nidirect website [here](#).

The video demonstrates a range of simple exercises that can be undertaken when going about the daily routine at home. RoSPA provided advice for the video to other partners who deliver the **Home Accident Prevention Strategy in Northern Ireland**, based on experience from the **Stand Up, Stay Up** campaign that was recently delivered in England. A booklet illustrating the full range of exercises recommended is also available from RoSPA.



Poster launch: Pauline Herbison (back row, left) with Southern Health and Social Care Trust's community health improvement officer Lisa McAliskey (back row, right); senior physiotherapist Sandra Crawford (front row, left) and falls coordinator Joanne McElmeel (front row, right)

Royal college supports National Accident Prevention Strategy

The **Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health** has called for intervention to reduce accidental injury among children in its **State of Child Health 2020** report, launched in March.

The report highlights that unintentional injuries are a leading cause of death and disability in children under the age of five. Falls, poisoning and drowning are cited as examples of types of accidents that can be prevented with improved safety messages.

The report, produced in collaboration with children and young people, confirms the RCPCH's support for the recommendations set out in the **National Accident Prevention Strategy for England**, produced by RoSPA in conjunction with key partners. The college calls for implementation of the strategy, including providing safer environments, addressing health inequalities, improving data collection and product safety, providing education and training and ensuring a systematic approach and leadership in tackling accident prevention.

Attending the launch, Ashley Martin, public

health adviser for RoSPA (pictured right), said: "We welcome this report and the RCPCH support for the recommendations in the National Accident Prevention Strategy which, if implemented, will save lives."

The report recommends that local authorities should be sufficiently resourced to implement in full the **NICE public health guidance PH30**, "Unintentional injuries in the home: interventions for under-15s". Implementing home safety assessments particularly to families living in deprived areas or social housing, combining assessment, advice and provision of safety equipment are recognised as key components in an effective strategy to reduce unintentional injuries.



The report concludes that "focusing on prevention and delivering early intervention services for parents, children and families can lead to economic savings for the NHS and wider public services, as well as supporting children and young people to enjoy good health across their life course."

Webinars are helping to deal with social distancing challenges

In the face of social distancing measures around the world, RoSPA has launched a series of webinars about the international occupational safety and health response to the COVID outbreak.

The series, launched at the end of March, is designed to aid employers and health and safety professionals deal with the particular challenges presented by social distancing.

The first three webinars were attended by professionals around the world, with each reaching organisations in 12 countries. They covered organisational response

to the crisis (led by Higher Colleges of Technology Dubai), mental health and wellbeing support (led by RoSPA's wellbeing experts) and employees who need to work in proximity (led by the Waste Industry Safety and Health forum and Acumen Waste).

Taking place every Wednesday at 1pm (UK time), the webinars are free to access for RoSPA members and award winners.

Karen McDonnell, RoSPA's occupational safety and health policy adviser, developed the content for the webinars.

She said: "As health and safety practitioners

and employers, a lot of what we are facing right now is uncharted territory, and there are a lot of factors to consider when it comes to looking after our workforce.

"At RoSPA we wanted to help our supporters and partners, wherever they are, through the pandemic as best we could. The response to the webinars has been immense – we've had hundreds of people watching the first few of the series.

"That's really exciting for us, as it demonstrates the value placed in sharing of health and safety expertise, knowledge and best practice."



Homes should be safer by design to help prevent accidents

When it comes to accidents, the home is the most dangerous place to be. Every year more than 6,000 people are killed due to unintentional injuries sustained in the home environment, and it's the most vulnerable family members – the under-5s and over-65s – who are most at risk. Andrew Tromans, RoSPA PR and media officer, met RoSPA trustee **DR JULIAN REDHEAD**, medical director at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, to talk about how, by preventing common accidents in the home, the burden on our health service can be reduced.

Andrew: What kind of common accidents in the home can result in a hospital admission?

Dr Redhead: Each year, falls on level surfaces result in 124 deaths, 48,600 hospital admissions and more than 600,000 A&E attendances. I see the reality behind the figures – in almost every shift my colleagues and I will treat patients who have been injured as a result of a fall. More often than not, it is the elderly and children under the age of five who experience falls.

What sort of impact can common accidents in the home, such as a fall, have on a patient?

Having a fall, especially if you're an older person, can have a devastating effect on your quality of life. As well as the physical consequences, falls can destroy confidence leading to loneliness, isolation and a loss of independence. One of the common injuries that occur as a result of a fall is a hip fracture. Almost every shift at an A&E department will see at least one older person admitted because of this. For a frail person, a hip fracture can easily become a fatal injury as it may complicate existing conditions.

What preventative measures could be put in place to help prevent accidents in the home?



There are lots of things people can do retrofit their homes to make them safer. One example of this would be to fit a lock onto cupboards which contain cleaning products. Another is putting handrails in the bathroom to help prevent slips and falls among older people. However, if homes were designed to be safer to begin with, that would make a huge difference. This is why I endorse RoSPA's **Safer by design framework** which is full of practical and low-cost recommendations to improve safety in the home.

Can you give an example of how accident risk might be reduced by implementing RoSPA's Safer by design framework?

Not so long ago, a little girl came into hospital with severe burns. The doorbell went while the girl's dad was making dinner. Dad had switched on the hob to boil some pasta – he only stepped away from the kitchen for a few seconds but sadly this was enough time for the girl to place her little hand on the hob. Luckily, she was taken to A&E and was treated

promptly. She will make a strong recovery. Sadly, burns from hot surfaces account for about four deaths, 1,700 hospital admissions and about 22,000 A&E attendances each year. Some of these accidents could be avoided by putting in place some simple design features such as installing induction hobs and guards around fireplaces. These are both recommended in the Safer by design framework.

How did you become involved with RoSPA?

RoSPA uses its expertise to provide information and advice to prevent unintended injury. So really, in a manner of speaking, they are trying to save me work! If we can prevent more accidents happening in the first place we can reduce the burden on our health service. It was a very natural fit for me to get involved with the work of RoSPA.

● For more information on the Safer by design framework, see www.rospace.com/built-environment

Adopting new ways of staying in touch during the pandemic

By **Elizabeth Lumsden**
RoSPA community safety manager Scotland



Building Safer Communities (BSC), a collaboration of partners in Scotland focused on the prevention of unintentional harm and injury, has gone online to stay in touch. When restrictions were put in place due to COVID-19 an online communication tool was quickly utilised to bring together the BSC partners, including RoSPA. This ensured that the established organisations operating under the BSC banner were able to share information and discuss developments, concerns and possible solutions regarding how the lockdown measures were affecting the safety of the population of Scotland.

The weekly catch up sessions comprise each of the partners sharing what their own

surveillance is telling them and what concerns they have for local communities. Along with RoSPA and the **Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN)**, the partners include the **Scottish Government (Safer Communities Division)**, **Neighbourhood Watch Scotland**, **Crimestoppers**, **Scottish Business Resilience Centre** and **Inspiring Scotland**.

The first meeting was quick to highlight that all the organisations represented had similar concerns about how they would communicate with both the practitioners and other partners they worked with, and also how they were going to engage with the public. SCSN immediately conducted a survey of its members who represent local community safety partnerships and found that local service delivery was generally still ongoing, albeit somewhat altered to redirect focus where it was most needed and still possible due to social distancing measures, for example keeping helplines open and monitoring CCTV cameras. However, although some additional tasks were being adopted to help frontline staff, crucial activities such as home safety visits were obviously no longer possible. New options

for engaging were being considered, such as using social media to connect with local communities.

During the first three weeks of the online discussions with BSC partners, the most common concerns included more people living in close proximity for longer periods in their own home – including children being off school and adults working at home – and the risk of increased vulnerability to sustaining unintentional injuries. Older people being more at risk of a fall due to lack of strength and balance exercise opportunities was also a concern. RoSPA's campaign **Accident Free, Avoid A&E** (see pages 04-07) was useful in this respect and the BSC partners shared the campaign messages on their own social media platforms. Other concerns raised by the partners, who were adapting their existing processes accordingly to reach those most in need, included increased demand for food parcels, isolation, poverty, opportunistic crimes, domestic violence, increased alcohol consumption, ongoing scams and the rapid sharing of misinformation.

Along with the concerns that organisations have about the communities they work with, each has the additional pressures of uncertainties about their own organisation's funding, staff sickness and coping with new ways of working.

These are tough times for those involved in the prevention of unintentional harm and injury but the BSC partners are remaining positive that things are beginning to settle down, with new ways of working and communicating proving effective in reaching those in our communities who most need their support, advice and information.

RoSPA staff are investigating the use of electronic platforms to reach the parents of young children to raise awareness of child home safety, as well as keeping informed groups that they provide the secretariat to, such as **Water Safety Scotland** and the **Cross Party Group on Accident Prevention and Safety Awareness**.





Keep as active as possible to reduce the risk of injury from falls

By **Ashley Martin**
RoSPA public
health adviser



The opportunities to get out and about or attend exercise classes are currently greatly reduced but it is still important to stay as active as possible. A resource that helps give older people ideas about how they can improve their strength and balance while staying at home is the Stay Steady video produced by partners in Northern Ireland.

Another set of online resources from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, developed in partnership with AGE UK, which give advice on how to stay healthy can be

found at www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-healthy/staying-healthy-you-age

Later Life Training, the organisation that provides training and support for exercise instructors who deliver the evidence-based programmes FaME and Otago, has provided some information for how instructors can provide remote support to their classes at home, along with advice to people who haven't yet attended classes. This includes Make Movement Your Mission, 10-minute movement snacks live on Facebook at 8am, noon and 4pm, for older people or those who have been very sedentary and want to ease back into movement and activity. See the Facebook site [here](#) (or search for Make Movement Your Mission). Sessions that have already taken place are

also available in video format via YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVUq4FvWu9uSwUK8YMwZlVjx1CKp8q

These serve to encourage sitting less and moving more, in addition to any other programmes or activities. These snacks use movements from the daily diary ICAN Calendar which has prompts and tips for being more active throughout the day, week or month and supports self-management with two simple functional tests of strength and balance to see progression over time. This can be downloaded free from media3.laterlifetraining.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/LLT-Calendar-2020-Final.pdf

In addition, SAGA's **Get Up and Go** booklet illustrates some useful exercises.

In Scotland, NHS Inform has produced a range of resources that are available for all:

- **Upwards and onwards film**
How to get up after a fall and what to do if you're hurt or can't get up. Viewers can watch the full 20-minute film, or chose an excerpt
- **What to do if someone falls film**
How to help someone who has fallen
- **What to do if someone falls leaflet**
Downloadable information about helping someone who has fallen.

You can access the films and other resources on NHS inform at www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/preventing-falls/dealing-with-a-fall/what-to-do-if-you-fall

For general advice on staying safe at home don't forget RoSPA's Facing up to Falls video which provides a whole host of useful tips. This can be found at www.rospa.com/Home-Safety/Advice/Older-People.aspx.

With all this evidence-based exercise support available, people will hopefully be able to stay safe, active and healthy during these difficult times.

Prime time slot for RoSPA child car seat advice



RoSPA's child car seat advice had a prime time television audience when Jo Bullock, RoSPA's executive head of awareness and education, appeared on BBC 1's The One Show on March 2. Jo discussed with presenter Iwan Thomas and three mums whose children had outgrown their car seats the issues surrounding reusing and recycling. Jo was able to impart safety advice about only using a child car seat if you can be sure about its history, as well as other RoSPA guidance, which can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).



Final Word

RoSPA's website is a source of valuable advice as we adapt to working from home and staying indoors, says chief executive **ERROL TAYLOR**



In the beginning of JRR Tolkien's epic tale, The Lord of the Rings, a small band of Hobbits set out on a long and perilous journey. Their decision to undertake such a journey is remarkable because Tolkien depicts these human-like, fictional characters as being fond of an unadventurous, simple life of farming, eating, and socialising. The aim of their journey is nothing less than to save the world from enslavement by destroying a malevolent magical ring. The first leg of their journey takes them to the hilltop village of Bree.

In those heady days before the COVID lockdown, I couldn't think of a better way to blow away the cobwebs than to follow in the Hobbits' footsteps and visit the village that provided the inspiration for Tolkien's Bree. Largely unchanged from Tolkien's day, the Buckinghamshire hill-top village of Brill benefits from fantastic views over surrounding countryside, a windmill (right), a village green and an ancient church. I don't think there's anything better than quietly gliding along, enjoying fresh air and sunshine, saying "hello" to the new-born lambs in the fields, admiring flowers and spectacular tree blossom... before making an essential pit stop for refreshments in one of Brill's excellent gastropubs.

In the depths of the COVID lockdown, such experiences have become happy daydreams. The simple act of travelling and meeting friends and family are longed-for, distant memories.

Travel is fundamentally important to human

beings and our attempts to contain the spread of COVID has led to a collapse in demand for air travel, hotels and restaurants. Whilst COVID-related lockdowns reduce the amount of pollution we pump into the atmosphere, they threaten livelihoods and damage economies. Thankfully, telecoms and the internet provide a lifeline by enabling many service businesses to continue to keep in touch with customers and suppliers. They have also allowed us to keep in touch with friends and family. We are entering an increasingly virtual world where computer technology allows us to be sociable without physically touching and exchanging pathogens (including bacteria and viruses).

For many people however, working from home has created a new and challenging psychological journey. We had to get to a point where we could transform a private, relatively unsafe environment, into a safe and productive one. Boundaries had to be set between work and recreation, with agreed start and finish times, physically separate workspaces and secure storage of confidential data. Given RoSPA's long experience of home and leisure safety, as well as road and workplace safety, there always has been a wealth of advice and practical tools available on RoSPA's website.

We know that the home accounts for almost a half of all the accidental injuries that are treated by hospital emergency departments so we must carry

out our own safety assessments of our new working environments. We must deal with trip hazards from, for example, loose rugs and trailing cables. We must not add to the already massive burden of accidental injury. Just in England in 2018, accidental falls accounted for 5,719 deaths and a huge 480,785 hospital admissions. We all face a significant risk of falling and this increases with age. Holding the handrail while using the stairs is a simple and highly effective way of both reducing the risk and the severity of trips and falls. Unfortunately, many people are now putting themselves at risk of falling because they are reluctant to hold the handrail on public staircases because they might pick up a pathogen. Again, the solution is simple: hold the handrail but wear gloves, wash hands often and thoroughly and/or do not touch your face.

While the goal of our journey might not be quite as impressive as that of the Hobbits, we can look forward to a massively beneficial increase in flexible working while keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe from pathogens as well as remaining free from serious accidental injury.



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