



Falls, Trips & Ladder Injuries (60+)

Australian national snapshot + practical prevention tips

AIHW statistics show falls are the largest injury problem for older Australians. Most serious injuries come from **same-level slips/trips**, and ladder falls remain a high-risk cause of major trauma.

Key national numbers

248,211 hospitalisations (2023-24)	Falls were 43% of all injury hospitalisations.
6,698 deaths (2022-23)	Falls were 43% of all injury deaths.
\$5.4B health spending (2023-24)	Estimated spending on injuries from falls.
4.8 days average stay	Average length of stay for fall-injury hospitalisations.

Why 60+ matters

- Risk rises steeply: people 65+ were almost 12x as likely to be hospitalised due to a fall as adults aged 25-44 (3,298.7 vs 276.9 per 100,000).
- Most serious fall injuries are from same-level slips/trips/stumbles (not just big heights).
- Falls are more likely to lead to complications, longer recovery, and loss of confidence after 60.

Ladder falls: smaller numbers, high severity

- 6,167 hospitalisations in 2023-24 were from fall on and from a ladder (W11).
- People aged 65+ have higher risk of serious injury from ladder falls. Avoid ladders when possible (use a platform step, or hire help).

Simple prevention checklist

1) Home hazards (stop trips and slips)

- Good lighting; night-lights for hall/bathroom.
- Remove loose mats; clear cords/clutter; wipe spills fast.
- Non-slip surfaces in bathroom; grab rail if needed.
- Handrails on steps; mark step edges; keep pathways clear.

2) Strength, balance, and footwear

- Do strength + balance 2-3x/week (sit-to-stand, heel-to-toe walk, single-leg stand near a bench).
- Check vision/hearing; keep glasses up to date.
- Wear supportive shoes; avoid slippery soles and loose slippers.

3) Health and medicines

- Ask your GP/pharmacist to review dizziness, blood pressure drops, and sedating medicines.
- Manage diabetes/neuropathy and any foot numbness.
- Use walking aids if recommended - they prevent injuries, not independence.

4) Ladder rule-of-thumb: avoid if you can

- Prefer a stable platform step; never climb when tired, unwell, or dizzy.
- Keep 3 points of contact; do not over-reach; set up on firm, level ground.
- Have someone present to spot/assist; consider help for gutter/roof jobs.

After a fall: get urgent help if...

- Head strike with confusion, vomiting, severe headache, or if on blood thinners.
- Severe pain, deformity, or cannot weight-bear.
- New weakness, slurred speech, or loss of consciousness.

Sources (national)

AIHW, *Falls* (hospitalisations 2023-24; deaths 2022-23):

aihw.gov.au/reports/injury/falls

AIHW, *Health system spending on disease and injury in Australia 2023-24* (injuries from falls \$5.4b):

aihw.gov.au/reports/health-welfare-expenditure/health-system-spending-disease-injury-aus-2023-24

Better Health Channel (Vic), *Ladder safety matters* (higher risk of serious injury for 65+):

betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/ladder-safety