

Sunderland Strength and Balance Falls Prevention Programme – September 2026

City-wide delivery, as agreed by Ageing well Board, to support residents to improve their strength and balance to reduce falls

[View our falls prevention video](#)

Strength and Balance programme is an evidence based (OTAGO) exercise program, funded by Sunderland City Council for people who live in Sunderland. This exercise program targets vulnerable, mildly, and moderately frail over 50's who have a history of falls and/or fear of falling with the key aim of improving their independence and confidence and reduce falls, whilst promoting 'Healthy Ageing' and a lifelong participation in exercise and activity.

Referral Criteria:

- Motivated to improve and committed to attending a 14-week exercise class in a group setting alongside weekly home exercises
- Aged 50 years+ and live in Sunderland
- History of falls or near misses, fear of falling or reduced confidence, identified as having strength and balance deficits
- Identified as either vulnerable, mildly frail, or moderately frail (Rockwood Clinical Frailty Score 4-6).
- Identified as having strength and balance deficits
- Able to walk independently or with a walking aid (3 or 4 wheeled walker/stick)
- Able to sit to stand from a chair using arms independently
- Able to stand for several minutes at a time, with or without support (such as holding onto a chair, if required)
- Medically stable and in control of any long-term conditions they may have
- Timed up and go test: between 14 and 25 seconds

Exclusion Criteria:

- Moderate/severe aortic stenosis
 - AAA inoperable
 - Recent injurious fall without medical examination
 - Uncontrolled angina
 - Resting SBP >180mmHg or resting DBP >100mmHg
 - Uncontrolled Postural hypotension or Symptomatic drop in BP during exercise
 - Tachycardia >100 bpm
 - Acute systemic illness
 - Unstable or acute heart failure
 - Advanced Parkinson's disease
 - Visual or vestibular disturbances
 - Uncontrolled Pain
 - Cognitive impairment
- Which may limit their ability to take part in the group or place other participants at risk*

(American College of Sports Medicine and American Heart Association Joint Position Statement. 1998. Recommendations for cardiovascular screening, staffing and emergency policies at health/fitness facilities. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, pp.1009-1018.)

For any information regarding the programme please contact
Jackie.nixon@sunderland.gov.uk

East: Millfield, Hendon, St Michael's, Ryhope, Doxford Online booking via: Strength and Balance Links for Life Sunderland				
Venue	Day	Time	Cost	Contact
St Michael's Community Centre, Stanington Grove, Sunderland SR2 9JT	Thursday Start: 03 rd September 2026	1.00pm	Free (14 weeks) Support with transport available	01915166083
Raich Carter Sports Centre, Commercial Road, Hendon SR2 8PD	Wednesday Regular weekly classes	1.30pm	£3.00/session	01915143077

West: St Anne's, Pallion, Barnes, Sandhill, St Chad's, Silksworth Online booking via: Strength and Balance Links for Life Sunderland				
Venue	Day	Time	Cost	Contact
Thorney Close Action & Enterprise Centre, 120 Thorndale Rd, Thorney Close, SR3 4JQ	Tuesday Start: 01 st September 2026	1.00pm	Free (14 weeks) Support with transport available	01915166083
Silksworth Tennis and Community Pool, Silksworth Lane, SR3 1PD	Thursday Regular weekly classes	2.00pm	£3.00/session	01915110611

North: Castle, Redhill, Southwick, Fulwell, St Peter's Online booking via: Strength and Balance Links for Life Sunderland				
Venue	Day	Time	Cost	Contact
Fulwell Community Library, Dene Lane, SR6 8EH	Thursday Start: 10 th September 2026	10.00am	Free (14 weeks) Support with transport available	01915634749
Fulwell Community Library, Dene Lane, SR6 8EH	Tuesday Regular weekly classes	1:00pm	£16.00 for 8-week block	01915634749

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Washington: East, West, North, South, Central Online booking via: Strength and Balance Links for Life Sunderland				
Venue	Day	Time	Cost	Contact
Millennium Centre, The Oval, Concord, Washington, NE37 2QD	Friday Start: 11 th September 2026	10.00am	Free (14 weeks) Support with transport available	01915373231

Coalfields: Shiney Row, Houghton, Copt Hill, Hetton Online booking via: Strength and Balance Links for Life Sunderland				
Venue	Day	Time	Cost	Contact
Hetton and Eppleton Community Hall, Front Street, Hetton le Hole, DH5 9JQ	Tuesday Start: 08 th September 2026	1.30pm	Free (14 weeks) Support with transport available	01915843840
Houghton Sports and Wellness centre, Station Road DH4 5AH	Thursday Regular weekly classes	1.30pm	£3.00/session	01915843840



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