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Getting moving again after a hospital stay

Leaving hospital and the first 14 days at home, with local help in Berkshire

For adults in Berkshire, their families, carers and anyone helping them at home. This edition adds a list of local help in Berkshire.

Your own care plan comes first. Follow the advice your hospital or care team gave you, including anything you must not do, and any advice about walking, exercise, eating or drinking. Use any equipment and help you were advised to use.

This is a checklist and a diary. It is not an exercise programme, and it is not a deadline for getting better.

When to get medical help: page 9. My 14-day record: page 11.

Before you leave hospital

Tick each one when it is sorted. Ask the ward team about anything you are unsure of.

- [ ] My journey home is arranged, and I can get into my home.
- [ ] Anyone helping me knows when I am coming home. Any care visits are confirmed.
- [ ] I have my discharge letter or care plan, and I understand the next steps.
- [ ] I know which of my medicines have changed, and how and when to take each one.

- [ ] I have the medicines I need, and I know how to get more before they run out.
- [ ] Any equipment I need is ready, and I have practised using it.
- [ ] I know what help I need with my bed, chair, toilet and any stairs.
- [ ] Any exercises, and anything I must not do, have been explained and written down.
- [ ] Food and drinks are sorted for when I get home.
- [ ] If I have been in hospital for a while, someone will put the heating on before I get home, so the house is warm when I arrive.
- [ ] If I have a personal alarm or falls sensor, it is charged and working.
- [ ] I know about any follow-up appointments, and who to call if there is a problem.
- [ ] I have talked about my worries, and asked whether short-term help at home would be useful.

My useful contacts

Hospital ward or discharge team, and phone:

GP surgery and phone:

Community or home care team and phone, if arranged:

Equipment contact and phone:

Follow-up appointment: date, time and place:

At home: little and often

Follow the advice from your own healthcare team first.
Some of the points below may not be right for you, or may need changing. This is a general guide. If you are not sure something is safe for you, check with your healthcare team before you try it.

- Take it easy on your first day home. Getting home from hospital can be very tiring.
- Get dressed and sit out of bed for meals when you can, with help if you need it.
- Try not to sit or lie still for long spells. Move about in the way your care team advised, and walk only when it is safe, with your walking aid and any help you need.
- Do the exercises you were given, the way you were shown.
- Spread things out through the day and rest in between. Build up gradually. You do not have to do more every day.
- Have regular meals and drinks, following any advice you were given about diet, swallowing or how much to drink.
- If something new starts, or something gets worse, do not push through it. Ask for advice, and use the “When to get medical help” page.

Things I must not do, or help I need:

Something I would like to work towards, with my care team:

Making home safer

- Keep the places you walk clear of clutter, cables and loose rugs.
- Light the way to the toilet at night.
- Wear shoes or slippers that stay on securely and grip the floor.
- Put your personal alarm or falls sensor back on when you get home, and keep it charged. Keep your phone within reach.
- Use your walking aid as you were shown, and take your time getting up.
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower, and any equipment recommended for you.
- Get help with lifting, reaching and heavy jobs.

Ask your GP or pharmacist whether any of your medicines could affect your balance. Do not change or stop a medicine without advice.

Where to get help in England and Wales

Short-term help at home. Ask the ward before you leave, or your GP surgery or council once you are home. You may be assessed for short-term care, often called reablement or intermediate care. When it is offered it is free, and it usually lasts no more than 6 weeks, depending on your needs.

Equipment and changes to your home. Your council's adult social care team can tell you how to ask for an assessment.

Worried about how you left hospital. Speak to the hospital team, or its patient advice service (PALS in England, the concerns team in Wales). For an urgent medical problem, use the "When to get medical help" page instead.

Local help in Berkshire

Berkshire has six councils: West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and Slough. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover more than one area.

West Berkshire Council adult social care. For people in West Berkshire. Call 01635 503050. Out of hours, for emergencies: call 01635 551111 and choose option 1. westberks.gov.uk

Reading Borough Council adult social care. For people in Reading. Call 0118 937 3747. Out of hours, for emergencies: 01344 351 999. reading.gov.uk

Wokingham Borough Council adult social care. For people in Wokingham Borough. Call the Health and Social Care Hub on 0300 365 1234. Out of hours, for emergencies: 01344 351 999. wokingham.gov.uk

Bracknell Forest Council adult social care. For people in Bracknell Forest. Call 01344 351500. Out of hours, the same number goes through to the Emergency Duty Service. bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead adult social care. For people in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Call 01628 683744. Out of hours, for emergencies: 01344 351 999. rbwm.gov.uk

Slough Borough Council adult social care. For people in Slough. Call 01753 475111 and choose the adult social care option. Out of hours, for emergencies: 01344 351 999. slough.gov.uk

Short-term help after a hospital stay. Ask the ward staff about help at home before you leave. Reading: reablement is free for a short time. Bracknell Forest: short-term care is free while you work on your goals, for 1 to 6 weeks. Slough: reablement is free

for up to six weeks. West Berkshire: reablement usually lasts 1 to 2 weeks, and never more than 6. Wokingham and Windsor and Maidenhead: the hospital team will plan short-term help with you. Age UK Berkshire also helps people settle back home in Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. In Reading and Bracknell Forest this is free.

Equipment. Ask your council's adult social care team for an assessment. Reading, Slough and Windsor and Maidenhead lend equipment through Millbrook Healthcare. To return it or get it mended, call Millbrook on 0118 228 8701. Reading: collection is free, and small changes such as grab rails, up to 1,000 pounds, are free. West Berkshire: council equipment is usually free if the assessment shows you need it. Windsor and Maidenhead: for walking sticks, frames and wheelchairs, ask your GP.

Falls. Tell your GP about any fall. Your GP can check why you fell and refer you for help. Reading: call the Falls Prevention Service on 0118 937 3747, or fill in the online falls checklist. Windsor and Maidenhead: the council's Falls Prevention Team is on 0333 121 0205. West Berkshire: exercise classes at leisure centres, if your GP or health worker refers you.

Personal alarms. A button to press for help, 24 hours a day. Reading: alarms from the council's adult social care have no charge. Call 0118 937 3747. Slough: the council's alarms are free for people who need them, after an assessment. Call 01753 475111. West Berkshire: ask on 01635 503050. You may have to pay towards the monitoring. Anywhere in Berkshire: Forestcare, run by Bracknell Forest Council, fits alarms. There is a charge. Call 01344 786599, any time.

Help for carers. Reading and West Berkshire: the Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership gives advice and support. Call 0118 926 3941. In West Berkshire, if you care for someone

over 50, you can also call Age UK Berkshire on 0118 959 4242. Wokingham: the Wokingham Carers Partnership, through Age UK Berkshire, 0118 959 4242. Bracknell Forest: Signal for Carers gives free support. Call 01344 266088. Windsor and Maidenhead: ask the council for a carer's assessment on 01628 683744. Slough: the council's Slough Carers Support team, through 01753 475111.

Safe and Well Visit. A free home visit from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, if you qualify. They check your home room by room and can fit free smoke alarms where needed. Check online to see if you can have one. rbfrs.co.uk

Age UK. Help and advice for older people. Age UK Berkshire works across the county. Call 0118 959 4242, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm. Age UK Reading gives free information and advice. Call 0118 950 2480. ageuk.org.uk/berkshire

Citizens Advice. Help with money, benefits and other problems. Call Adviceline on 0800 144 8848. It is usually open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and puts you through to a local Citizens Advice. Calls are free from mobiles and landlines.
0800 144 8848 · citizensadvice.org.uk

Healthwatch. Healthwatch is independent. Tell them about your health or social care, good or bad. Reading: 0118 214 5579. West Berkshire: 01635 886210. Wokingham: 0118 418 1418. Bracknell Forest, Slough, and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead: 0300 012 0184.

Hospital patient advice (PALS). Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading: 0118 322 8338, Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm. West Berkshire Community Hospital, Wokingham Hospital and St Mark's Hospital, Maidenhead (Berkshire Healthcare): 0118 904 3467, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

Local contacts checked 16 November 2026. Services can change, so check before you rely on one.

When to get medical help

This is not a full list. Follow any extra advice in your discharge paperwork.

Call 999 now if you have

- Sudden chest pain or discomfort that does not go away, pain that spreads to your arm, neck, jaw or back, or chest pain with sweating, feeling sick, light-headed or short of breath.
- Severe difficulty breathing: gasping, choking or not able to get your words out.
- Pain and swelling in a leg together with chest pain or breathlessness. This can be a blood clot.
- Your face droops on one side, you cannot lift both arms, or your speech is slurred or muddled. These can be signs of a stroke. Call even if they stop.
- You have fallen and cannot get up, or you may have hurt your head, neck, back or hip.
- Bleeding that you cannot stop, for example from a wound or where you had stitches.

Do not drive yourself to A&E.

Call NHS 111, or get an urgent GP appointment, if you have

- New pain and swelling in one leg, sometimes with red or darker skin. This can be a blood clot.
- Breathlessness that comes on suddenly, or being more short of breath than usual.
- Coughing up blood.
- A wound or stitches that open up, or a wound that is bleeding, red, swollen, more painful or has pus coming out of it.
- You have fallen and are in pain, hurt or feeling unwell, but none of the 999 signs apply.

If any 999 sign applies, call 999 first.

Contact your GP or care team if

- You are worried about your walking or balance.
- You have had a fall, even if you were not hurt.
- Everyday things are getting harder to manage. Ask early. Do not wait for the diary to finish.

If you fall and cannot get up

- Call 999, or use your personal alarm. If you cannot reach either, shout or bang on the wall or floor.
- Keep warm. Cover yourself with anything within reach.
- Do not force yourself to get up. Follow the call handler’s advice about moving while you wait.
- Anyone with you should not try to lift you.

My 14-day record

Start on your first day at home. Tick the things that were right for you and that you managed, with help if needed. Write “n/a” where something does not apply. This is a record, not a test.

The days do not have to look the same. If something new starts or you are clearly getting worse, use the “When to get medical help” page rather than waiting for the diary to finish.

Keep this record and take it to any follow-up appointments.

Day	Date	Got dressed	Sat out for meals	Movement as advised	Exercises as advised	How I felt, or things to ask about
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

My 14-day record (continued)

Day	Date	Got dressed	Sat out for meals	Movement as advised	Exercises as advised	How I felt, or things to ask about
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						

General information, not a personal treatment plan. Follow your own discharge advice. Prepared by Mobile Physiotherapist UK from NHS guidance. Sources checked 20 October 2026. General guidance checked by Claire Williamson, Chartered Physiotherapist, 27 October 2026. Berkshire contacts checked 16 November 2026. Free to print, copy and share.