



Swedish Civil
Contingencies
Agency



Everyday safety

Tips and advice for the elderly!

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Safety goes hand in hand with quality of life

“You can’t go around feeling scared the whole time”, many people think, and they discreetly avoid good advice. Then there are those who go around and actually are scared the whole time, often for no reason because in so many areas, it’s possible to reduce the risk of whatever is causing the fear.

Falls and other types of accident affecting older people are often closely linked to health. If both the body and the brain are well, that has a preventive effect in itself. Public health and safety efforts go hand in hand. What is good for public health, in the form of physical activity, balance training, good diet and an active social life, also reduces the risk of accidents.

We need many coordinated resources at all levels working on several fronts to improve older

people’s safety. Falls, Fire, Traffic and Crime are areas where we can often make simple changes that do a lot to improve our safety. The four sections are structured in the same way, starting with information on risks together with ways of reducing them. At the end of each section there is a brief account giving an example from real life. You will also find a list of practical contacts associated with the particular area.

Some of what we write you will certainly know already. But there may be useful ideas that we hope you will take on board – it is quite simply smart to look after yourself, and look about you. After all, safety often goes hand in hand with quality of life. And that is something we all value.

Inger Mörk, MSB

Contact for safety for the elderly



*Look after
yourself and
your nearest
and dearest.*

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We all fall down, some more easily than others



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Good walking shoes are a smart investment – and good indoor shoes with proper heels are recommended.

.....

Just imagine we looked after our bodies as well as we care for our cars. The body is our main means of transport, which takes us to places where no car can go. Every day, three people die from falls. Many of these falls would never need to happen if we were just a bit better at adopting good habits and a safe home environment.

But isn't that just part of getting older? Your balance gets a bit worse, and your strength a bit less... Actually, that isn't quite true. Of course your body changes over the years, and of course you can't stop the natural ageing process, but research has shown that many of the complaints of old age are things we ourselves can prevent with an active lifestyle.

Activity gives vitality

Our bodies are made for activity, all our lives. All of us, whatever our age, have a lot to gain from exercise. And a fit senior may well run away from an untrained teenager on the exercise track. Biological age can be influenced. With the right training you can take around 15–20 years off your biological age when it comes to your capacity for physical activity.

AN EVERYDAY TIP: stand on one leg when you brush your teeth – it's worth it!



Better balance and a stronger body

Good balance involves your eyesight, the balance organs in your ear, feeling in your skin and good joint and muscle function. Physical activity improves these different abilities and the risk of imbalance decreases as your ability to recover your balance improves. If you still fall over, your chances of surviving the fall without any serious injury will also be much greater if you have a stronger body.

For the best results...

... the physical activity should be regular and go on for a while every day. 30 minutes a day is a good start. Someone who has been sedentary for a long time may need to break up the training into several shorter spells at first.

It is good to build up, and increase the effort over time with longer walks, a faster pace, more exercises and heavier weights, for example.

Examples of good training

From our 30s onwards, the skeleton starts to lose strength. Over time, brittle bones can develop, and women are especially susceptible. Strenuous physical activity can counteract this process. Walking, running and strength training are all types of exercise that strengthen the skeleton.

Dancing, tai chi and strength training improve balance. Aquarobics and swimming are safe forms

of training for those who have balance problems. This sort of training should be supplemented with bone-strengthening exercises. Stamping on the floor is one trick. With strength training, age is irrelevant – the effect is the same in older people as it is in the young.



Balance exercises are always good as a complement to strolls and Nordic walking, for example.



*Eat fruit and
vegetables
every day.*

Steady on your feet with a good diet

Older people do not always experience hunger and thirst in the same way as younger folk. An inadequate fluid intake can cause dizziness and so increase the risk of a fall. It is good to drink something with every meal, including snacks, even if you are not thirsty.

The right food keeps your body going

The body's need for nutrition is the same whether you are young or old. A varied and nutritious diet is important.

The skeleton needs calcium, which there is a lot of in things like milk, cheese, yoghurt and cottage cheese. For a strong skeleton, you also need vitamin D. The body can produce this itself with the help of the sun's rays. However, this ability decreases with age, so as we get older it is important to take on vitamin

D in our food. Oily fish like sardines, herring and salmon are good sources of vitamin D. There is also a small amount of vitamin D in eggs and enriched milk.

To cover the body's energy and nutritional needs, it is good to eat three main meals a day; breakfast, lunch and dinner. These should be interspersed with 2-3 snacks between meals.

Involuntary weight loss may be a sign that you are getting too little to eat. Contact your GP or a dietician for help and advice on your food intake.



As we get older, our eyes need more and more light. A night light reduces the risk of a fall when you go to the bathroom in the night.

Good sleep makes for better balance

The night is the body's time to recover. That is when it is built up and repaired. A good night's sleep provides balance in both body and soul, and can combat the early morning dizziness that many people experience. 7–8 hours' sleep is enough for most adults.

Tiredness in the morning does not necessarily mean you had a bad night's sleep. If the alarm clock goes off in the middle of a phase of deep sleep, it is just a bit harder to wake up.

Fresh air, exercise and a good diet

All these factors affect your chances of sleeping well. Going to bed on a full stomach may make it harder to sleep, the same as going to bed hungry. A lighter evening meal a while before going to bed will make it easier to get to sleep.

Go easy with naps

They should not be longer than 20–30 minutes, and preferably not too late in the day. One tip is to hold a bunch of keys in your hand. If deep sleep sets in you will drop it and wake up, then you can save the deep sleep for the night-time.

TROUBLE SLEEPING?

Fixed routines make it easier to sleep. Turn down the lights. Wind down. Take a hot bath or a nice shower. A good book makes it easier to switch off. If you still can't sleep, or you wake up and can't drop off again, it's better to get up, maybe drink a glass of hot milk and read a bit more...





It is always too soon to stop exercising!

The function of several of the body's organ systems gradually diminishes with age. But even in very advanced years, you will not just retain but improve functions by regular physical activity.

Every other woman and one man in four...

... over 50 will suffer a fracture at some time in the future. Injuries from falls have become an increasing public health problem in recent years.

A fractured hip is a common result of a fall. For the individual, this sort of fracture brings both pain and reduced mobility. Half of the people who suffer a hip fracture never regain the same functional capacity they had before the fall. Fear of another fall may also restrict your life. Checking over your home

environment and keeping yourself fit can therefore prevent a lot of human suffering.

It's normal for your memory to deteriorate But if your memory problems become troublesome, it is advisable to contact your doctor. The progress of most dementia conditions can be delayed if treatment is started in time. The problem may also have a different cause that can probably be treated.

.....
Every year, almost 75,000 people are admitted to hospital after a fall. Almost 50,000 of them are 65 or older.
.....

The most important contribution to well-being

Research has shown that reduced mobility and disabilities increase significantly after the age of 75. At the same time, we know that exercise is effective at a much greater age, in the form of increased mobility and general well-being. Physical activity is actually the single most important contribution to greater well-being, all your life.

Good advice costs little

Anyone who has difficulty exercising because of joint pain, heart trouble or anything else should talk to a doctor or physiotherapist about the type of exercise that may be suitable for them. Otherwise, it can be easy to fall into a vicious circle that leads to fresh problems. You can now have exercise prescribed for you.

Your social network also means a lot

Here we find company to stimulate the intellect and activities we can do together with others. At least as important is the sense of security offered by a social network; someone who can help, someone who can keep an eye on us...

SEVERAL BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Positive effect on some 30 illnesses, including adult-onset diabetes and cardiovascular diseases
- Relieves pain
- Reduced stress and depression
- Better memory and sleep



” Exercise, fresh air and a good diet strengthen your immune defences.

Medication can affect your balance

” *Physical activity and human company can reduce the need for drugs.*

As the function of various organs changes, our sensitivity to medication also increases with age. Medicines taken for many years without any problems suddenly give us trouble. There are also drugs that have the side-effect of upsetting our balance.

Combinations of drugs may have an unwanted effect

Another dilemma is the increased medication of older people. This has made it more and more common for problems to arise from some drugs influencing the effect of others. Take note if any problems arise. Maybe the dose needs to be reduced or the medication re-assessed.

Anyone who takes multiple drugs should have *one* doctor with the *overall responsibility* for their medication. Regular check-ups to assess whether some drug should be changed, withdrawn or supplemented are one way of preventing falls.

Same medicine, different names

A large number of drugs are sold under different names, which increases the risk of an overdose. If there are a lot of drugs in your cabinet at home, possibly prescribed by different doctors, it may be necessary to check what active substances they contain. In case of doubt, it is always good to consult a doctor.

Natural remedies can influence the effect of other medicines. Always talk to your doctor before taking them.





Where we fall

At home. On a level floor. That is where most falls happen. If the door sills are an obstacle, remove them. Smooth carpets will stay in place with a non-slip underlay. Don't wax the floor, it's fine as it is. And if you fix loose wires to the wall, no-one needs to trip over them and take a tumble.



It is easy to slip on a wet floor

Non-slip bath mats are now available in all sorts of stylish colours and shapes. A handrail will make it easier to get out of the bath and may be an extra safeguard in the shower. Have soap, shampoo and towels within reach.



Have the things you need often close at hand

A cordless phone is practical. With several handsets placed around your home, it will be even easier to reach and answer the phone. It is a good idea to organise kitchen cabinets and wardrobes so the things you use often are right at the front and at a convenient height. A stable stepladder with a handrail is good to have when you need to take things down from higher up. Ask someone for help if you feel unsafe climbing up.

The right glasses for every occasion

Reading glasses affect your judgment of distance and should not be used when you are up and about. Progressive lenses may bring an increased risk of stumbling outdoors. For some people, normal glasses are better for walking.





*With exercise, my
appetite returned.*



“The fall in the kitchen was not the first”

With the curtain rod in her hands, Aili turned to take a step down from the chair, but instead of landing safely, she fell headlong.

“I hit my head on the edge of the table and landed badly on my left shoulder. I ended up being taken to hospital by ambulance.”

Aili has always been thin, and after her husband’s death, she lost a few more kilos. The issue of her weight came up during aftercare.

“I was referred to a dietician. We discussed my eating habits and concluded that I was not getting the nutrition I needed and that I was not drinking nearly enough.”

The fall in the kitchen was one of many that Aili had suffered in a short time.

“The dietician suggested my eating habits could have been a factor in losing my balance. I just thought it was one of those things; I’m no spring chicken after all,” says Aili with a laugh.

As her glasses were broken in the fall, she also had to visit the optician.

“They told me how stupid I was to go climbing on chairs with my reading glasses on. Anyway, now I’ve got a smart new pair of glasses.”

Aili changed her eating habits and started taking regular exercise.

“With exercise, my appetite returned. Now I always take a glass of water with me when I sit down to read or work on something. And so far I have stayed on my feet.”

Who can I turn to?

WHAT I NEED

Contact with a pensioners' association

CONTACT

PRO, Pensionärernas Riksorganisation
Tel. 08-701 67 00, www.pro.se

RPG, Riksförbundet Pensionärgemenskap
Tel. 08-597 604 20, www.rpg.org.se

SKPF, Svenska KommunalPensionärernas förbund
Tel. 010-442 74 60, www.skpf.se

SPF, Sveriges Pensionärsförbund
Tel. 08-692 32 50, www.spf.se

SPRF, Svenska Pensionärers Riksförbund
Tel. 08-702 28 80, www.sprf.se

To know what to do when I have taken too much medicine

Swedish Poisons Information Centre
Tel. 08-33 12 31
www.giftinformation.se

An answer to a question about care

Sjukvårdsrådgivningen (healthcare advice)
Tel. 1177, www.1177.se

Help with changing a bulb, curtains, batteries etc.

Many municipalities provide a 'fixer service' to help with these things. Call your municipality.

A place to meet other people

Contact your municipality about meeting places/seniors' centres/associations and facilities for the elderly. Parish/church.

Carer, dietician, physiotherapist Health centre/GP

Information on medicines www.kollpalakemedel.se

Ambulance, priest on call

SOS Alarm
Tel. 112



Don't let your memories go up in smoke



Things change. What worked yesterday may not work today. Every year there are 6,000 house fires in Sweden. Precious memories go up in smoke. Homes become uninhabitable, many of them for a long time, or even forever. But it is quite a simple matter to make both your home and your behaviour safer.



We all need to act as our own fire safety inspector from time to time.

Many fires start in the kitchen

They often start in a pan that boils dry. If you are unlucky, the fire may spread to the extractor fan, where it can really take hold if you have failed to wipe off old grease. Regular cleaning of the fan reduces the risk of fire, and so does keeping the stove clear of newspapers and other flammable materials. An oven monitor can help to switch off the oven if you forget about it.

Candlelight enhances the mood

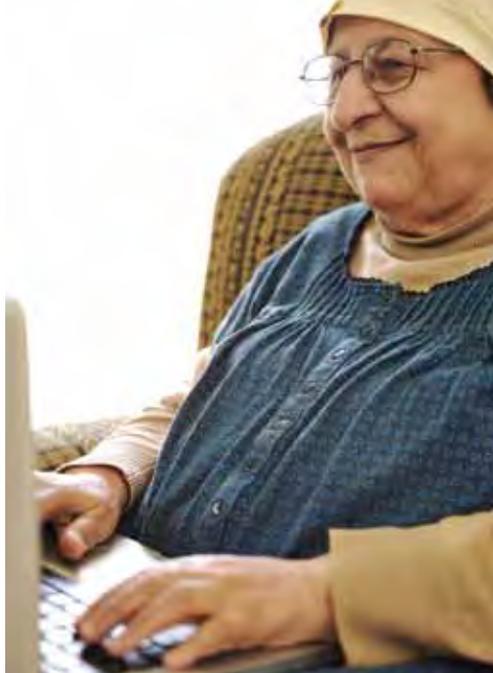
But if the candle is too close to a curtain or table decoration that catches fire easily, the mood can be just as quickly destroyed. A candlestick in a non-flammable material, at a safe distance from any objects that burn easily, is safer. Remember never to leave a candle unattended. Now there are also battery-powered lights as an alternative for those who don't want to be on the lookout all the time.

The commonest cause of fatal fires is smoking in bed

It can be easy to nod off. So you should never smoke in a place where there is a risk of going to sleep. A glass of water is good to have beside you if you should still drop a cigarette or ash. For many people, a smoking apron can provide still greater safety. It is a good idea to wet the ash before you throw it in the bin.

That old toaster...

... is suddenly over 20 years old and the cord may be worn. Then it's time to invest in a new one, and maybe to take



a look at the other appliances in the house.

A lot of lamps are very hot. So it is important for them not to risk coming into contact with anything flammable, by being covered or toppling into a bed or something like that.

Other electrical equipment can also get hot. Switch off all such equipment when it is not in use. And avoid leaving it to charge in the bed, or on a chair or sofa.

The commonest cause of fatal fires is smoking in bed.



.....

*FOR THOSE WHO DON'T HEAR TOO WELL...
... there are smoke alarms that can be
connected to a flashing light, or to a unit
with a vibrating signal. The smoke alarm
can also be connected to the panic button.*

.....



Very good to have

Most people have a smoke alarm

But what many people forget is that you need to check that it works at regular intervals, particularly if you have been away for a while. It is easy to reach the test button with something long, like a walking stick or a long shoe horn. Change the battery if necessary and try to keep a spare battery in the house.

The more the merrier

At least one smoke alarm on each floor is recommended. They should ideally be positioned in or close to bedrooms. The important thing is that the smoke alarm should be heard wherever you are in the home.

There are smoke alarms that can be connected to each other, so the alarm upstairs will go off if there is a fire in the cellar, for example. They can also be installed between neighbours.

Other equipment

A 6-kilo powder extinguisher should be part of your own fire protection, along with a fire blanket. They should be positioned so they can be reached quickly and easily when needed. It is good to learn how they work. If a fire should start sometime, every second may be precious.

SOME QUICK TIPS

- Check regularly that your smoke alarm is working
- It is good to have a hand-held fire extinguisher at home; a 6-kilo powder extinguisher is recommended
- Use a lighter for your candles; it will go out if you drop it.

Help – fire!

Save–Warn–Alarm–Extinguish

Remembering this can save both lives and possessions. Learn this line! In a stressful situation it can be hard to think clearly. If you know it there is a much better chance of doing the right thing if an accident should happen. *Save* yourself and people around you. *Warn* others who may be in danger. Raise the *alarm* by dialling 112. *Extinguish* the fire if you can do so without risk to life or health.

You can usually put out small fires yourself

The easiest way to put out a fire in a saucepan is to put a lid on it. Never try to put out a fire on the stove with water; if there is burning fat, the fire may “explode”.

You can use a fire blanket and powder extinguisher to douse fires in appliances and other things that are burning.

Smoke is lethal

Just a few breaths may be enough for a person to lose consciousness. If you cannot put out the fire, you must be sure to get to safety. On the way out it is important to close all doors on the fire, then the smoke and flames will not spread so easily.

If there is a fire on the stairs

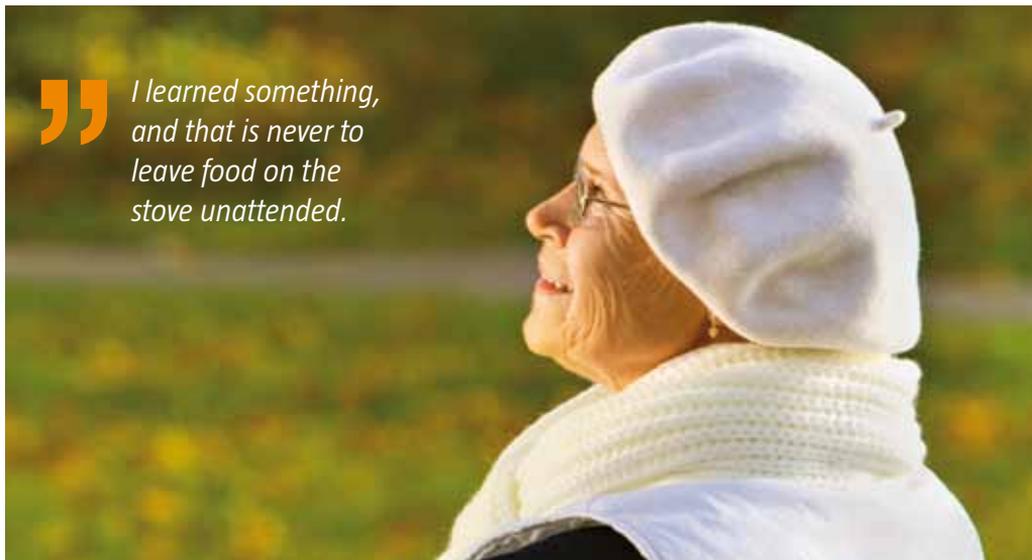
Then it is best to stay in the flat, call 112 and wait for help. A flat can usually resist fire for an hour.



IN THE RISK AREA

The risk of being killed or injured in a fire increases with age. This may be because it gets harder to detect the fire in time and deal with it. Of the 120 or so people who die in fires each year, around half are over 65.

” *I learned something, and that is never to leave food on the stove unattended.*



“How lucky I was that they were so close...”

Sonja is a sprightly 73-year-old. But since having a car accident, she has trouble getting up if she falls down, so she has a panic button linked to the home-help service. One day she was making lunch when the phone rang.

“It was my sister Sollan. We hadn’t spoken for a while and I was very happy. Sollan talked and talked and I completely forgot about the food.”

After the phone call, Sonja felt tired, dropped into an armchair and fell asleep. She did not notice that the pan was boiling dry on the stove, and she didn’t hear the smoke alarm because she had taken out her hearing aid.

The smoke detector is connected to Sonja’s panic button, so the alarm went straight to the alarm centre, which tried to contact her. When they didn’t get an answer, they sent home-help staff who were in the neighbourhood. They also called 112.

“When the home-help arrived, the pan was burning, but they turned off the oven and managed to douse the flames with my fire blanket. How lucky I was that they were so close; I hardly dare think what might have happened otherwise.”

After this incident, Sonja had an oven monitor installed. And the panic button she always carries was fitted with a vibrating signal, connected to the smoke alarm.

“I learned something, and that is never to leave food on the stove unattended. Now I also have cordless phones in several places around the flat, and always one in the kitchen.”

Who can I turn to?

WHAT I NEED

Assistance

To know more about
fire protection

To raise the fire alarm

To know more about electrical
appliances and installations

CONTACT

Municipality or county council,
via the care centre.

Emergency services in your
municipality. NB: do not use
the emergency number.

Call 112

National Electrical Safety Board
Tel. 0550-851 00



Safety in the traffic

Darkness and bad weather that blur visibility, slippery and uneven surfaces – there are many factors that affect our ability to move about safely outdoors. The positive thing is that you can avoid many of these problems by quite simple means.

The ability to leave your home to run an errand, or just to get some fresh air and exercise, is essential for an independent existence, good health and quality of life. Of course it is also an advantage to be able to go out in safety and security.

You're not there if you can't be seen!

Anyone who drives a car knows how hard it can be to see pedestrians the moment it starts to get dark. And the more “confused” the traffic situation, the easier it can be to miss someone at a crossing, half way across the road, for example. Most road accidents involving pedestrians happen in the evening in urban settings – despite low speed and well-lit streets, and despite that fact that fewer people are out and about at that time.

The solution is simple – you just have to make sure you can be seen. And keep an eye on the traffic around you.

THE BIGGEST RISK TO PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

Statistics show that it is as an unprotected road-user that you run the greatest risk of injury on the roads when you are past 65. In this age group, just over 60 percent of injuries are to pedestrians or cyclists.



Reflectors are perishable goods – replace them frequently!

The best way to be seen is to wear a reflective jacket

Reflective jackets are being worn by more and more people moving about at dusk or in the dark. Normal reflectors are most visible if they are low down and moving, i.e. low down on your arms and legs. And they are just as useful on August nights as they are in winter time.

Cycling – what does the law say?

A cycle being ridden in the dark must have a fixed white or yellow light at the front, a fixed or flashing red light at the back and amber or white reflectors on both sides. The cycle must also have a white reflector at the front and a red one at the back. Many manufacturers put these in the lights, so there is no need for separate reflectors. Fit a working bell and your cycle will be equipped according to the law.

The same legal requirements apply to electric wheelchairs, scooters and similar vehicles.

Not just master and mistress

A dog that runs off, a cyclist who doesn't see the leash in the dark, a master or mistress who doesn't react – it can all end in a nasty accident. Now there are reflective jackets for dogs too. And a reflective leash improves safety that little bit more.

CARRY A TORCH...

... if your walk takes you along a road where it is especially important to be seen clearly. If you want to have your hands free, a head torch is at least as good.



A safe journey – threats and opportunities

The ground

Every year around 150,000 people suffer injuries because of the ground outside. Many accidents are caused by slipping, but there may also be asphalt that has cracked, or slabs and kerbstones sticking up in unexpected places. Many of those who fall and hurt themselves are unfortunately fit and active older people who go out a lot.

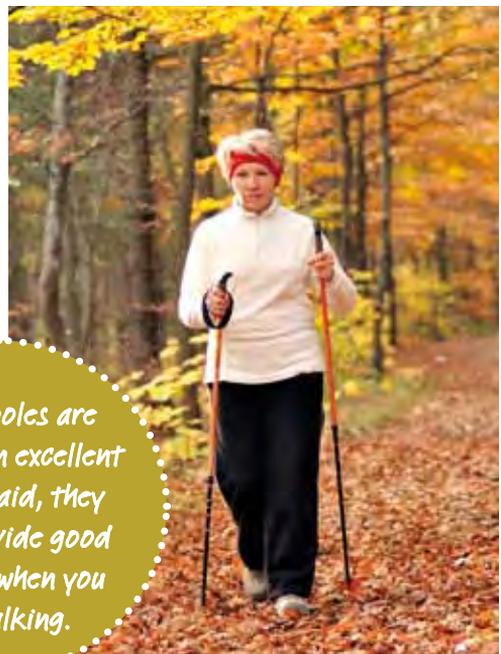
Walk more safely with the right equipment

Rain-soaked ground, wet leaves, mud, snow and ice all increase the risk of slipping. Shoes with coarse-patterned soles in good materials reduce the risk. Studded soles give even better grip on snowy and icy surfaces. As a pensioner you may also be able to allow yourself the luxury of simply waiting until the pavements are cleared and gritted before you go out.

Hiking poles are not just an excellent exercise aid, they also provide good support when you are walking. In the wintertime you swap rubber soles for crampons. The same goes for sticks and crutches. And it is equally important to change back when the snow and ice have gone.

NOT WITHOUT MY HELMET!

Cycle helmets are not a legal requirement for adults, but nowadays most people wear them as a matter of course. The safety details also include checking that the hand grips and pedals are not slippery and the chain has the right tension.



Hiking poles are not just an excellent exercise aid, they also provide good support when you are walking.

” Every year around 150,000 people suffer injuries because of the ground outside.



STUDDED SOLES SHOULD NOT BE USED INDOORS

They carry the risk of slipping on some floor coverings, and they also destroy the floor. If there is no place to sit down by the door to the local shop where you can take them off, it is good to alert the staff to the fact.

Find and report any hazards

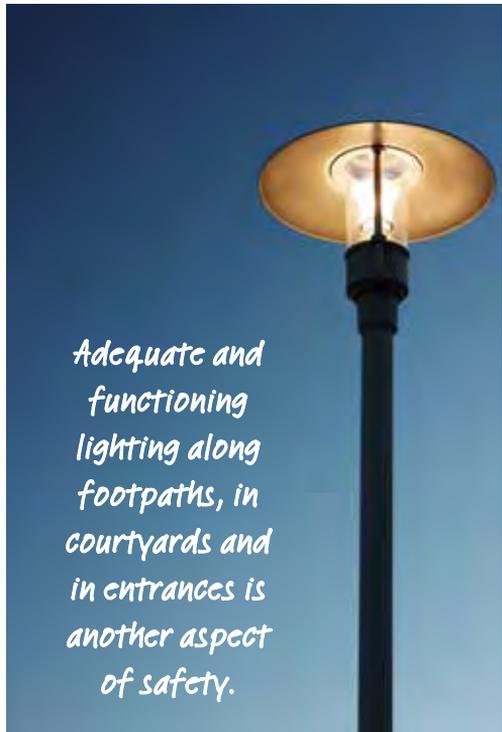
Many people share the responsibility for a safe outdoor environment; landlords, the municipality and the Swedish Transport Administration. Do not hesitate to contact them to point out things that constitute a risk to pedestrians and other road users, or to make a suggestion for improvement in general. Many things can be easily fixed by those responsible, if they only know about them. Otherwise, it may be something they can take into account in their future plans for long-term changes.

Some things to watch out for

Projecting objects that block the view and get in the way on pavements and cycle paths may constitute a risk. High hedges that block the view at exits can also be a hazard.

Separate foot and cycle paths and speed bumps at crossings improve safety on the roads. Adequate and functioning lighting along footpaths, in courtyards and in entrances is another aspect of safety.

Many older people may need places to sit down and rest their legs, which also demands attention from a safety standpoint.



Adequate and functioning lighting along footpaths, in courtyards and in entrances is another aspect of safety.



It was a blessing in disguise that I was due to see the orthopaedist.



“I was afraid the bus would move off”

It had snowed heavily in the night. The city was shrouded in a beautiful blanket of white when Josef set off early in the morning to visit the orthopaedist for his bad shoulder, accompanied by his wife Fehime.

“We live near the hospital and if it hadn’t snowed, we would have walked there, but now it seemed safest to take the bus.”

But they were unlucky that day. At the hospital bus stop, Josef got off a bit too quickly, slipped and got his foot stuck between the bus and the kerb.

“I was afraid the bus would move off. We were the last to get off.”

But the driver saw what had happened and helped Josef to get free. Leaning on Fehime, he limped into the hospital.

“Annika, my doctor, looked a bit surprised when I showed her my foot, because it was my shoulder we were

supposed to be discussing. It was a blessing in disguise that I was due to see the orthopaedist.”

Annika examined his foot and found that he had a slight sprain.

“She said I had been lucky and she was expecting a hectic day at work because of the slippery conditions.”

Annika herself had worn studded soles to work, and recommended some good models.

“It was pretty stupid of me to wear my best shoes rather than boots in the snow. Anyway, we went straight from the hospital to buy studded soles – for both of us!”

Who can I turn to?

WHAT I NEED

To report a faulty light, cracked asphalt etc.

CONTACT

The landlord, if it is in your building. The municipality, if it is in a public place.

Hiking poles

E.g. a sports shop

Studded soles

E.g. a pharmacy

To report an accident

Call 112



Put a stop to crime

Swedes think of themselves as a safe society, according to studies by the National Council for Crime Prevention. Those who feel safe also have statistics on their side – most of us are never the victims of any crime. That does not mean we should not be careful. On the contrary: taking good care of yourself helps to ensure that older people are not as vulnerable to crime as they think they are.

With good neighbours, practical aids and a lot of simple tricks, you can safeguard your home against intrusion.

The weak points in your home

Windows and balcony doors are common ways in for thieves because the locks are often inadequate. Proper locks and cotter pins or window bolts make it harder to break in.

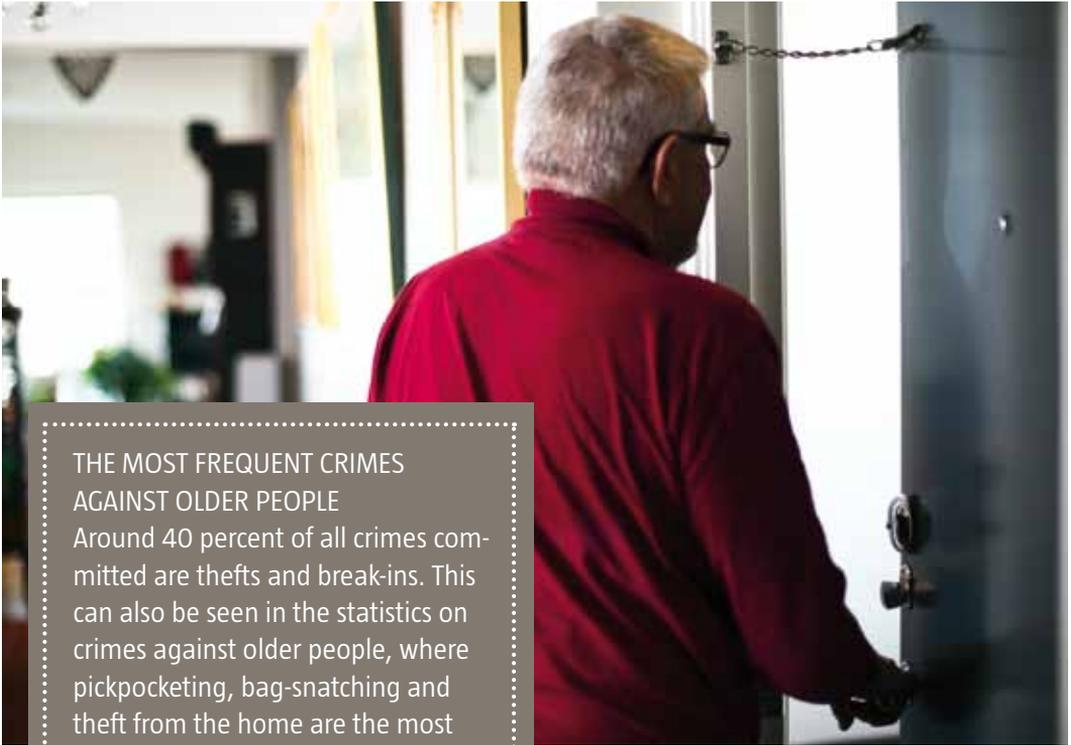
Adding a chubb lock will make your front door even more secure. But windows and chubb locks should not be locked when you are at home; you must

always be able to get out quickly if a fire starts.

A chain or bar on the door makes it safer to open the door to a stranger. A peephole may also be a good thing to have. There are now electronic peepholes that show who is ringing on a display. The display can be positioned where it fits best, such as in the bedroom.

Peepholes, chains, locks and other things should be installed by a professional locksmith.





THE MOST FREQUENT CRIMES AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE
Around 40 percent of all crimes committed are thefts and break-ins. This can also be seen in the statistics on crimes against older people, where pickpocketing, bag-snatching and theft from the home are the most frequent.

Pretending to be at home

A radio that switches on and off with a timer, washing hanging out and things lying around may make a thief unsure whether someone is at home or not. It is always good to have your mail forwarded, cancel the newspaper or have someone help to empty your mailbox. A friend or neighbour to cut the grass, clear the snow, park in your driveway or even move things around will give the impression that someone is living in the house.

There is someone in the house!

If despite all your safety precautions, you come home and suspect there is someone inside, you should not go in yourself. If you should happen to see the intruder, it is good to note down the best possible description of the person, and not to move anything he or she may

have touched – to make it easier for the police to catch the thief.

People who have the foresight to photograph their valuables are more likely to get them back, and also have a better chance of receiving full payment from their insurance company.

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A BRIGHT "STAGE" WILL SCARE OFF THE THIEF

Outside lighting by the doors, preferably with motion sensors, makes it harder for the thief to work undisturbed. Lock up or secure ladders and other equipment that could be used to get in.

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Don't get onto the fraudster's lists



Don't disclose any codes or account numbers on the telephone, by e-mail or over the Internet. No banks, or any other serious operators, have that sort of routine when contacting customers. Another good rule is never to enter into a contract on the phone if you are at all unsure. The same applies to door-to-door salespeople.

Could I have a glass of water?

Thieves often trick their way in by pretending to be someone else or by asking a favour.

Staff from the home-help and health care services should always be able to identify themselves.

You can expect to be notified in advance of any tradesmen and other service staff engaged by a landlord. Tradesmen that you use yourself should have good references and be registered for business tax, and they should be willing to sign a written contract agreeing on the price before they start work.

Do not leave handbags and other valuables within easy access in the hallway.

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It is a good idea to keep any valuables you are not using in a safe-deposit box.
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Attacks are unusual

The crime statistics show that older people run a relatively small risk of being the victims of crime. Nevertheless, that is something they often worry about. The risk of being attacked by a stranger in a public place is extremely small.

For anyone who does have the misfortune to be assaulted or injured in connection with a crime, it is important to have this documented by a doctor or the police. This documentation may be used as evidence, both in a possible trial and to obtain compensation from the insurance company.

Lethal violence is rare and most often occurs in the home. In just over 70 percent of cases, those involved are known to each other.



BE SMART IN THE CITY

- Keep your wallet in a closed bag. A good tip is to fasten your wallet to the bag with a long piece of elastic.
- Be particularly alert in crowds.
- Take out money together with someone you know.
- Never walk around with a lot of cash.
- Don't wear a gold necklace where it can be seen.
- Keep your glasses in your pocket so you can get at them without opening your bag.
- If anyone grabs your bag, let it go!
- Do not accept help from a stranger to carry your bags.



” *For me the worst thing is the feeling of being deceived.*

“Who knows what else they smuggled out in their bags?”

“I’ll be back around 11,” said Berit as she hurried out. Erik sat down at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and had just opened the newspaper when the doorbell rang.

Outside stood a guy and a girl around 30 dressed in overalls. They said they were just checking the thermostats on the elements in the building, and Erik let them in.

“I had no reason to suspect anything, they seemed both pleasant and serious. I know the landlord usually tells us when there is work to be done, but I thought we must somehow have missed it,” Erik recalls.

The two workers each inspected some of the thermostats, thanked him and left the flat.

A little later, a freshly-coiffed Berit

came home to change for the lunchtime show she was going to and discovered that her jewellery was gone, and some money and a watch were missing.

“Who knows what else they smuggled out in their bags? It’s hard to remember everything you have afterwards,” says Erik.

“It would have helped to have photos of our valuables, but we hadn’t thought of that. Berit is very sad about the jewellery that was stolen. For me the worst thing is the feeling of being deceived. How could I be so stupid? Why didn’t I call the landlord to check?”

Who can I turn to?

WHAT I NEED

To know how to protect myself against crime

CONTACT

The National Council for Crime Prevention, tel. 08-401 87 00, www.bra.se

Intrusion protection for doors and windows

Landlord, locksmith

To report an ongoing crime

Call 112

To report a crime that has already been committed

Police, tel. 114 14. Some crimes can be reported via www.polisen.se

Help, advice or someone to talk to about threats imes against myself or someone close to me

Brottsofferjouren (victim support organisation); you can find the nearest office via www.boj.se
Switchboard: 0200-21 20 19

Kvinnofridslinjen (helpline for women), tel 020-50 50 50, www.kvinnofridslinjen.se

Social emergency service in your municipality

To learn how to protect myself against robbery

Swedish Theft Prevention Association, tel. 0771-773 773 www.stoldskyddsforeningen.se

Help in dealing with salespeople

Swedish Consumer Agency, tel. 0771-42 33 00 www.konsumentverket.se
Consumer adviser in your municipality

To block my My bank bank card



MSB – The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

The MSB works with other agencies to enhance the capacity of individuals and the community to prevent, manage and learn from emergencies and crises. The MSB operates by awareness-raising, support, training, practice, regulation, supervision and its own day-to-day work in close collaboration with municipalities, county councils, authorities, companies and organisations to achieve increased safety and security at all levels of society – from the local to the global.

DinSäkerhet.se

DinSäkerhet.se is the MSB web site covering risks and security for private individuals. This web site contains information, films, checklists and tips relating to your security and health. For more information, visit DinSäkerhet.se/65plus.

ICE* – Good to know if something happens to you

Enter your next of kin under 'ICE' in you mobile phone contacts. Then they can be contacted quickly if you should be found seriously injured or sick and unable to talk. If your phone has to be unlocked with a password every time you use it, this function will not work.

How to enter 'ICE':

1. Create a new contact in your address book.
2. Type in 'ICE' followed by your relationship to the person, e.g. spouse, then their name and telephone number.
3. Save the new contact.

*ICE = In case of emergency

For more information, go to DinSäkerhet.se/ICE

Call 113 13 – in the event of a serious accident or emergency

From March 2013 onwards there will be a new national information line. You will be able to call 113 13 to pass on or obtain information on a serious accident or crisis in the community. This does not replace 112, which will still be the number to call in an emergency.



Swedish Civil
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