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Millercare offers tips to prevent onset of deep vein thrombosis

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We're set to have one of the coldest Januarys in years. As winds batter the UK, it can be tempting to stay indoors and hide from the chill, particularly for the elderly. Cosying up under a blanket and sitting by the radiator might be one way of keeping warm, but it could put you at risk of serious illness.

This winter, mobility aids specialists Millercare are raising awareness of circulatory health issues that plague the UK public in colder periods. Cold weather and inactivity are a potentially lethal combination. Slowing our circulation, a lack of mobility in winter could lead to numerous issues, including slow healing of wounds, swelling and deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

DVT affects 1 in 1,000 people in the UK. Whilst you might be able to see it coming from pain and swelling around the calf area, there's also a chance that no symptoms will show at all.

So, how can we prevent the onset of DVT?

1. **Get out of bed as soon as possible** - Get up and move around after a night of sleep, instead of lying in. Whilst it's tempting to stay in the warmth, you need to get on your feet after minimal movement throughout the night.

2. **Watch out for swelling** - Compression socks are an absolute must for the elderly and don't have to be worn exclusively on long-haul flights. You should also seek a wide-fit slipper if you find your feet swell over your shoes.

3. **Massaging** - Focusing on the back of your legs, you can instantly stimulate the blood flow in the targeted area. However, you should seek advice from a professional first. Osteopath & Clinic Founder of TotalHealthClinics, Ben Barker, says:

Massages can be particularly effective for improving circulation because they can stimulate both parts of the circulatory system; the cardiovascular and the lymphatic. However, if you're already suffering from DVT, massages can be damaging and aren't recommended.

4. Ben also suggests **hydrotherapy**: "Using alternative submission into both hot and cold water, the blood vessels will be consistently stimulated. The blood will rush to the skin in order to regulate the temperature and then be forced back when hot water is introduced." A foot bath could be used to mimic this sensation in the home.

5. **Move your feet whilst sitting** - Ben explains:

The deep veins of the lower legs weave themselves around the calf muscles and each time you take a step; the calf muscles squeeze the blood back up the leg. This is increased if you have a good walking action, with a full 'heel-toe' action. The blood passes through a one-way valve that stops the blood falling back down. So, the best tip for healthy circulation is to make sure your calf pump works well.

Anyone can do this from the comfort of their own chair with the help of a [Happy Legs Seated Walking Machine](#). Perfect for the elderly who cannot go out to exercise, this handy piece of equipment keeps your legs active from the comfort of your own chair. Moving your feet gently in a step-by-step formation and mimicking the body's natural gait cycle, this gadget is clinically proven to aid blood circulation and gives you the much needed exercise you might not otherwise get in winter.

6. **Watch your diet** - If you're overweight, you could be at higher risk of suffering DVT. A little light exercise and controlled portions of food can help you reduce your risk.

7. **Stop smoking** - It can be harder for the elderly to quit as they're likely to have developed their habit over the years. However, the toxic chemicals in cigarettes can thicken the blood and heighten your risk. Cutting down gradually could help.

8. **Keep warm** - Whilst it may sound like an obvious one, keeping warm is imperative for the elderly. Microwaveable bean bags and hot water bottles will ensure your feet don't get cold and will stimulate the blood flow to your legs.

Stewart Clough from Millercare says:

Winter is a difficult time for many vulnerable people in the UK. If you know someone in need, it's best to keep a closer eye on them at this time of year and encourage them out of the house if possible. If not, regular light exercise and massaging is imperative to combat the effects of immobility. Even those who can't get up and about much can ensure they're keeping active with handy tech such as seated walking machines. Sometimes DVT shows no signs at all before it's too late, so it's much better to be safe and not sorry.

Source:

[MillerCare](#)
