



Control Your Inner Klutz

Writer **Leslie Goldman**'s life has been a blooper reel of slips and spills. Fear not: There's hope at the end of her—and your—black-and-blue rainbow.

Have you ever set your wrist on fire by knocking a candle into bed during sex? Or concussed yourself by careening your bicycle into a mailbox? Well, I have. Because I [*thwacks self in eye while stuffing cape*] am Clumsy Girl.

Recently, after falling off the couch for no reason (again), I began to

wonder: Why am I the opposite of what Ludacris rapped about—a lady in the bed but a freak in the streets?

Clumsiness is basically “a mismatch between your intended movement and the movement you actually make,” says Emily Bloesch, PhD, an assistant professor of psychology at Central Michigan University who studies hand-eye

coordination. It worsens with age (ugh), and some of us may be hard-wired to take spills. One of every 29 people has a 50 percent greater chance of experiencing an accident requiring medical attention, according to *Accident Analysis & Prevention* (a.k.a. klutz porn).

What makes someone like me that unlucky 1 in 29? “We all have a bubble, a sense of personal space that usually extends as far as you can reach your arms,” Bloesch explains. When something (say, an overhead baggage compartment) enters your bubble, areas of the brain that tell it to pay extra attention are signaled. But for unknown reasons, some people are just lousier at bubble monitoring.

Stumble sisters, take heart. These strategies can help you flop (and fall, and bump) less.

Check the Calendar

Progesterone, which causes muscles to relax, peaks just before your period hits, which is why you may feel off-balance at that time, says neuropsychiatrist Louann Brizendine, MD, founder of the Women's Mood and Hormone Clinic at the University of California at San Francisco. Be extra careful during your workouts, and cut back on salty grub; it can cause swelling in your hands and feet, contributing to the clumsies.

Mono-Task

Attempting to do too many things at a time shifts attention outside our bubble. Plus, multitaskers are more susceptible to distraction. Note to self: Stop shoving nut bars in your mouth and texting while rushing to appointments.

Be Single-Minded

That one activity you're doing? Do it with intent, says Susan Krauss Whitbourne, PhD, a professor emerita of psychological and brain sciences at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. If you're brewing a cup of tea, count the spoonfuls of loose leaves and listen to the water pouring into the mug. If you catch yourself daydreaming, stop and bring your mind back to the tea.

Drop Everything (Carefully) and Read This

Clumsiness can be a sign that information isn't being passed smoothly between the eyes and the brain or, in rare cases, a red flag for serious conditions like diabetes or coordination-sabotaging neurological disorders like multiple sclerosis. If you notice yourself tripping or losing balance much more often than usual, check in with your doc.