Can a wearable alarm help when someone cannot reach a phone?

Yes, a wearable alarm can help when someone cannot reach a phone. That is its core purpose. When a person falls, feels unwell, or finds themselves in a situation where they cannot move or speak clearly, a phone may be out of reach or too difficult to use. A wearable alarm worn on the wrist or as a pendant provides a way to call for help without needing to dial, unlock a screen, or even speak.

What makes a wearable alarm different from a phone?

A phone is a general-purpose device. To call for help, you need to locate it, unlock it, open the dialler or contacts, and either tap a number or use voice commands. If you have fallen and cannot get up, the phone might be across the room. If you are disoriented or in pain, navigating a screen can be impossible. A wearable alarm is designed for exactly these moments. It is always on your body, and activating it usually requires a single press of a button.

Many wearable alarms also include automatic fall detection. This means if the device senses a fall and you do not move for a set period, it can send an alert on its own. That feature is important for people who might be unconscious or too injured to press the button. A phone cannot do that unless you have already set up a specific app and keep it running, which drains the battery and still depends on the phone being on you.

What happens when you press the SOS button?

Pressing the SOS button on a wearable alarm typically triggers a call to a response centre or a pre-set emergency contact. The device may have two-way communication built in, so you can speak to the responder through the alarm itself. You do not need to hold a phone to your ear. The responder can hear you, assess the situation, and send help. If you cannot speak, they can still see your GPS location and dispatch assistance.

Some systems also send a text message to family members or carers with the wearer's location. This means even if the person cannot describe where they are, the alert carries that information automatically. For someone living alone or spending time in the garden, garage, or a remote part of the house, this can make the difference between a quick response and a long delay.



When a phone is not enough

There are several common scenarios where a phone is not a reliable way to call for help:

- **Falls:** A fall can knock a phone out of reach or damage it. The person may be lying on the floor, unable to stand or crawl to where the phone is.

- **Medical emergencies:** A heart attack, stroke, or seizure can make it impossible to dial or speak. The alarm can be triggered by the fall detector or by a family member nearby.
- **Confusion or memory loss:** Someone with dementia or cognitive decline may not remember how to use a phone in a crisis. A wearable alarm with a single button is simpler to operate.
- **Hearing or vision impairment:** Reading a phone screen or hearing a dial tone can be difficult. The alarm's two-way communication is designed to be loud and clear.

In each of these situations, a wearable alarm offers a direct, reliable path to help that does not depend on the person's ability to use a phone.

Who benefits most from a wearable alarm?

Older adults who live independently are the most common users, but anyone with a health condition that increases the risk of falls or sudden illness can benefit. People who spend time alone at home, in the garden, or while exercising may also find a wearable alarm reassuring. Carers and family members often feel more at ease knowing their loved one can call for help without needing a phone.

The device is not a replacement for a phone in everyday life. It is a backup for emergencies. For routine calls, checking messages, or browsing the internet, a phone remains essential. But for the specific purpose of summoning help when you cannot reach a phone, a wearable alarm is a dedicated tool that does one thing well.

How does it work day to day?

Wearable alarms are designed to be worn continuously. They are usually water-resistant, so you can wear them in the shower or bath, where many falls occur. The battery lasts several days or longer, and the device charges on a simple dock or cable. Some models also include a base unit that extends the range around the home.

When you wear the alarm, it is always ready. You do not need to remember to carry it or check its charge daily. The automatic fall detection works in the background, monitoring movement patterns and sudden impacts. If you trip on a step, slip on a wet floor, or lose your balance, the device may detect the fall before you even realise you need help.



For people who are active and want to maintain their independence, this kind of protection can be a practical choice. It allows them to continue living in their own home, going for walks, and doing daily tasks without constant worry.

What about false alarms?

Automatic fall detection can sometimes be triggered by a sudden movement that is not a fall, such as dropping the device or sitting down heavily. Most systems have a short delay before sending the alert, giving you time to cancel it if it was a mistake. Two-way communication also lets you tell the responder that everything is fine. This trade-off between sensitivity and false alarms is common, and most users find it acceptable because the alternative is missing a real emergency.

Some wearable alarms also allow you to set a schedule or a quiet mode, so you are not disturbed by false alerts during the night. The technology continues to improve, and newer models are better at distinguishing between a fall and a non-fall event.

Choosing a wearable alarm

When looking at options, consider the following features:

- **Fall detection:** Does it work automatically, or do you need to press a button?

- **Two-way communication:** Can you speak through the device itself?
- **GPS location:** Does the alert include your location?
- **Battery life:** How often does it need charging?
- **Water resistance:** Can you wear it in the shower?

Some devices also connect to a response network that is staffed 24/7. Others send alerts directly to family or neighbours. The best choice depends on your living situation, health needs, and personal preference.

One example of a wearable alarm designed for older New Zealanders is familyr.co.nz, which offers automatic fall detection, GPS location, SOS alerts, two way voice communication, and no monthly fees. This kind of device is built to be worn daily and provides a direct link to help when a phone is not an option.



The key point is that a wearable alarm fills a gap that a phone cannot cover. It is always on your person, activates with a single press, and can work even if you cannot speak. For anyone who lives alone, has a medical condition, or simply wants peace of mind, it is a practical and reliable solution. It does not replace a phone for everyday communication, but for emergencies, it is a dedicated tool that can make all the difference.

If you or someone you care about is at risk of falling or has a health condition that could suddenly require help, consider a wearable alarm. It is a small device that can provide a large sense of security, knowing that help is always just a button press away. For more information on how such a device works and what to look for, you can visit familyr.co.nz to see the features available.