

Tips to Prevent Falling

Check for Safety: A Checklist

Each year, **a lot of** people fall down at home. Many of them get badly hurt or become disabled as a result. Falls are often due to hazards around the house that are easy to fix. Use this checklist to see if you have any hazards around your house. If you do, these tips can help fix the problem. You may want to ask a family member or friend to help you make your home safer and easier to get around.

FLOORS — Look at the floor in each room

Q: When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

Ask someone to move the furniture so you have a clear path.

Q: Do you have rugs on the floor?

Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so that the rugs won't slip.

Q: Are there papers, books, towels, shoes, boxes, blankets, or other objects on the floor?

Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor so that you do not trip and fall.

Q: Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, phone, or other cords)?

Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them.

STAIRS AND STEPS — Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.

Q: Are there papers, shoes, books or other objects on the stairs?

Move things off the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs so that you do not trip and fall.

Q: Are some steps broken or uneven?

Fix loose or uneven steps.

Q: Has the stairway light bulb burned out?

Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.

Q: Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

Q: Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?

Fix loose handrails or have new ones put in. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.



KITCHEN — Look at your kitchen and eating area.

Q: Are the things you use often on high shelves?

Move items in your cabinets where you can easily reach them. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).

Q: Is your step stool unsteady?

If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

BATHROOMS — Look at all your bathrooms.

Q: Is the tub or shower floor slippery?

Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.

Q: Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet?

Have a carpenter put grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.

BEDROOMS — Look at all your bedrooms.

Q: Is the light near the bed hard to reach?

Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

Q: Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

Put in a night light so you can see where you're walking. Some night lights go on by themselves after dark.

Other Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls

- Exercise regularly. Exercise makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Have your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Improve the lighting in your home. Put in brighter light bulbs.
- It's safest to have uniform lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up.

