



Home Alone Connection™

Fall Prevention Checklist



FALL PREVENTION

Falls put you at risk of serious injury.

You can reduce your risk of falling with these fall-prevention measures.

Your odds of falling each year after age 65 are about one in three. Many of these falls can seriously injure a person and some are disabling. Falls can lead to a tragic loss of an older person's independence and mobility. Falls are the leading cause of injury and injury-related death among older adults. You're more likely to fall as you get older because of common, age-related physical changes and medical conditions. Most falls occur at home and most fractures result from a fall at home.

Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home. Simple modifications to the interior of your home can cut by one half your risk of falling. The checklist asks about hazards found in each room of your home. For each hazard, the checklist tells you how to fix the problem and where necessary, install safety devices.

REMOVE HOME HAZARDS

Many accidents can be prevented by changes in furniture arrangements and housekeeping. Lighting can greatly reduce your risk of an accident. As part of your fall-prevention measures, take a look around you — your living room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, hallways and stairways may be filled with booby traps. Clutter can get in your way, but so can the decorative accents you add to your home. To make your home safer and reduce your chances of falling, follow these tips:

FLOORS – look at the floors in each room.

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

Move furniture so all walk ways are clear.

Q: Are there throw rugs on the floor?

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

Use nonskid floor wax.

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

Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

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

Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so they can't be tripped over. If needed,

STAIRS AND STEPS – look at the stairs and steps both inside and outside your home.

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

Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

Q: Are some steps broken or uneven?

Repair loose, wooden step boards and carpeting right away.

Q: Are your steps carpeted?

Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet that is (10 mm, 3/8 inch thick or more) and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

Q: Are step treads loose or torn?

Fix tread coverings securely; coverings must be tight against the nosings.

Put nonslip treads on each bare-wood step.

Q: Are your step nosing distinctly visible ?

Mark nosings permanently (not with tape) if they are not distinctly visible. Note that a painted stripe even works very well, and looks good on carpet.

Q: Are you missing a light over the stairway?

Have an electrician put in an over head light at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Q: Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (only at the top or at the bottom of the stairs)?

Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs.

HANDRAILS – all steps should have handrails.

Q: Are there handrails on the stairs?

There should be handrails on both sides of the stairs and aand be sure to use them.

Check to see that handrails are not loose and secure to walls and posts. You should be able to bear your entire weight on the handrail without damaging the handrail.



Q: Are you missing a light over the stairway?

Have an electrician put in an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Q: Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (only at the top or bottom ?

Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of 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. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).

Q: Do you use a step stool and is it steady/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.

Q: Is floor clear of throw rugs?

Remove rugs. Use nonskid floorwax.



LIVING AREA – light up your living space.

As you get older, less light reaches the back of your eyes where you sense color and motion. So keep your home brightly lit with 100-watt bulbs or higher to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see.

1/3 of all falls experienced by older adults can be attributed to environmental hazards within the home.

Don't use bulbs that exceed the wattage rating on lamps and lighting fixtures, however, since this can present a fire hazard. Also:

- ❖ Arrange furniture to create clear pathways between rooms. Do not sit in a chair or on a sofa that is so low it is difficult to stand up.
- ❖ Make light switches more easily accessible in rooms. Make a clear path to the switch if it isn't right near the room entrance. Consider installing glow-in-the-dark or illuminated switches.
- ❖ Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- ❖ Turn on the lights before going up or down stairs. This might require installing switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- ❖ Store flashlights in easy-to-find places in case of power outages.

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.

Place a slip-resistant rug adjacent to the bathtub for safe exit and entry.

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.



❖ Mount a liquid soap dispenser on the bathtub/shower wall.

❖ Use a sturdy, plastic seat in the bathtub if you are unsteady or if you cannot lower yourself to the floor of the tub.

❖ Stabilize yourself on the toilet by using either a raised seat or a special toilet seat with armrests.

Statistics show that 20% to 30% of those who have a fall will suffer moderate to severe injuries such as hip fractures or head traumas. Two-thirds of those who fall, will fall again within six months.

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 nightlight so you can see where you're walking. Some nightlights go on by themselves after dark.

❖ Keep a telephone near your bed.

❖ Sleep on a bed that is easy to get into and out of.