



Preventing Falls in the Home



Falls can be a serious problem – they are a major cause of injury, restricted mobility and loss of independence. Many falls are preventable. Some things you can do to prevent falls include:

- Maintain as much strength and coordination as possible
- Take your medications as prescribed by your physician
- Eat properly and exercise regularly
- Look around your home for hazards that could lead to a fall.
Some examples and suggestions are listed below.



Tips for Making You and Your Home Safer

General Safety Tips

- If you live alone, stay in contact with a relative or neighbor on a daily basis
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Keep rooms and hallways free of clutter
- If you use a walker, do not carry items. Use a walker basket, bag or rolling cart.
- Remove all electrical and telephone cords from walkways
- Watch out for small pets, which tend to get underfoot and cause you to trip or fall
- Keep newspapers and magazines off the floor
- Pick up all scatter/throw rugs to prevent tripping and falls
- Tape down the edges of area rugs or loose carpeting to prevent your walker/crutches from getting caught or tangled
- Have emergency phone numbers programmed on your phone and/or written on or next to your phone. The emergency number for most communities is 911.

- Keep a phone within reach of your bed and chair in case of an emergency
- Use cordless telephones

Shoes

- Wear sturdy shoes with non-skid soles
- Avoid wearing open-toed or slip-on shoes
- Don't walk around in socks or stockings on bare floors

Bathroom

- Install grab bars in the tub and next to toilet
- Place a bath bench or chair in the bathtub/shower
- To prevent slipping, place a non-slip rubber mat or attach nonskid decals or strips on the tub or shower floor
- Put a non-skid mat near the tub and toilet
- Always make sure the floor is dry

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Tips for Making You and Your Home Safer *(Continued)*

Kitchen

- Never stand on a chair to reach a shelf – use a sturdy step stool with handrails
- Organize frequently-used items so they are easy to get to without having to reach high or bend. Items used routinely can be left on the bathroom and kitchen counter tops, or placed on lower shelves.
- Wipe up spills/clean up broken glass immediately
- Use non-skid floor cleaner instead of wax

Stairways

- Keep stairways well lit
- Install railings. It is best to have railings on both sides of the steps if possible.
- Keep stairways clear and carpeting well secured
- Apply a non-slip surface to stairs without carpeting
- Take your time going up and down and never leave anything on the stairs

Bedroom

- Put a light switch at the door to prevent accidents in a dark room
- Avoid hazardous placement of furniture
- Lamp or light switches should be within reach of the bed
- Keep a phone within reach of your bed or close to the floor in case of emergency

- Avoid changing position quickly. When getting out of bed or a chair, stand for a moment to make sure you are not dizzy. If dizziness does not clear, sit down.

Closet

- Do not stack items high on shelves; make sure all items are stored securely
- Store heavy boxes on the floor where they may be moved and reached safely. Do not stack heavy boxes.

Outdoors

- Have someone steady the ladder if you must climb to reach something
- Wear non-slip shoes if you must stand on wet surfaces
- Remove hazardous obstacles from yard, entrances and garage

Lighting

- Make sure your house is well lit, and do not exceed recommended wattage for light fixtures
- Install motion or light-activated night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and any hallways you might use in the night



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