

Check for Safety: Home Fall Prevention Checklist



Falls at Home: Your House

Every year, thousands of older Americans fall at home. Many of them are seriously injured and some are disabled. 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 the home.

Floors: Look at the floor in each room

- When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture or step around wires or cords?
 - ✓ Move the furniture to clear the path. Tape cords to the wall so you cannot trip.
- Are there papers, books, towels, shoes, boxes or other objects on the floor?
 - ✓ Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

Stairs and Steps: Look at the stairs you use inside and outside your home.

- Are some steps broken, uneven or have torn carpeting?
 - ✓ Fix loose or uneven steps. Make sure carpet is firmly attached to each step.
- Do you have enough light over the stairway?
 - ✓ Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Kitchen: Look at your kitchen and eating area

- Are the things you use often on high shelves?
 - ✓ Move items in your cabinets and keep things used often on lower shelves.
- Is your step stool unsteady?
 - ✓ If you must use a step stool, use one with a bar to hold onto. Never use a chair.

Bathrooms: Look at all your bathrooms

- 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.
- Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet?
 - ✓ Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub and next to the toilet.

Bedrooms: Look at all your bedrooms

- Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?
 - ✓ Put in a night-light to see where you're walking.
- Do you use the bathroom in the middle of the night?
 - ✓ Consider putting a commode near your bed.

Other Tips:

- Wear shoes both inside and outside. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Do exercises that improve your balance and make your legs stronger
- Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and update your glasses.

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Falls at Home: Your Body

Physical changes to your body happen as we age, and by the time we are in our 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond, things are not as easy as they once were. Vision, hearing, sleep, diet and other medical concerns can make balance and gait more unsteady. This checklist will help you be more alert to physical changes and how you can respond to them.

Vision:

- Make sure to wear your glasses as prescribed by your eye doctor.
- Quickly report any changes to your vision to your doctor.

Strength:

- Try to be active during the day—walking is a great way to build up your muscles.
- Get out of bed daily.
- Do home exercises as prescribed by your doctor or therapist.

Sleep:

- Report changes to your normal sleep pattern, including an inability to sleep.

Heart Problems:

- Call 911 immediately if you have any signs of chest pain, shortness of breath, or dizziness.

Diet:

- Remember to eat healthy and drinking fluids every day.
- Stick to the doctor's orders if you follow a special diet.
- Report any changes in eating or drinking to your doctor.
- Alcohol can impair an older person differently. Make sure to limit your intake of alcohol.

Bladder Issues:

- Put a commode near your bed.
- Having a nightlight will make it easier to look around when in a darkened room.
- Don't be shy to ask for help.

Blood Pressure (High and Low):

- Sit up slowly after you've been laying down.
- Report any headaches or dizziness to your doctor.

Medications:

- Always make sure to review all your medications with your doctor, even over the counter drugs.
- Be sure to report any unusual side effects to your doctor immediately.

* Content summarized from information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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