



A Guide to **Fall Prevention**



Let's start talking about living.[®]

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Around the House

As we age, balance becomes a significant issue due to a variety of factors, including physical weakness, medications and cognitive or visual impairment. Ideally, a source of comfort for us, our home can become hazardous without a fall-preventive strategy. Right at Home can assess your house for anything that might be a health risk. In addition to a professional home safety check, you can increase your safety by:

- ▶ Finding someone to check on you regularly
- ▶ Discussing medications with your physician
- ▶ Establishing light-exercise routines
- ▶ Scheduling vision checks
- ▶ Checking their balance
- ▶ Ensuring adequate lighting throughout home, especially in high traffic areas
- ▶ De-cluttering the home of any loose items such as rugs or electrical cords

95%

of all hip fractures are caused by falling*

*National Council on Aging



The Bedroom

Getting Out of Bed, Reaching/Bending For Closet Items and Getting Up From Chairs

Risk Factors	
➤ Poor Lighting	➤ Uneven or loose flooring
➤ Electrical cords across the floor	➤ Decorative pillows and oversized bedding
➤ Beds/chairs that don't support safe egress	➤ Bed skirts or other items that hang low
➤ Obstacles in pathways	➤ Sliding throw rugs
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure a light is within easy arm's reach of the bed, and use nightlights to illuminate the path from the bed to the bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid rearranging bedroom furniture so people with limited vision do not stumble over objects and fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide bright light making it easier to avoid obstacles and furnishings	<input type="checkbox"/> Rearrange lights and electronics along the walls and out of pathways
<input type="checkbox"/> Remove clutter so paths are wide, straight and clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove throw rugs from pathways or secure them with non-slip backing
<input type="checkbox"/> Position closet shelves between waist and shoulder high to avoid excessive bending/reaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure proper bed height (when sitting on edge of bed, your knees should be 90 degrees with both feet flat on floor)
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide stable chairs with sturdy armrests to help those who are weak	<input type="checkbox"/> Other



1/3

of aged adults fall each year, and among older adults, falls are the leading cause of both FATAL and nonfatal injuries*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



The Bathroom

Getting In and Out of the Tub and Shower

Risk Factors	
➤ Slippery floor surfaces	➤ Poor lighting (especially at night)
➤ Slippery hand-support surfaces (top of sink)	➤ Bathroom door opens inward (difficult to access fallen elder)
➤ Towel bars used for balance support	
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of non-slip tiles and removal or rugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove door locks
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace towel bars with grab bars (color contrast)	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove all cords and loose wiring from walkway
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase general and task lighting, including floor lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> If plumbing allows, add hand-held shower
<input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom door opens outwards or install sliding pocket door	



Bathroom

Moving About

Risk Factors	
➤ Slippery floor surfaces	➤ Towels or slippery rugs on floor
➤ Lack of supportive grab bars	➤ Stepping in and out of tub or shower onto slippery surface
➤ Towel bars used as a grab bar	
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grab bars with color contrast	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower chair/transfer bench
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-slip mats/decals/strips on floor, in tub and shower	<input type="checkbox"/> Wall-attached soap/shampoo dispensers

Bathroom

Moving About

Risk Factors	
➤ Nighttime toileting	➤ Hurrying to the toilet
➤ Poor lighting	
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet grab bars (bars that attach to toilet are preferable to wall-attached bars for those with good arm strength)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bedside commode
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet riser to make it easier for those with decreased arm strength to stand up	<input type="checkbox"/> Nightlights or floor lighting between bed and bathroom
<input type="checkbox"/> Nightlights inside and outside the bathroom	

Hallways

Walking



Risk Factors

- Poor lighting
- Obstacles in pathways
- Sliding throw rugs
- Upended carpet edges
- Electrical cords across the hallway floor
- Handrails absent or handrails that don't support walking balance

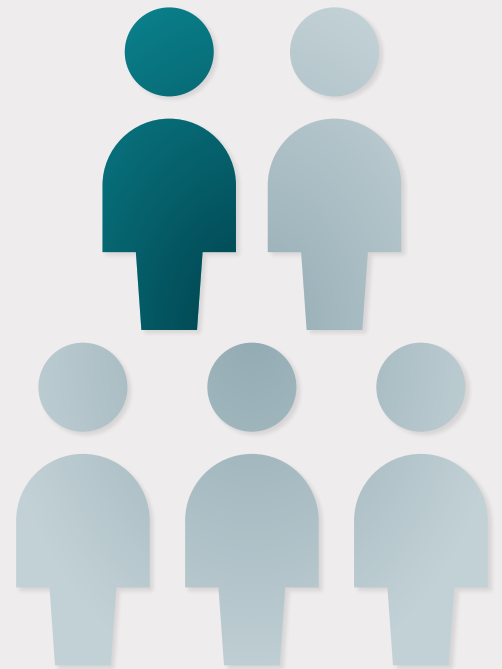
Prevention

- Rearrange lights along the walls and out of pathways
- Remove clutter or furnishings in pathways
- Remove or secure throw rugs with non-slip backing
- Provide bright lighting making it easier to avoid obstacles
- Install sturdy handrails for balance support
- Repair any loose or uneven flooring and eliminate raised thresholds

1/5

falls result in serious injury.

*National Council on Aging



The Living Room

Getting up from sofas and chairs

Risk Factors	
➤ Sofas and soft chairs don't support safe transition	➤ Upended carpet edges
➤ Smooth, slippery floors such as vinyl or wood	➤ Electrical cords across the floor
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rearrange lights and electronics along the walls and out of pathways	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove sliding throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing
<input type="checkbox"/> Install floor lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Tape down or mend upended carpet edges
<input type="checkbox"/> Remove clutter	<input type="checkbox"/> Create wide, straight and clear paths
<input type="checkbox"/> Relocate low-lying tables that may be difficult to see	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide sofas with armrests to support safe transitions



Steps

Walking up and down steps

Risk Factors	
➤ Lack of handrail support	➤ Carrying loads, unable to see steps
➤ Lack of lighting	➤ Wearing socks, making it easy to slip on steps
➤ Steps/step coverings in poor repair	➤ Not using handrails
➤ Hurrying up/down steps	➤ Other
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Install rounded handrails on both sides of steps that extend beyond top and bottom step so you know you are on solid footing	<input type="checkbox"/> Repair faulty steps and loose carpet
<input type="checkbox"/> Install brighter or additional stairway lighting and check for shadows that may cause visual confusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Install carpet or non-slip rubber treads on each step
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide lighting at the top and bottom of steps where most falls occur	<input type="checkbox"/> Change potentially accident-prone stairway activity (e.g., grasp handrails)
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider installing stair lights to illuminate the path	<input type="checkbox"/> Wear supportive footwear with slip-resistant soles
<input type="checkbox"/> Relocate low-lying tables that may be difficult to see	

The Kitchen

Reaching and bending for objects on shelves, slipping on wet flooring and getting up from kitchen chairs that slide or aren't equipped with arm-rest support

Risk Factors	
➤ Too high or low shelf and cabinet heights	➤ Objects on high shelves and cabinets
➤ Slippery floor surfaces	➤ Climbing on unsteady stools and chairs to obtain items
➤ Unstable chairs	
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Place a water-absorbent, non-skid mat in front of the sink	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean up spills immediately
<input type="checkbox"/> Use kitchen chairs with arms to allow you to sit and stand up more easily	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay off freshly mopped floors
<input type="checkbox"/> Never keep wheeled chairs in the kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove sliding throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing
<input type="checkbox"/> Store frequently-used and heavy items within easy reach in a cabinet or shelf between your waist and shoulder	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help whenever possible with tasks like changing light bulbs and retrieving things from high shelves rather than relying on the step stool
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider using a Lazy Susan if cabinet/shelf space is limited	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using step stools but use a sturdy step stool with a handle for balance support when necessary
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide adequate lighting	

70% of falls occur on hard surfaces*

*Outdoor Falls Among Middle-Aged and Older Adults: A Neglected Public Health Problem | www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1483851/



Outside

Walking Outside

Risk Factors	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneven sidewalks and street surfaces, curbs and slippery surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Parking lots and garages with short curbs placed at the end of parking spaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Porches with slippery surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor outdoor lighting
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks can have uneven surfaces and wet grass	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision problems or glare from sun
Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Install good lighting on stairs and walkways	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure steps, patios and porches are maintained to avoid loose or broken boards and uneven surface
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate lighting on perimeter of house	<input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of changes in terrain such as steps, holes, uneven areas and obstacles in pathways
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover walk areas such as porches and steps with weatherproof and textured paint for more traction	<input type="checkbox"/> Check the height of curbs and steps before stepping up on them or down from them. Curbs with inclines or cutaways for bikes can be misleading.
<input type="checkbox"/> Add abrasive strips or rubber stair treads, or use deck paint that has a rough texture	<input type="checkbox"/> Watch for short curbs, wet areas and uneven surfaces in garages
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep steps, sidewalks, decks and porches free of obstacles and debris	<input type="checkbox"/> Wear correct eyewear when walking. Reading glasses or bifocals can distort potential hazards
<input type="checkbox"/> Always use handrails when stepping on stairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Install handrails that are graspable for outdoor steps.

Risk Factors	
▶ Loose or uneven sidewalks, steps and driveways	▶ Inclement weather creating unsafe conditions (e.g., ice, snow accumulation, mud, etc.)
▶ Inadequate or lack of stair railings	▶ Overgrown shrubs and tree branches
▶ Patio or deck furniture in walkways	▶ Wearing improper footwear
Prevention	
□ Make sure stairs are even, in good shape and well lit.	□ Walk on grass if sidewalks or driveways appear slippery or uneven
□ Paint the edges of the steps with a color that contrasts with the rest of the stairway	□ Hire or ask someone to help with shoveling, yard work and pruning shrubs and trees
□ Install sturdy railings around deck and patio areas	□ Remove protruding tree roots and repair loose concrete areas on driveways
□ Replace steps with ramp access, as needed	□ Wear shoes that are well fitted and have no-slip traction soles.
□ Ensure outdoor furniture is out of the walkway	

50% of all outdoor falls are related to walking.*



**Call today for an in-home visit
or for more information.**

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