



# A Guide to Fall Prevention



Let's start talking about living.®

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# Around the House

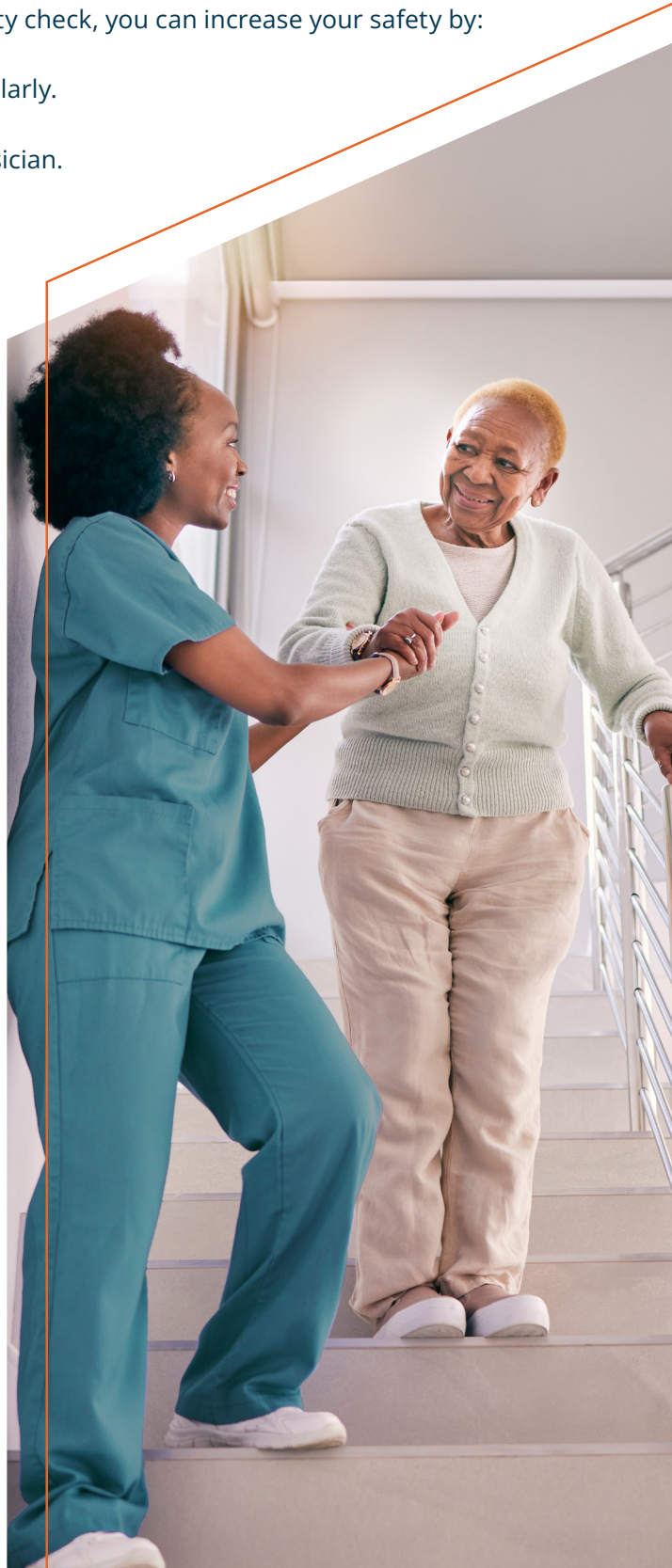
As we age, balance becomes a significant issue due to a variety of factors, including physical weakness, medications and cognitive or visual impairment. Ideally, a source of comfort for us, our home can become hazardous without a falls prevention strategy. Right at Home can assess your house for anything 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, usually by falling sideways\*

\*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, loose or slippery 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

# 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	▶ Too tight or cramped spaces for assistive aids (walkers, wheelchairs) to fit into

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



Prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of non-slip tiles and removal of 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid high gloss and highly waxed ceramic or hardwood flooring that may be extra slippery when wet

## 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

- Grab bars with color contrast
- Shower chair/transfer bench
- Non-slip mats/decals/strips on floor, in tub and shower
- Wall-attached soap/shampoo dispensers

## Toileting

### Risk Factors

- Nighttime toileting
- Hurrying to the toilet
- Poor lighting
- Forgetting to use walker/cane

### Prevention

- Toilet grab bars (bars that attach to toilet are preferable to wall-attached bars for those with good arm strength)
- Bedside commode
- Toilet riser to make it easier for those with decreased arm strength to stand up
- Nightlights or floor lighting between bed and bathroom
- Nightlights inside and outside the bathroom
- Place walker or cane close to bedside for easy access and as a reminder

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



In the elderly, **30-50%** of falls are due to **environmental causes** such as poor lighting, slippery floors, and uneven surfaces.\*

\*Aging.com



**1/5**

falls result in serious injury.

\*National Council on Aging



**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/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1483851/)



# 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

- Rearrange lights and electronics along the walls and out of pathways
- Remove sliding throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing
- Install floor lighting
- Tape down or mend upended carpet edges
- Remove clutter
- Create wide, straight and clear paths
- Relocate low-lying tables that may be difficult to see
- 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   |  |



# Outside

## Walking Outside

Risk Factors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Uneven sidewalks and street surfaces, curbs and slippery surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Parking lots and garages with short curbs placed at the end of parking spaces</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Porches with slippery surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Poor outdoor lighting</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Parks can have uneven surfaces and wet grass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vision problems or glare from sun</li> </ul>

Prevention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Install good lighting on stairs and walkways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Ensure steps, patios and porches are maintained to avoid loose or broken boards and uneven surface</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Ensure adequate lighting on perimeter of house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Be aware of changes in terrain such as steps, holes, uneven areas and obstacles in pathways</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Cover walk areas such as porches and steps with weatherproof and textured paint for more traction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 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.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Add abrasive strips or rubber stair treads, or use deck paint that has a rough texture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Watch for short curbs, wet areas and uneven surfaces in garages</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Keep steps, sidewalks, decks and porches free of obstacles and debris</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Wear correct eyewear when walking. Reading glasses or bifocals can distort potential hazards</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Always use handrails when stepping on stairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Install handrails that are graspable for outdoor steps.</li> </ul>

# Outside, cont.

## Walking Outside

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	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure stairs are even, in good shape and well lit.	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk on grass if sidewalks or driveways appear slippery or uneven
<input type="checkbox"/> Paint the edges of the steps with a color that contrasts with the rest of the stairway	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire or ask someone to help with shoveling, yard work and pruning shrubs and trees
<input type="checkbox"/> Install sturdy railings around deck and patio areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove protruding tree roots and repair loose concrete areas on driveways
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace steps with ramp access, as needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Wear shoes that are well fitted and have no-slip traction soles.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure outdoor furniture is out of the walkway	

Approximately **50%** of falls among adults aged 65+ occur in outdoor environments.\*

\*Journal of the American Geriatric Society

# How Right at Home Canada Can Help

At Right At Home, we are proud to offer a full range of exceptional support and home care services for those with physical, medical, or memory impairment. From cleaning, companionship, therapy and accident rehabilitation, to personal care, nursing care and palliative care, we offer expert services for your loved one.

Whether you know exactly what you need or want, or have no idea where to turn, your Right at Home Care Planner is your personal advocate, there to help you explore all of your options and

craft a unique, budget-conscious care solution as individual as your family and as flexible as you need.

Our goal is to enhance, not replace, the care that the government and family can provide. We fill that gap between where government care leaves off, and what a family wants or needs for a loved one. We can be a small or large piece of the “care puzzle” and we can assist you in navigating changes as they come. And best of all, Right at Home support can change, increase or decrease at any time.

**Improving the quality of life for those we serve.**



## Companion Care

Light housekeeping, meal prep, groceries, transportation



## Personal Care

Physical assistance, mobility, eating assistance, bathing, hygiene



## Nursing Support

In-home medical care, wound care, foot care, ostomy, medication management



## Specialty Care

Dementia specialists, MVA care, stroke recovery, respite, hospice, palliative care





**Call us for a free, no commitment  
assessment and to meet your  
community Care Planner.**

**1.855.983.4663**

**[www.rightathomecanada.com](http://www.rightathomecanada.com)**



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