



Helpful Tips for Fall Prevention

Nearly 35% of American adults 65 and older fall each year. Falls can lead to broken bones and can spiral into scenarios like orthopedic surgery, long term hospital stays, nursing home placements, infection and even death. Most accidental falls are preventable; consider these easy tips to lower your chance of experiencing a fall in your home.

Personal Health and Wellness

- Exercise regularly. Exercise programs like Pilates and yoga help with balance, strength and flexibility and are a great way to prevent falls.
- Have regular eye examinations to maintain proper vision correction.
- Ask your pharmacist to review your medications for side effects like dizziness, impaired vision and sleepiness that contribute to increased fall risks.

Proper Footwear

- All shoes and footwear should fit properly.
- Choose shoes with low heels and good tread, whenever possible.
- Soles and heels of shoes should provide good "traction" and be slip-resistant. (Note: traction is the force, measured in terms of quality of surface friction, that allows you to walk without slipping)
- Avoid shoes with shoelaces.

Your Home

- Eliminate clutter on all floors and make sure the hallways are clear between rooms.
- Inspect the thresholds between every room to ensure they are level. Consider installing flooring transition strips to provide a safe transition from carpet to tile or wood flooring.
- Make sure all lighting works properly and has the maximum wattage specified by the manufacturer. As people age, the need for brighter lights to see well increases.
- Repair bulges in carpeting.
- Use care around low furniture. (coffee tables, ottomans, etc.)
- Anchor loose telephone, computer and electrical cords.
- Secure or avoid area throw rugs. (especially those used over linoleum, wood or tile flooring, or those that curl up on the ends)



Bathroom

- Consider remodeling your shower with a walk in design that does not require a step up.
- Add non-skid adhesive textured strips in the tub or shower floor.
- Insert a plastic shower chair to help ease access in and out of the tub.
- Install a raised toilet seat with armrests to help provide balance for sitting down and getting up.
- Remove all throw rugs that are not slip-resistant or use double-sided carpet tape to keep rugs from slipping.
- Install handrails and/or grab bars on the bathroom walls, especially near the toilet, bathtub or shower to help maintain balance.

Kitchen

- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Use a sturdy step stool (not a chair), when you need to reach up into those top kitchen cupboards.
- Use reacher aids to access those high shelves.
- Organize your kitchen for easier access.
- Keep kitchen drawers and cabinets closed.
- Use a non-skid rug in front of the sink.
- Do not over wax or polish your floors.

Stairs

- Consider adding handrails on both sides of the stairwell for more support.
- Consider adding stair treads to provide more traction.
- Consider adding an electric stair chair that would glide up and down the steps for further fall prevention.

Garage

- Clean up greasy, oily, or muddy floors.
- Clean and organize the clutter. (it's easy to trip over a misplaced object in storage areas)
- Never use a "make-shift" ladder in place of a real ladder. (note: chairs, boxes, barrels, etc. should never be used as substitutes for a true sturdy ladder)
- Take extra care when climbing up to high places.
- Take extra care when reaching out your arms or overextending your reach, especially on a ladder.