

## **Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults**

*The following checklist and recommendations were produced by the CDC (U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention): [www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html).*

### **Falls at Home**

Falls are often due to hazards that are often overlooked but easy to fix. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home.

The checklist asks about hazards found in each room of your home and tells you how to fix the problems. At the end of the checklist, you'll find other tips for preventing falls.

#### **➔ FLOORS: Look at the floor in each room.**

- Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.
- Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.
- Pick up items that are on the floor.
- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.



➔ **STAIRS AND STEPS: Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.**

- Pick up items on the stairs.  
Always keep objects off the stairs.
- Fix loose or uneven steps.
- Have an electrician put in an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs if this has not been done.  
You can get light switches that glow.
- Have a friend or family member change any burned-out bulbs.
- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.
- Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.



➔ **KITCHEN: Look at your kitchen eating area.**

- Move items in your cabinets. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

➔ **BATHROOMS: Look at your bathrooms.**

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Have a carpenter put grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.



➔ **BEDROOMS: Look at your bedrooms.**

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- Put in a night-light so you can see where you're walking. Some night-lights go on by themselves after dark.

**Other Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls**

**Do physical activity regularly.** This makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.

**Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all your medications,** even over-the-counter medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy.

**Have your vision checked at least once a year** by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.

**Get up slowly** after you sit or lie down.

**Wear shoes both inside and outside the house.**

Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.

**Improve the lighting in your home.** Put in brighter light bulbs. Fluorescent bulbs are bright and cost less to use.

**It's safest to have uniform lighting in a room.** Add lighting to dark areas. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.

**Paint a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps** so that you can see the stairs better. For example, use a light color paint on dark wood.

### **Other Safety Tips**

- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up.
- Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and can't get up.
- Look out for pets who may get underfoot or are resting on floors or stairs.

