

Preventing Falls at Home:

A Home Safety Checklist

Why should you be concerned about preventing falls in your home? For many of us, the home provides the most basic need of shelter from the elements and intruders. It also provides comfort and a place for self-expression vital for our well-being. Our home can give us a feeling of independence, but it can also become a barrier if we become susceptible to falls or a fear of falling. Nearly 85% of falls occur at home with the most frequent location being stairways, bedrooms, and the living room.

Here is a room by room checklist to help you assess your home to identify potential hazards. As soon as possible, correct items to which you answered "NO." Refer to the last page for tips on selecting a contractor if needed.



Throughout the House

YES NO There should be good even lighting throughout the house. Light fixtures, lamps, and window treatments should be selected and placed to avoid glare on smooth surfaces.

YES NO Emergency numbers and your address are posted by each telephone.

YES NO Telephones are located in each room. They can be reached from the floor in case of a fall. A portable phone will do.

YES NO Flooring materials should be hard, even surfaces or tightly woven, low pile carpeting over a thin pad.

YES NO Carpeting and rugs are not worn or torn.

YES NO Small, loose rugs have non-skid backing and are not placed in traffic areas of the home.

YES NO Electrical cords are placed out of the flow of traffic and out from underneath rugs and carpet.

YES NO Things are kept in their proper place so they won't become a tripping hazard.

YES NO Pet sleeping areas are away from traffic paths.



Kitchen

- YES NO Light switches are located near the doors.
- YES NO The range and sink areas have adequate light levels.
- YES NO Storage in upper shelves or cabinets is used only for infrequently needed items of light weight.
- YES NO A sturdy, stable step ladder or step stool is used rather than a chair to reach objects in overhead cabinets.
- YES NO Countertop space lets you keep carrying and lifting to a minimum.
- YES NO Flooring is not slippery and has a non-glare surface.
- YES NO A non-skid rubber mat is place on the floor in front of the sink.

Bathroom

- YES NO The light switch is located near the door.
- YES NO Bathroom has even light without glare.
- YES NO Bathub or shower doors are safety glass or plastic.
- YES NO Grab bars are installed on the walls by the bathtub and toilet.
- YES NO The bathtub or shower has non-skid mat or strips on the standing area.

Bathroom (cont'd)

- YES NO A high rise seat is installed on the toilet, if appropriate.
- YES NO Bathroom flooring is matte-finished, textured tile, or low pile commerical carpet (no throw rugs or bath mats).



Stairs

- YES NO Light switches are located at top and bottom of stairways and at both ends of long hallways.
- YES NO Stairways and hallways are well lighted.
- YES NO Hallways are equipped with night lights.
- YES NO Sturdy handrails are on both sides of stairway and securely fastened.
- YES NO Steps are in good condition and are free of objects.
- YES NO Steps have non-skid strips. Carpeting on steps is securely fastened & free of fraying or holes.
- YES NO It is easy to see the leading edge or losing of each stair tread while walking down stairs. When possible, indicate steps by use of bright colored adhesive tape on step edges or contrasting color of paint.

Stairs (cont'd)

- YES NO Inside doors do not swing out over stair steps.
- YES NO Room entrances do not have raised door thresholds or thresholds are marked with a contrasting color.



Bedroom

- YES NO Bedroom floor is located on the first floor of the home, if possible.
- YES NO A lamp or flashlight is kept within reach of your bed. Check batteries periodically to make sure they are working and keep a spare package of batteries nearby.
- YES NO A night light is used to brighten the way to the bathroom at night.
- YES NO You have an adequate-sized night stand or small table for the phone, glasses, or other important items.
- YES NO There is a sturdy chair with arms where you can sit to dress.
- YES NO Shoes are kept in special racks or tucked well under the bed.
- YES NO Clothing and other items are not left on the floor.



Living Room

- YES NO The light switch is located near the entrance.
- YES NO Furniture, which might be used for support when walking for rising, is steady and does not tilt.
- YES NO Chairs and sofas are sturdy and secure.
- YES NO Chairs and sofas have full arms to aid in sitting or rising.



Outdoor Area

- YES NO Doorways, steps, porches, and walkways have good lighting.
- YES NO Handrails are sturdy and securely fastened.
- YES NO Steps and walkways are in good condition and are kept free of ice and wet leaves.
- YES NO Porches, balconies, terraces, window wells, & other heights or depressions are protected by railings closed with banisters, or are otherwise protected.
- YES NO You have adequate light in your garage so you don't need to grope your way in the dark.
- YES NO Garden tools are returned to their proper place after use.

