

Safety Tips to Prevent Falls at Home

Here are some ideas to use in your home to help prevent falls.

Floors

- Keep cords, furniture, and small objects out of walkways and off of stairs. Do not put electric cords under rugs or carpet.
- Large area rugs should have non-slip backing. If not, use double-sided tape to keep the rug securely attached to the floor. Remove throw rugs, so you do not trip on them.
- Replace or remove carpet that is torn or has turned-up edges. Use low pile carpet or solid flooring.
- Use bright tape or paint to mark areas where the flooring surface changes, such as from carpet to solid floors. It is easy to fall when walking from one type of flooring to another.

Lighting

- Have lighting throughout your home. Use night lights in bedrooms, bathrooms, and near stairs.
- Use switches that glow in the dark, so they can be seen more easily.
- Keep electrical cords and small things out of your path.

Stairs

- Mount sturdy handrails to help with going up and down stairs. They should extend beyond the top and bottom stair.
- Have lighting on the stairs. Apply non-slip surfaces to wood stairs to prevent falls.
- On the edge of each step, paint a bright colored line, so they are more easily seen.

Furniture

- Use caution when sitting down. Before sitting down on a chair, make sure the backs of your legs are touching the seat of the chair behind you.
- Use chairs and furniture that are stable for your size and weight. Choose chairs that have armrests.

Bathroom

- Place non-skid decals or a mat in the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars around the toilet and in the shower or bathtub. Towel bars are to hold towels, and they will break if you use them as grab bars.
- Use a tub seat and an elevated toilet seat.
- Leave the bathroom door unlocked, so it can be opened if you do fall.

Bedroom

- Avoid wearing long nightgowns or robes. These can cause you to trip.
- Wear non-slip shoes or slippers that fit well and stay securely on your feet. Loose shoes that cause you to scuff or shuffle your feet could cause you to fall.
- Sleep in a bed that is easy to get into and out of.
- Place a lamp, telephone, and flashlight near your bed in case you need them during the night.

Kitchen

- Place items you use often at counter level or within easy reach.
- Use a sturdy step stool with a handrail to reach items on high shelves. Do not climb on the counter or use chairs.
- Wear non-slip shoes in the kitchen to avoid falls.

Outside your home

- Leave some outside lights on at night to prevent falls if you or others go outside or come home after dark.
- Ask someone to repair cracks in your pavement and fill holes in the lawn.
- Get help to remove rocks, tools, snow, wet leaves, and ice on walkways and stairs.

Other tips

- Take your time. Get in the habit of moving at speeds that are safe for your energy level and ability. Do not rush to answer the phone or door.
- Ask for help when getting up from bed, a chair or the toilet if you feel at all shaky, weak, dizzy, or lightheaded.
- Use your cane or walker rather than using furniture to give you support when walking.
- Be careful that you do not trip over your pet. Be aware of where your pet is when you are moving around.
- Keep a telephone close by or carry a mobile phone. You may want to consider a personal alarm or monitor service if you are at high risk for falls.
- Talk to your doctor about the medicines you take and if they affect your balance and coordination.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.