

# Home Safety Checklist to Reduce Your Risk of Falling

You can do some simple things to stay safe inside and outside your home to help reduce your risk of falling and hurting yourself. Place a check next to each of the things you already do. Then try to make changes so that you can check off the rest of the boxes.

## Personal safety

### Personal condition

- Eat a healthy diet
- Get regular exercise
- Get enough rest
- Get regular medical checkups

### What you wear

- Avoid footwear that is too loose or too tight
- Wear good shoes with good support, low or flat heels, closed toes, nonslip soles
- Replace boots and shoes when the soles or heels are worn smooth
- Avoid long clothing (such as bathrobes, dressing gowns, nightgowns, or winter coats) that you can trip over
- If you wear glasses, keep your prescription up to date

### Moving around

- Ask for help with tasks that you may not be able to do safely
- Do not climb up on stepladders, step stools, chairs, or other objects
- When you carry bulky packages, make sure they don't block your vision
- Divide large loads into smaller loads whenever possible
- Plan ahead and don't rush
- Move slowly and avoid rushing to answer the phone or doorbell
- Take time to get your balance when you change position from lying down to sitting and from sitting to standing

### **An emergency plan**

- If you live alone, have daily contact with a friend or neighbor
- If your phone has speed dial buttons, add your emergency contact numbers
- Rent a personal response and support service (an emergency HELP button) in case you fall and cannot get up

### **Bathroom safety**

- Ask a professional about putting in a raised toilet seat and grab bars for your toilet and bathtub
- Use a rubber bath mat or other nonslip surface in your bathtub or shower
- Use a nonskid rug on the bathroom floor
- Use a bath seat for extra safety
- Have your water heater set to a temperature below 120° F (49° C)
- Use liquid soap instead of bar soap
- Have good bathroom and hall lighting

### **The rest of your home**

#### **Don't let your things be your downfall**

- Keep floors and stairs clear of clutter
- Keep the traffic lane from your bedroom to the bathroom free of things you might trip over
- Arrange furniture so that you can walk across every room in your home, and from one room to another, without having to go around furniture
- Watch out for pets lying in or crossing your path when you stand up or walk
- Keep electrical and phone cords away from where you walk. Use a cordless phone
- Store things that you use often at a comfortable height so you don't have to bend or stretch too much to get to them

#### **Stairs, rugs and floor**

- Install 2 handrails on your stairs
- Buy rugs with a nonskid backing (or fasten them to the floor), and tack the edges
- Wipe up spills right away

#### **Keep it lit**

- Keep indoor areas and stairways well lit to get rid of shadowy areas
- Use nightlights in your bedroom, hallway, and bathroom
- Have a lamp or light switch within easy reach of your bed

## Outdoor safety

- Install railings by your entrance
- Keep lawns and gardens free of holes
- Always put away garden tools and hoses when not in use
- Have mats at doorways for people to wipe their feet on
- Keep outdoor walkways, steps, and porches free of wet leaves, snow, and things you might trip over
- Avoid going outside in poor weather or when sidewalks are not clear and dry
- Avoid busy traffic times and cross the street at traffic lights

### Have the light you need

- Make sure your entrance is well lit
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas
- Take time to let your eyes adjust to changes in lighting; wear sunglasses on sunny days

*Adapted from the National Safety Council.*

**For more information contact:**

The National Safety Council at 1-800-621-7619 [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

**The information provided here is for educational purposes only, please consult your doctor.**