



Check for Safety

Things you can do to avoid falling down in your home.



ASPIRUS™
SENIOR HEALTH

Passion for excellence. Compassion for people.

Home Safety Checklist



FLOOR:

Look at the floor in each room.

Q: *When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?*

- Ask someone to move the furniture, so your path is clear.

Q: *Do you have throw rugs on the floor?*

- Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.

Q: *Are there papers, books, towels, shoes or other objects on the floor?*

- Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

Q: *Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, phone, extension cords)?*

- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall, so you cannot trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

KITCHEN:

Look at your kitchen and eating area.

Q: *Are the things you use often on high shelves?*

- Move items in your cabinets. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).

Q: *Is your step stool unsteady?*

- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

BATHROOM: *Look at all your bathrooms.*

Q: *Is the tub or shower floor slippery?*

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.

Q: *Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet?*

- Have a carpenter put grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet.

BEDROOM: *Look at all your bedrooms.*

Q: *Is the light near the bed hard to reach?*

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

Q: *Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?*

- Put in a night light so you can see where you are walking. Some night lights go on by themselves after dark.

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Each year, thousands of older Americans fall at home. Many are seriously injured, and some are disabled. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home.



STAIRS & STEPS:

Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.

Q: Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs?

- Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off the stairs.

Q. Are some steps broken or uneven?

- Fix or have a repairman fix loose or uneven steps.

Q. Are you missing a light over the stairway?

- Have an electrician put an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Q. Do you have only one light switch for your stairs? (only at the top or bottom of stairs)

- Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.

Q. Has the stairway light bulb burned out?

- Ask a friend or family member to change the light bulb.

Q. Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached. Or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

Q. Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of 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.

Home Safety Checklist



OTHER ACTIONS you can take to prevent falls:

- Exercise regularly. Exercise makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medications you take. Some 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. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Improve the lighting in your home. Put in brighter light bulbs. Florescent bulbs are bright and cost less to use. Add lighting to dark areas. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Paint the edges of steps a contrasting color so you can see the stairs better. For example, use a light color paint on dark wood.

SAFETY TIPS:

- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and cannot get up.
- Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and can't get up.

Check List Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/injury.

MORE HELP:

- MAKE an appointment for an Aspirus Falls Assessment. This is an individualized assessment to help you learn what things you can do to avoid falling down.
- ATTEND Falls Prevention Friday, a free, one-hour presentation and discussion. Learn ways to reduce your risk or your loved one's risk of falling.
- CALL the Aspirus Senior Health Nurse Navigator at 1-877-908-5027 (or email SeniorsRN@aspirus.org) to learn about Falls Prevention Friday, the Aspirus Falls Assessment, and other falls prevention resources.