

# Fall Prevention in the Home, Adult

Falls can cause injuries and can affect people from all age groups. There are many simple things that you can do to make your home safe and to help prevent falls. Ask for help when making these changes, if needed.

## What actions can I take to prevent falls?

### General instructions

- Use good lighting in all rooms. Replace any light bulbs that burn out.
- Turn on lights if it is dark. Use night-lights.
- Place frequently used items in easy-to-reach places. Lower the shelves around your home if necessary.
- Set up furniture so that there are clear paths around it. Avoid moving your furniture around.
- Remove throw rugs and other tripping hazards from the floor.
- Avoid walking on wet floors.
- Fix any uneven floor surfaces.
- Add color or contrast paint or tape to grab bars and handrails in your home. Place contrasting color strips on the first and last steps of stairways.
- When you use a stepladder, make sure that it is completely opened and that the sides are firmly locked. Have someone hold the ladder while you are using it. **Do not** climb a closed stepladder.
- Be aware of any and all pets.

### What can I do in the bathroom?

- Keep the floor dry. Immediately clean up any water that spills onto the floor.
- Remove soap buildup in the tub or shower on a regular basis.
- Use non-skid mats or decals on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Attach bath mats securely with double-sided, non-slip rug tape.
- If you need to sit down while you are in the shower, use a plastic, non-slip stool.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the tub and shower. **Do not** use towel bars as grab bars.



### What can I do in the bedroom?

- Make sure that a bedside light is easy to reach.
- **Do not** use oversized bedding that drapes onto the floor.
- Have a firm chair that has side arms to use for getting dressed.

### What can I do in the kitchen?

- Clean up any spills right away.
- If you need to reach for something above you, use a sturdy step stool that has a grab bar.
- Keep electrical cables out of the way.
- **Do not** use floor polish or wax that makes floors slippery. If you must use wax, make sure that it is non-skid floor wax.



### What can I do in the stairways?

- **Do not** leave any items on the stairs.
- Make sure that you have a light switch at the top of the stairs and the bottom of the stairs. Have them installed if you do not have them.

- Make sure that there are handrails on both sides of the stairs. Fix handrails that are broken or loose. Make sure that handrails are as long as the stairways.
- Install non-slip stair treads on all stairs in your home.
- Avoid having throw rugs at the top or bottom of stairways, or secure the rugs with carpet tape to prevent them from moving.
- Choose a carpet design that does not hide the edge of steps on the stairway.
- Check any carpeting to make sure that it is firmly attached to the stairs. Fix any carpet that is loose or worn.

### **What can I do on the outside of my home?**

- Use bright outdoor lighting.
- Regularly repair the edges of walkways and driveways and fix any cracks.
- Remove high doorway thresholds.
- Trim any shrubbery on the main path into your home.
- Regularly check that handrails are securely fastened and in good repair. Both sides of any steps should have handrails.
- Install guardrails along the edges of any raised decks or porches.
- Clear walkways of debris and clutter, including tools and rocks.
- Have leaves, snow, and ice cleared regularly.
- Use sand or salt on walkways during winter months.
- In the garage, clean up any spills right away, including grease or oil spills.

### **What other actions can I take?**

- Wear closed-toe shoes that fit well and support your feet. Wear shoes that have rubber soles or low heels.
- Use mobility aids as needed, such as canes, walkers, scooters, and crutches.
- Review your medicines with your health care provider. Some medicines can cause dizziness or changes in blood pressure, which increase your risk of falling.

Talk with your health care provider about other ways that you can decrease your risk of falls. This may include working with a physical therapist or trainer to improve your strength, balance, and endurance.

### **Where to find more information**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, STEADI: <https://www.cdc.gov>
- National Institute on Aging: <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov>

### **Contact a health care provider if:**

- You are afraid of falling at home.
- You feel weak, drowsy, or dizzy at home.
- You fall at home.

### **Summary**

- There are many simple things that you can do to make your home safe and to help prevent falls.
- Ways to make your home safe include removing tripping hazards and installing grab bars in the bathroom.
- Ask for help when making these changes in your home.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.