

Your falls prevention safety checklist

Use this checklist to see if there are changes you can make in and around your home to prevent falls. By making your home safer, you can live independently for as long as possible.

HEALTH

- Exercise regularly to strengthen your muscles and improve your balance and coordination.
- Review ALL your medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal) with your pharmacist. Ask about side effects and take all your medication correctly.
- Eat a variety of healthy foods and get enough calcium.
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids.
- Take vitamin D. It helps keep your bones strong and improves muscle strength.
- Have your vision checked once a year.
- Have your hearing checked once a year.
- Have your blood pressure checked each time you see your health professional.
- Take good care of your feet.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.

STAIRS

- Put handrails on both sides of all stairs.
- Keep stairs well lit.
- Don't leave anything on stairs that you can trip over.
- Put a non-skid surface on the top of each step.

BATHROOM

- Use non-skid mats and grab bars in tub and shower.
Have grab bars installed professionally.
- Replace fixed shower head with handheld type.
- Put grab bars beside toilet.
- Install non-slip flooring throughout.
- Put one night-light in your bathroom and another in the hallway near the door.
- Set your water temperature to no more than 120 °F (49 °C).
Always test the water temperature before getting into the tub or shower.

KITCHEN

- Put kitchen supplies where they are easy to reach.
- Put heavy items in the lower cupboards.
- Use a solid step stool with a safety rail for reaching high cupboards.
- Wipe up spills right away so you won't slip.

LIVING ROOM AND BEDROOMS

- Leave lots of space to move around.
- Don't use throw rugs.
- Move electrical cords so they are out of your way.
- Use sturdy furniture and lamps.
- Put a light switch near the entrance of your bedroom.
- Place a lamp or light switch near your bed.
- Keep a phone and a list of emergency phone numbers near your bed.

ENTRANCE WAYS

- Keep clear of clutter.
- Have a chair to sit on to change footwear.

OUTSIDE

- Keep all walkways, stairs and the driveway clear and well lit.
- Install outdoor lighting with motion sensors.
- Put garden tools and snow shovels away.
- Report hazards in the community to your municipality, such as uneven sidewalks.
- Avoid walking on icy, slippery, or uneven ground.

GENERAL TIPS

- Use a portable, cordless phone or a cell phone.
- Avoid dizziness by getting up slowly from a chair or bed.
- Remove your reading glasses when you're not reading.
- Keep your house well lit and use night lights throughout.
- Take your time when moving. Don't rush to answer the door or phone.
- Get help to do major chores like snow shovelling, raking leaves, mowing the lawn, painting.
- See your health professional if you feel unsteady or have trouble walking. You may need to visit a physiotherapist or occupational therapist for advice, exercise, or an assistive device such as a cane or walker.
- Use your assistive devices properly, as shown by your therapist.
- Pets like to stay close. Be careful not to trip over your pet or their toys.
- Review your footwear. Wear low-heeled shoes that give good support.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside of the house. Avoid wearing floppy slippers or stocking feet.

For advice or help, call your health or community information centre to find a fall prevention program in your area.