

Tips To Keep From Tipping A Home Fall Prevention Checklist

Each year, thousands of Americans fall at home. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix as well. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home.

Floors

- Remove all throw rugs.
- Always keep floors clear of books, clothes, shoes, boxes and other objects.
- Rearrange your furniture to avoid having to walk around it.
- Coil or tape cords and wires from lamps, phones, or extension cords next to the wall. If needed, have an electrician install another outlet.

Stairs

- Always keep stairs clear of all objects.
- Fix loose or uneven stairs.
- Have an electrician install an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Have an electrician install light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs. Consider getting one that glows.
- Ensure any carpet on stairs is firmly attached to every step or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to 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.

Kitchen

- Keep things you use most often on the lower shelves of cabinets of cabinets (about waist level).
- 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

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars next to and inside the tub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Don't use the bars with the suction cup grips as these are unreliable

Bedrooms

- Ensure that the light near your bed is easy to reach and turn on and off. It is possible to get lights with a convenient touch on/off mechanism.
- Put in a night-light to illuminate your path to the bathroom at night.

- Consider ones that turn on by themselves after dark.

Other fall prevention advice

- Do exercises that improve your balance and make your legs stronger. Exercise also helps you feel better and more confident.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review all of the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. Some medications can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Have your eyes checked by the eye doctor at least once a year and update your glasses.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers or flip flops.
- Improve the lighting in your home by using brighter light bulbs.
- It's safest to have uniform lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Paint a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps so that you can see the stairs more clearly. For example, use a light color paint on dark wood.

Other safety tips

- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Sign up for **Smart 911**, a free national service used by public service agencies across the country. You provide potentially life-saving information so that, in an emergency, responders will arrive knowing just what's needed to help.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up.
- Consider getting a LifeAlert device that will bring help in case you fall and can't get up.