



Falls in the home are one of the leading causes of injury. In just the blink of an eye a fall could turn your world upside-down.

With just a few lifestyle tips and easy-to-do home modifications you will be well on your way preventing needless accidents.

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging, and many falls can be prevented. To reduce the risk of falls, we should make changes to our lifestyle and/or our home environment.

A few simple lifestyle changes

Regular exercise and physical activity help lower the risk of falling. This includes simple relaxed walking, cycling, or spending time moving in a swimming pool. Leisure activities such as gardening, dancing, bowling, tai chi and yoga are very engaging ways to increase your physical activity. Find what fits your interests and get going!

The use of a cane or walker greatly improves steadiness, especially in unfamiliar areas. There are many helpful stabilizing products available with styles and colors to fit many tastes.

If the shoe fits... it's likely to be safer. Safe footwear includes low-heeled shoes with non-skid soles that offer full support. Avoid backless shoes and slippers.

Medication Issues and awareness of side effects

Be knowledgeable about the medications you take. Have your doctor or pharmacist explain any risks with regard to dizziness or loss of balance. Be sure to ask if certain combinations of your medications may be hazardous to your balance.

Clear vision and home lighting

Have your vision checked and glasses updated regularly for your correct vision needs. Visibility greatly enhances the ability to see hazards, even in familiar surroundings. Use the highest wattage bulbs allowable in fixtures in rooms, on stairs and at entrances. Use night lights in bedrooms, halls, bathrooms and the kitchen. Always have an easy to turn on lamp at your bedside. A flashlight can be indispensable to have close at hand at a moment's notice.

Bathroom modifications

The two best and easiest ways to improve bathroom safety is by installing grab bars for the bath, shower and toilet. Improve tub and shower traction with non-skid pads or a rubber mat.

Keep floors safe

It is easy to overlook paths of travel that you feel very familiar walking through. Simple things that can quickly become a tripping hazard include unsecured/loose carpeting on floors and stairs. Throw rugs should be securely fastened to the floor or removed. Always be aware of raised door thresholds and uneven flooring. Clean spills immediately and keep floors dry. Use of non-skid wax on waxed floors reduces the risk of slipping.

Create safer stairways

Stair falls can easily be prevented with a few safety measures that include having handrails on both sides. Make sure stairways are well lit with switches available on both the top and bottom of the stairs. Steps should have non-skid surfaces whenever possible. To distinguish one step from another, apply a contrasting tape or edging strip.

Dealing with clutter and clearing pathways

Arrange furniture to allow plenty of room to walk freely and remove anything that might cause tripping or slipping. Harness, move or otherwise secure all electrical cords away from the floor and walking areas.

Outdoors around the outside of your home

Have handrails on both sides of stairs and outdoor walkways and be sure to have them all well lighted. Keep sidewalks level and repair uneven or cracked areas. In inclement weather, always use a cane or walker outside as surfaces may be slippery.

General fall prevention tips

Inform your doctor right away should a fall occur. Even if you believe you are okay, it may be related to a medical issue or medication. Always keep a phone nearby and next to your bed. Keep emergency phone numbers close at hand and consider signing up for a 24-hour response system.