



Tips for Preventing Falls - Fall Prevention Coalition

Every year thousands of people fall at home. Injuries from falls can be painful and debilitating. There are a few easy steps you can take to prevent falls.

Make your home safer by:

- Ask someone to move your furniture so that you can walk through rooms without having to walk around furniture.
- Remove your throw rugs or if you can't stand to let them go secure them to the floor with double-sided tape or non-slip backing.
- Pick up the clutter, books, magazines, boxes, and other objects on the floor.
- Make sure that all electrical cords, phone cords, and oxygen tubing is taped next to the wall so that you can't trip over them.
- Make sure that your stairs including handrails are in good repair. Place a piece of brightly colored tape on the top and bottom stair so that you can see when you have reached the top or bottom. Make sure that the lights work so you can see the stairs. It's a good idea to have a light switch at the top and bottom of the staircase. If you only have one then an electrician can install a second one for you.
- Keep the kitchen items that you use regularly on lower shelves, about waist high.
- Place the lamps in your bedroom close to the bed where they are easy to reach.
- Put in a night-light or two so that the path from your bed to your bathroom is always well lit.
- In the bathroom place a non-slip mat or self stick strips on the floor of the tub and shower. Don't use bars of soap or bottles of shampoo in the shower. Install a liquid soap, shampoo, and conditioner dispenser on the wall of the shower within easy reach. Have a handyman or carpenter install grab bars inside your tub and next to your toilet.

- Consider a sitting bench or stool in the shower and an elevated toilet seat.
- Make sure that all of the light bulbs in your home are at least 60 watts or brighter.
- Have someone trim the plants beside the walkway into your home so they don't obstruct the path.
- Make sure that the batteries in your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detectors are changed every year. If you don't have these detectors have some installed.

Other things you can do to help prevent falls:

- Have your physician or pharmacist review all of your medications including over the counter medications and vitamins for ones that can make you dizzy or sleepy.
- Have a portable phone or cellular phone that you can carry with you around the house, one that you can use to call for help if you need it.
- Consider wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall when you are alone.
- Exercise regularly; it will improve your balance and coordination. Consider taking Tai Chi classes or water aerobics at the local pool.
- Have your vision checked once each year. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Wear sturdy shoes with thin, non-slip soles. Do not walk around your home with stocking feet.
- If you have a cane or walker, use it.
- Eat a balanced diet that includes calcium and vitamin D to help build strong bones.
- Moderate your consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Good fall prevention activities will help you keep your independence and your health intact.

Source: Pinellas County Fall Prevention Coalition