

Thousands of older adults fall each year, with many of them experiencing multiple falls.

Most falls can be prevented by

- Reviewing medication – the number and type of medications can contribute to falls. Check this out with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Exercise
- Home modifications
- Attention to other health factors

Research says that the home environment is responsible for about one-third of all falls. Even minor changes in your home may help prevent the next fall from occurring.



For a safe home environment, make sure that you also have the following, and that they are in good working order:

- Smoke detectors (Test them monthly and change batteries once/year).
- Carbon monoxide detector
- Emergency numbers by your phone
- Shoes with low heels, good traction, fit well and don't fall off. Avoid walking in stocking feet.
- Personal response system such as Lifeline.

For more information, call the Farewell to Falls Program, an injury prevention program at the Trauma Center at Stanford University Medical Center 650-724-9369.

Farewell to Falls

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FAREWELL TO FALLS

Home Safety Checklist



Go through your rooms carefully and follow this checklist.

If you have a check in the "Needs Attention" column – see what you can do to fix the problem.

Additional Home Safety Tips

If you have throw rugs, remove them! Second best – adhere throw rugs to floor with double-sided tape or thin specialty carpet mats that are made for this purpose. Throw rugs can slip or buckle. Is keeping the throw rug really worth the risk of a fall?

Floors without rugs can be slippery. Use non-skid shoes or slippers. Don't walk on linoleum, hardwood or tiles with socks only.

Consider getting a raised toilet seat to make it easier to get on and off the toilet. It's best to have handrails on both sides of the stairs.

Move items that you use regularly to lower shelves.

NEVER use a towel rack for support!

It's best not to use a step stool. If you do use a step stool, make sure it has a bar to hold onto. Never use a chair as a step stool.

You may want to have a chair or bench to sit while shaving, drying hair or applying make-up.

Consider installing carpet to avoid slippery floors.

FAREWELL TO FALLS CHECKLIST	OK	Needs Attention	Doesn't Apply
ENTRANCES			
Steps—is there a railing, and is it secure?			
Is entrance well lit?			
LIVING ROOM AND BEDROOMS			
Can you turn on lights upon entrance into room?			
Are phone and extension cords away from all areas where you walk?			
Are floors clear of clutter, shoes and dog toys?			
Do you have throw rugs?			
KITCHEN			
Is floor clear of clutter?			
Are items within easy reach?			
BATHROOM			
Is there a night light in the bathroom?			
Does shower or tub have non-skid surfaces (mat, decals or strips)?			
Does the tub or shower have sturdy grab bars?			
Are floors kept dry and do they have a non-slip surface?			
Does bathroom rug have non-skid backing?			
Are you able to get off and on the toilet easily?			
STAIRWAYS AND HALLWAYS			
Can stairway be lighted from top and bottom of steps?			
Is there a handrail, and is it solid and sturdy?			
Are steps in good repair?			
Have you removed small rugs or runners from your hallway?			
OUTDOOR AREAS			
Are walks and driveways free of breaks and uneven surfaces?			
Are your hoses looped on a hose reel?			
Do you have stairway handrails?			
Do you have lighting to provide safe walking at night?			