

# Tips for Preventing Falls in Your Home

Every year, one out of four Americans aged 65 or older experience fall. The majority, 60%, of falls happen in the home, 30% in a public setting, and 10% in a health care center.

Most falls in the home are because of easily overlooked hazards. We hope this quick checklist will help you identify and fix potential fall hazards.

## Key Items Below:

- Tips for safer, floors, steps and stairs, kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms
- Additional tips and tricks to prevent falls

# Tips To Prevent Falls

## KITCHEN

**Are the things you use often on high shelves?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

Move items in your cabinets. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).

**Do you have a steady step stool?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

If you have to use a step stool, be sure to get one with a bar to hold on to. A chair should never be used as a step stool.

## BATHROOMS

**Is the bathtub or shower floor slippery?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

Use a non-slip rubber mat or self-adhesive strips on the floor of the bathtub or shower. Place nonskid mats or strips on all surfaces that may get wet.

**Do you need support when you get into or out of the bathtub or up from the toilet?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

Have grab bars installed next to and inside the bathtub, shower, and next to the toilet. Update your toilet to a raised toilet seat or one with armrests.

## BEDROOMS

**Is the closest lamp to the bed hard to reach?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

Place a lamp close to the bed so it is easy to reach.

**Is the path from your bed to the bathroom too dark?**

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**

Add a night-light so that you can see where you are walking. Some night-lights go on and off by themselves after dark or when they sense motion.

**For more information and resources, check out Falls Free Wisconsin at [fallsfreewi.org](http://fallsfreewi.org)**

## Additional Ways To Help Prevent Falls

- Do exercises that improve your balance and strengthen your legs.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist review all your medications (even over-the-counter) since some medicine combinations can make you sleepy or even dizzy.
- Have your eyes checked annually by an eye doctor and be sure to update your glasses or contacts when you receive a new prescription.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside of your home/condo/apartment. High heels, floppy slippers and shoes with slick soles can make you slip, stumble and fall. So can walking in your stocking feet. Instead, wear properly fitting, sturdy, flat shoes with nonskid soles. Sensible shoes may also reduce joint pain.
- Improve the lighting in your home/condo/apartment by using brighter light bulbs or LEDs.
- The safest thing is to have uniform lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas and hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Consider painting a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps so you can see the stairs better.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you do fall and are unable to get up.
- Keep a flashlight by your bed in case the power goes out and you need to get up. Store flashlights in easy-to-find places in case of power outages.
- Make sure your sofas and chairs are the right height for you to get in and out of easily.
- Don't let your cat or dog trip you. Know where your pet is whenever you're standing or walking.
- Don't let fear of falls limit your independence – limiting your activities and staying home won't prevent you from a fall.
- If you do have a fall, write down the details, including when, where, and how you fell and share with your health care provider.

## Floors

### When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

Front entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Dining room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Living room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Den	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Laundry room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS...

Ask someone to move the furniture so you have a clear path.

### Do you have throw rugs on the floor?

Front entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Dining room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Living room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Den	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Laundry room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS...

Remove throw rugs or use double-sided tape or a nonslip backing so the rugs won't slip.

## Floors Continued

### Are there books, magazines, towels, shoes, blankets, or other objects on the floor?

Front entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Dining room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Living room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Den	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Laundry room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

**Pick up things that are on the floor. Keeping floors clear can greatly reduce falls.**

### Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (lamp, telephone, extension)?

Front entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Dining room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Living room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Den	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bedroom 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Bathroom 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hallway 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Laundry room	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

**Coil up or tape electrical cords and wires next to the wall so you cannot trip over them. Have an electrician put in an additional outlet so cords are not a tripping hazard.**

## Steps and Stairs

### Are there books, magazines, towels, shoes, blankets, or other objects on the stairs?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Pick up things that are on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

### Are there uneven or broken steps?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Fix loose or uneven steps.

### Is there a light over the stairway?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Have an electrician install an overhead light at the top and bottom of stairs.

## Steps and Stairs Continued

### Is there only one light switch for the stair light (only at the top or only at the bottom)?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. Having light switches that glow will make switches easier to find in the dark.

### Is the stairway light bulb burned out?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Ask someone to replace the light bulb with a working bulb.

### Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...

Make sure the carpet is attached firmly to every step. Loose stair carpet can be removed and replaced with non-slip rubber treads.

## Steps and Stairs Continued

### Are the handrails loose or broken?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**  
**Fix loose handrails or replace with new ones.**

### Is there a handrail on both sides of the stairs?

Front door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Garage entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to basement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Stairs to second floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Deck or patio	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Back door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Side door entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**SMART FIX TO HELP PREVENT FALLS ...**  
**Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.**



