

Fall Prevention at Home

A room-by-room checklist for families

Most falls at home trace back to a short list of things a family can work on: weaker legs and balance, medications, eyesight, blood pressure that drops on standing, and a house that has quietly gotten harder to get around. Walk through the house with this sheet and check off what's done.

1 in 4+

More than 1 in 4 U.S. adults 65 and older fall each year

2×

Falling once doubles the chance of falling again

Less than half

of older adults who fall tell their doctor

Start here: the walk from the bed to the bathroom **MOST IMPORTANT**

- ☐ Plug-in or motion-sensor **night lights along the whole route**, from the bedroom to the toilet
- ☐ **Phone within reach of the bed**, not charging in the kitchen
- ☐ **Medical alert worn to bed**. It only helps if it is worn, not left on the dresser.
- ☐ **Sit on the edge of the bed for a minute** before standing up. A drop in blood pressure on standing is common and can cause dizziness.
- ☐ Path clear of tripping hazards, for example throw rugs, cords, laundry baskets and the dog's bed
- ☐ **Up two or more times a night?** Ask the doctor. It's called nocturia, it's associated with a higher risk of falling, and the cause may be treatable.
- ☐ Until it's sorted out, a **bedside commode or protective underwear** at night means no rushing to avoid having an incontinence accident
- ☐ **Stay adequately hydrated**. Cutting back on fluids to avoid night trips can cause dizziness and urinary infections. Ask the doctor whether shifting fluids earlier in the day may help.

The bathroom

- ☐ **Grab bars** next to the toilet and inside the shower, **screwed into the wall studs**
- ☐ No leaning on towel bars or suction-cup handles. They aren't built to hold a person's weight.
- ☐ Non-slip mat inside the tub and another one outside it
- ☐ Shower chair or bench, and a handheld showerhead
- ☐ A night light that stays on
- ☐ Towels, soap and toilet paper within easy reach, so there's no twisting or stretching

A medical alert is a good idea, but it isn't prevention. It doesn't stop the fall. Use the device, and keep working through this list.

Stairs

- ☐ Sturdy rail on **both sides**
- ☐ Good light at the top and the bottom
- ☐ Nothing left on the steps, not even for a minute
- ☐ Falls already starting? Think about **moving the bedroom downstairs**

Feet and walking

- ☐ **Closed, flat shoes with non-slip soles**, worn inside the house
- ☐ No socks alone, loose slippers or backless shoes on hard floors
- ☐ Walker: let your parent **pick one they like**, and ask the doctor or therapist to recommend it
- ☐ Start using it where they feel least steady, like the bathroom at night

Kitchen and doors

- ☐ Everyday dishes and food **between waist and shoulder height**, so there's no step stool
- ☐ Outside lights on a timer or a sensor
- ☐ Wet leaves and acorns swept off steps and walkways, and salt ready before the first frost
- ☐ A railing at every outside step

Take these to the doctor

- ☐ **Mention every fall**, even if there was no injury
- ☐ Ask for a **fall-risk check**
- ☐ **Review every medication.** Sleep aids, blood pressure pills and some pain medicines can cause dizziness.
- ☐ Vision check and a **bone density** check
- ☐ Dizziness that keeps coming back? Ask about an inner-ear (vestibular) problem.
- ☐ Ask whether **physical or occupational therapy** makes sense

Call the doctor the same day for a sudden run of falls, especially with new confusion. Infections like UTIs can be behind sudden changes.

Build strength and balance

- ☐ **Tai Ji Quan** and **A Matter of Balance** are offered through county Offices on Aging in New Jersey. Call **1-877-222-3737** to reach yours and ask what's running near you.
- ☐ Ask your local senior center about tai chi, chair exercise and balance classes. Some can be joined online, which helps if your parent no longer drives.
- ☐ A physical therapist can set up exercises to do at home. Check with the doctor before starting anything new, especially after a recent fall or a hospital stay.

Want a second set of eyes? We're always willing to come out and walk through the home for fall risks, at no cost.

Call the Comfort Keepers® office nearest you. Read the full article: [Fall Prevention at Home](#)

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