



**HOME SAFETY  
IS BONE SAFETY.**

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## **FALLS AWARENESS & PREVENTION GUIDE**

**Prepare your home or assist a loved one today by following these fall-proofing recommendations, courtesy of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and The Orthopaedic Trauma Association.**



# TIPS ON FALL-PROOFING YOUR HOME

Research shows that simple safety modifications at home, where most falls occur, can substantially cut the risk of falls and related injuries — such as bone fractures — for seniors.

Prepare your home or assist a loved one today by following these fall-proofing recommendations, courtesy of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and The Orthopaedic Trauma Association.



## BATHROOM

- Place a slip-resistant rug or rubber mat adjacent to the bathtub for safe exit and entry.
- Use a rubber mat or place non-skid adhesive textured strips inside the tub.
- Use a sturdy, plastic seat in the bathtub if you cannot lower yourself to the floor of the tub or you are unsteady.
- Install grab bars on the shower walls.
- Replace glass shower enclosures with non-shattering material.
- Stabilize yourself on the toilet by using a raised seat or a toilet seat with armrests.
- Keep a nightlight on in the bathroom.



## KITCHEN

- Immediately clean up any liquids, grease or food spilled on the floor.
- Store food, dishes and cooking equipment within easy reach.
  - Do not stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper cabinets.
- Remove all throw rugs and hold area rugs in place with a rubber, slip-resistant backing.
- Use non-skid floor wax.



## STAIRWAYS

- Keep stairs clear of packages, boxes or clutter.
- Provide enough light to clearly see each stair and the top and bottom landings.
  - Light switches should be at both the top and bottom of stairs.
  - Consider installing motion-detector lights that turn on automatically when you approach.
  - Keep flashlights nearby in case of a power outage.
- Remove all throw rugs, and secure area rugs near the bottom and top of stairs with a rubber, slip-resistant backing.
- Install a contrast strip on the edge of each stair to increase their visibility.
- Put non-slip treads on each bare-wood step.
- Install handrails on both sides of the stairway.
  - Each should be 30 inches above the stairs and extend the full length of the stairs.
- Repair loose stairway carpeting, wooden boards and loose handrails immediately.

# TIPS ON FALL-PROOFING YOUR HOME *continued*



## BEDROOM

- Place a lamp, telephone and flashlight near your bed.
- Keep clutter off the bedroom floor.
- Arrange clothes in your closet so that they are easy to reach.
  - Do not stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper shelves.
- Install a nightlight along the route between your bedroom and the bathroom.
- Sleep on a bed that is easy to get into and out of.
- Replace satiny sheets and comforters with non-slip fabrics such as flannel.



## OUTSIDE

- Keep the path between your driveway and the front door, as well as the pathway between the mailbox and your front door well-lit and clear of debris.
- For cold weather locations, keep salt and a shovel near the front door so you do not have to walk on an icy sidewalk in order to reach them.
- Install motion-detector lights so they turn on automatically when you step outside at night.
- At least one covered, no-step entry with a ramp is recommended for any home.



## FOOTWEAR

- Wear properly fitting shoes with rubber, non-skid soles.
- Avoid wearing high heels.
- Tie your shoe laces and never walk in bare socks.
- Replace slippers that have stretched out of shape or are too loose.



## LIVING AREAS

- Keep low-rise coffee tables, magazine racks, footrests and plants out of the path of foot traffic.
  - Arrange furniture so that you have a clear pathway between rooms.
- Walk only in well-lit rooms and always turn on lights.
  - Install easy-access light switches at room entrances so you do not have to walk into a dark room to turn on the light.
  - Motion or sound activated lights and glow-in-the-dark switches are also helpful.
- Remove boxes, newspapers and all clutter from pathways, including doorways and hallways.
  - Keep electric, appliance and telephone cords out of walkways, but do not hide cords under a rug because it creates a tripping hazard.
- Secure loose area rugs with a rubber, slip-resistant backing.
- Replace chairs or sofas that are so low they are difficult to get out of.
- Repair loose wooden floorboards immediately.
- Remove door sills higher than a half inch.



## PETS

- Place a bell on your small pets so you can locate them easily and know when they are near your feet, creating a potential tripping hazard.
- Train dogs to walk beside you, instead of in front of you.
- In the case of a larger or stronger dog, train your pet not to pull you when on a leash.