



# Remembering When: Home Safety Checklist

People age 65 and older are especially vulnerable to falls and fires in the home. This checklist can be used by older adults to check their homes for hazards. It can also be used by a home health care worker,

visiting nurse, volunteer, relative, or friend to help an older adult identify hazardous situations in the home, discuss possible solutions, and reinforce fall and fire prevention messages.

## Fall Prevention

### EXERCISE

- Do you exercise regularly?*  
Exercise regularly to build your strength and improve balance and coordination. Ask your doctor or other health care provider about the best physical exercise for you.

### TAKE YOUR TIME

- Do you rush to answer the phone or doorbell?*  
Take your time. Being rushed or distracted increases your chance of falling. Get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of your bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk.

### CLEAR THE WAY

- Are there tripping hazards such as papers, books, electrical cords or shoes on the floor in walking areas and stairways?*  
Pick up the clutter. Always keep objects off the stairs.
- In winter, are sidewalks, outdoor steps, and walkways clear of ice and snow?*  
Keep the walkways clear. If needed, ask for help with snow and ice removal.

### LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF

- Have you had your eyes checked?*  
See an eye specialist once a year. Poor vision can increase your chance of falling.

- Do you have night lights along the path between your bedroom and the bathroom?*  
Night lights are the easiest and least expensive way to light the way.
- Do you turn on the lights before you use the stairs?*  
You need to have light switches at both the top and bottom of your stairs. If needed, ask for help installing new light switches. Never climb stairs in the dark.
- Does every room have a light switch that can be reached from the doorway?*  
If not, ask for help installing new light switches.

### **PREVENT SLIPPING**

- Are there non-slip bath mats in bathtubs and showers?*  
Use non-slip bath mats to prevent slips and falls.
- Do you have grab bars in tubs, showers, and near all toilets?*  
Grab bars should be installed in all bathrooms. Never use a towel rack or shower rod for support.
- Do you wipe up spilled liquids right away?*  
Spills make your floors slippery; even a few drops of liquid or grease can be a slipping hazard.

### **UNEVEN SURFACES**

- Do your throw rugs have rubber, non-skid backing?*  
Use only throw rugs with non-skid backing. Smooth out all wrinkles and folds in your rugs and carpets.
- Is your carpeting wrinkled, torn, or worn?*  
If so, ask for help repairing or replacing the carpeting.

### **TREAD CAREFULLY**

- Are there sturdy, easy-to-grip handrails on both side of the stairs?*  
If not, ask for help securing loose handrails to the wall, or installing new handrails along the full length of both sides of the stairs.

### **BEST FOOT FORWARD**

- Do you wear high heels, loose shoes, or slippers?*  
Wear sturdy, well-fitted, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles. These are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.
  - Do you take any medications?*  
Have your doctor or pharmacist review all of your medications, including over-the-counter drugs. Some medications can affect your balance and coordination.
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