

Preventing Falls in the Home: A Home Safety Checklist



All of us will fall during our lifetimes. For older adults, though, falls can more easily result in serious, potentially life-threatening injuries. The good news is that many falls (most of which happen in the home) can be prevented with a few precautions.

Follow this checklist from physical therapists to improve the safety of your home environment and reduce your risk of falling. Then, talk to your physical therapist for more tips to improve your balance, strength, and mobility to avoid falling and fall-related injuries.

Physical therapists are movement experts. They improve quality of life through hands-on care, patient education, and prescribed movement. You can contact a physical therapist directly for an evaluation. To find a physical therapist in your area, visit [ChoosePT.com](https://www.choosept.com).

Falls Prevention Home Safety Checklist

1. Make your floors, walkways, and stairs safe.

- Clear clutter from the floor, stairs, and walkways.
- Remove loose throw rugs and those that buckle or don't lie flat.
- Add nonslip mats or treads to each step (for hardwood or tile steps).
- Secure stair handrails and make sure they extend the entire length of your staircase. Consider adding a second secure railing on the opposite wall for extra support.
- Regularly check for and repair any loose or damaged steps.
- Install gates at the top and bottom (if small children or pets are in the home).

2. Illuminate dark areas.

- Ensure that steps, entrances, and areas where you walk outside your home are well lit. Tip: Motion detector lights can automatically brighten dark areas outdoors when you arrive or leave.
- Plug in motion-sensitive nightlights in hallways, bathrooms, bedrooms, stairs, and other indoor areas you use after dark.

3. Slip-proof your bathroom.

- Place a nonslip mat (one that is not too thick, so it doesn't pose a tripping hazard) in these areas:
 - Where you step into and out of the shower or tub.
 - In front of the sink.
 - On the shower or tub floor.
- Install secure grab bars:
 - Inside the shower.
 - Near the shower or tub entrance.
 - Next to the toilet (especially for people with mobility concerns).

4. Mind your footwear.

- Wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes with good traction.
- Avoid slippers and loose footwear (consider using an easy-on indoor pair of sneakers instead of slippers or sandals that can twist or slide off).

5. Contain small children and restrain pets.

- Use baby gates to keep children and pets from being underfoot when you're cooking, cleaning, or moving about.
- Consider training pets to stay away from your feet, both inside your house and during walks outside.

Additional Information

The American Physical Therapy Association offers many other prevention and wellness resources that can help older adults, people with mobility concerns, and caregivers reduce the risk of falls. Scan the QR code below to access our [Health Center on Falls Prevention](#).

