

HOME SAFETY

&

FALL PREVENTION GUIDE

Falls Change Lives!

Preventing falls is essential to maintain your independence and quality of life. This guide will help you assess and reduce your risk of falling.



HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Each question to which you answer “No” presents an opportunity to reduce your risk of falling.





1. Are sturdy handrails provided on both sides of the stairs? YES NO
Railings on both sides provide confidence whether going up or down.


2. Are the stairs in good repair and free of clutter? YES NO
Worn carpeting and obstructions often contribute to falls.


3. Are the stairs well-lit with switches both at the top and bottom? YES NO
Since our depth perception diminishes with age, clearly marking the edge of the bottom stair may prevent stumbling at the bottom.

4. Is there clear distinction between the bottom step and the ground? YES NO
We need more light to see clearly as we age; adequate lighting is of particular importance on stairs.

BEDROOM		YES	NO
	1. Is the pathway between the bed and bathroom clear of throw rugs, obstructions and clutter? <i>The second most common location to fall in the home is next to the bed.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Is lighting provided to light your path to the bathroom, and do you keep a flashlight on your nightstand? <i>Automatic or continuous lighting is the best. Flashlights are helpful in the event of a power outage.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Do you have a phone that is easily reachable from bed? <i>Many falls occur when we rush to answer the phone.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Is it easy for you to get in and out of bed? <i>Adjusting the mattress height or installing a bed rail or bedside pole may help.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BATHROOM		YES	NO
	1. Are grab bars provided within the shower enclosure? <i>Grab bars improve your confidence and reduce falls. They should be permanently and securely mounted (not suction cup style) both at the point of entry and within the enclosure.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Is a shower chair (or bath bench) and hand-held shower provided? <i>Sitting while bathing is safer and easier especially when using a hand-held shower.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Does the tub/shower floor have non-slip strips or a bath mat? <i>It is best if the mat or strips are permanently adhered to the floor with adhesive.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Can you easily get on and off the toilet without assistance? <i>If not, raising the height of the toilet or adding support rails can help dramatically.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Do you have night lights? <i>Night time trips to the bathroom are the most dangerous.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

KITCHEN		YES	NO
	1. Can you easily reach the items that you frequently use? <i>Reaching too far can cause a loss of balance. Climbing on something to reach is even worse.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Do your kitchen chairs have sturdy arms and no wheels? <i>It is much safer and easier to get in and out of a stable chair.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Have you placed a completed "Vial of Life" in your refrigerator? <i>Doing so will ensure that emergency responders will have immediate access to your critical health information (www.myvialoflife.org).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GENERAL		YES	NO
	1. Have all throw rugs been removed? <i>Small rugs create a tripping and slipping hazard and should be removed.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Do your large area rugs have non-slip grips beneath them? <i>The corners of area rugs are often where slips occur.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Are all pathways clear of clutter and cords? <i>Loose cords and cluttered pathways contribute to trips and falls. It is best to route cords along walls and behind furniture - not across paths or beneath rugs.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Are smoke detectors provided in every bedroom, in the adjacent hallway and on every floor? <i>Multiple detectors greatly increase the speed and reliability of detection. Every second counts.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Are smoke detectors less than 10 years old and equipped with fresh batteries? <i>Smoke detectors are only designed to last 10 years (even if they still work to the touch) Older detectors should be replaced.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Is a Carbon Monoxide detector provided? <i>Carbon Monoxide is odorless, colorless and lethal.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Do all electrical outlets have two or less appliances plugged in at any time? <i>Overloading of electrical outlets is the most common cause of household fires.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Are your house numbers visible both day and night? <i>Seconds count when emergency responders are trying to locate you.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Do you have a fire extinguisher on each level of your home and do you know how to use it? <i>Ready access to an extinguisher can prevent a minor fire from becoming a major one.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Do you keep a cordless phone with you at all times? <i>Doing so will prevent you from running to answer the phone.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Do you avoid walking around the house in socks? <i>Thin-soled shoes and slippers with non-slip bottoms are best to prevent falls.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Do you have an emergency alert system (e.g. pendant)? <i>An emergency alert system will enable you to get help even if you are unable to speak.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. Is the water heater set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less? <i>Doing so will reduce the likelihood of scalding.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Do you keep your pets' food, water and bedding well out of footpaths? <i>Doing so will prevent tripping over them or slipping on spills.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FALL PREVENTION SELF ASSESSMENT

YES NO



Answer the following questions for an indication of your relative risk of falling.

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have you fallen in the past year?
<i>Individuals who have fallen are likely to fall again.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Has your fear of falling impacted your daily activities?
<i>The fear of falling can contribute to depression and a spiral of declining health and independence.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have you lost some feeling in your feet?
<i>Foot numbness can lead to stumbles and falls.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you have difficulty rising from a chair without use of your arms or stepping up on to a curb?
<i>Reduced leg strength reduces our ability to recover from a near fall.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Has it been more than one year since your last eye exam?
<i>A proper eye glass prescription is essential to minimizing your fall risk.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you occasionally support yourself by grabbing onto furniture and fixtures?
<i>Doing so is an indicator of reduced balance (a precursor to falling).</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Do you frequently rush to go to the bathroom?
<i>Rushing to the bathroom, particularly at night, increases your risk of falling.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Do you exercise less than three times per week?
<i>Physical activity maintains leg strength and greatly reduces the risk of falling.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Are you reluctant to ask for assistance with challenging activities?
<i>Asking for help is a sign of intelligence not a sign of weakness.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Are you taking four or more medications each day?
<i>The interactions of medications often increase dizziness and decrease muscle strength.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

NOTE: The more questions to which you answer “Yes”, the greater your risk of falling.

RESOURCES

The organizations listed below perform home safety assessments and equipment installations.

Home Safety Services	www.homesafety.net	888.388.3811
Independent Living Centers*	www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/ils/ILC-List.html	916.558.5775
Meals on Wheels*	www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org	888.998.6325
Rebuilding Together*	www.rebuildingtogether.org	800.473.4229

*Services, fees, application processes and lead times vary by organization and region.